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RHETORICAL DISPLAY AND PRODUCTIVE DISSONANCE IN QUINTILIAN'S QUOTATIONS OF POETRY

Curtis Dozier

Among Latin rhetorical treatises and imperial writers on technical subjects, the *Institutio Oratoria* stands out for the sheer number of quotations of poetry that Quintilian incorporates into his discussion. Whereas Cicero's *De Inuentione* has 13 quotations of poetry and the *Rhetorica ad Herennium* 16, the *index locorum* in Russell's Loeb edition of the *Institutio* records 320 quotations from Greek and Latin poets.[1] Despite the distinctive scale of Quintilian's engagement with poetry, scholars have not taken much interest in it, perhaps under the influence of the persistent belief that in the imperial period 'the introduction of poetry into orations as an ornament of style' was 'often a useless affectation' or that such quotations constitute mere 'window dressing'.[2] Early twentieth-century treatments such as that of Cole, who evaluated Quintilian's citations of

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This essay began its life as a presentation for a Vergilian Society of America panel at the 2013 meeting of the American Philological Association. Since then, these ideas have undergone many revisions (and changes of venue) before finding a home in *Ramus.* My thanks to Craig Gibson, Robert D. Brown, Matthew Wright, Helen Morales, the anonymous reader for *Ramus*, and my research assistants Hannah Broholm-Vail and Tao Beloney for assistance on that journey.

1. Russell (2001). For quotations in Cic. *Inv.* and *Rhet. Her.* see Hunter (2010), 29. Of the quotations in Quint. *Inst.* about half (174) are from Vergil, 110 from other Latin poets, and the rest (36) are from Greek poets; Caballero López (1998), 850, notes that, in particular, Quintilian quotes Homer much more frequently than either of his major Latin rhetorical predecessors. Quintilian does not quote or even refer to any contemporary living poet other than the emperor Domitian (*Inst.* 10.1.91f., on which see Roche [2009]). Odgers (1933), 188 n.32, who says that 1300 or so allusions or quotations to literature of any type can be identified in Quintilian, counts only 'nine references to Latin literature' in Tacitus' *Dialogus*, a different kind of work than the *Institutio* to be sure but one nearly contemporary to it that treats an oratorical theme. Dueck (2009a) and (2011) has counted citations of poetry in Latin 'Historiography and Biography' and 'Roman Technical Writing', respectively, and finds only 61 quotations in the seven historians and biographers she studied, and only 88 in the eight technical writers surveyed (of these the only one securely datable as a contemporary of Quintilian is Frontinus, who quotes only one passage of poetry). According to Dueck (2009b), Cicero's philosophical works contain 327 quotations of poets and Seneca's 156, making them the only two writers in these studies with raw numbers of quotations of poets comparable to Quintilian's. North (1952) presents a general overview of quotations of poets in Greek rhetorical works, as well as a discussion of quotation of poetry in oratory by Demosthenes ('rare', 24), Aeschines ('many more…and in this respect at least notably un-Attic', 25), and Cicero ('Save for the period between 56 B.C. and 52… rigorously limit[ed]', 27). On Greek authors' quotation of poetry see the bibliography at Dueck (2009a), 170 n.2.

2. North (1952), 31–3, in designating quotation of poetry an 'ornament of style' and 'useless affectation', contrasts the (supposedly more admirable) use of quotations by early Greek orators. Dueck's (2011), 383, 'window dressing' reaffirms this view for quotations of poetry in Roman technical writers. I have not been able to consult Hettegger (1905).

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poets for their 'textual accuracy', and Odgers, who used the relative infrequency of Quintilian's quotation of Greek literature to establish the limits of Quintilian's knowledge of Greek, set a tone of dismissiveness in relation to any question of how and why Quintilian quotes poetry as he does: Cole and Odgers attribute any 'discrepancies' between Quintilian's quotations and those found in the manuscripts of the poets he quoted to a (presumed) tendency to quote from memory that made him 'rather liable to errors'.[3] Later critics have extrapolated from their findings to attribute to Quintilian the 'grave deficiency' of 'know[ing] little directly of the major Greek writers' and to diagnose 'intellectual stagnation' in his engagement with Latin literature.[4] These negative judgements are, of course, in line with the traditional assessment of Quintilian as 'neither a great writer nor a great thinker', one who is 'more often belittled than understood'.[5]

Taking my cue from the growing recognition that Quintilian is much more than either 'a type of likeable pedagogue, conscientious and agreeable' or a 'mine' for 'the information he contains',[6] and from Peirano Garrison's recent demonstrations of the degree to which 'Quintilian's textual presentation of the orator and of rhetorical practice is thoroughly informed by poetic, especially epic, models',[7] I argue that there is in fact much more than meets the eye in Quintilian's quotations of earlier literature, especially his quotations of poetry. Far from being a slapdash assemblage of lines reflecting a forgetful schoolmaster's shallow knowledge of literature, many of Quintilian's quotations reveal not only a deep and sophisticated knowledge of literary history and a keen sense of how poetry can enhance oratorical persuasion, but also a mostly unrecognized dimension of Quintilian's pedagogical practice by which he provides a provocative meta-critical commentary on quotation culture in general and in particular on the incongruous, even deceitful ways, that orators use poetic quotations to bolster their own authority.

3. Cole (1906), 51, and see also Odgers (1933), 186. Such a charge has become a kind of scholarly orthodoxy in addressing such differences in any ancient author's quotations, cf. West (1973), 17: 'The main cause [of alterations to a text] is inaccurate memory, as it was the practice of most ancient writers…to quote short passages as they remembered them instead of laboriously looking them up without the aid of numbered chapters or verses.' This basic idea is frequently restated, as in Dueck (2009b), 332. A more interesting version of this claim is that of Solodow (1989), 120f., who explains an 'inaccurate quotation' of Ovid in Seneca by arguing that the philosopher 'was led off track by recollection of the *Aeneid*.' Less often considered is West's (1973) next explanation, 18, that an author 'may deliberately adapt the construction or some other aspect of the quotation to suit his own purposes.'

4. Goodyear (1982), 675; Kennedy (1962), 143.

5. Kennedy (1969), v; Mayer (1999), 148.

6. These descriptions are those of Morgan (1998), 245, summarizing traditional assessments of Quintilian which have now been catalogued in detail by Dominik (2021), esp. 469–71 and 480–3.

7. Peirano Garrison (2019), 2. Her work marks an important contribution to the understanding that the *Institutio Oratoria* is 'in fact a work of ambitious literary breadth' (113). As will emerge in this essay I join her in finding 'productive tensions' in Quintilian's treatment of poetry but would explain the appearance of what she calls Quintilian's 'deep-seated anxiety' about the relationship of poetry to rhetoric differently than she does, putting more emphasis on Quintilian's 'energetic claim to encompass and subsume the authority of poetic, especially Virgilian, texts' (132).

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How and Why to Quote a Latin Poem

My analysis of Quintilian's quotational practice begins from the same insight that informs the best modern reassessments of this author: that Quintilian, in writing about rhetoric, is himself employing rhetoric, and that his pointed juxtaposition of theory and practice is a primary compositional principle of the *Institutio*.[8] Our understanding of Quintilian's use of poetic quotations, therefore, should emerge out of a comparison of Quintilian's articulation of the usefulness of such quotations for the rhetorician with the way he himself uses them. Carlozzo has collected many of the relevant passages.[9] Quintilian makes the memorization of poetry part of his educational program because 'the ability to recall' (*relatio*) material from previous writers is both 'pleasing in conversation' (*iucunda in sermone*) and 'useful in court' (*in causis utilis*, 2.7.4).[10] He defines this utility more specifically in an earlier passage, where he observes that 'the greatest orators' (*summi oratores*) use quotations of poetry either to provide 'support for their arguments' (*ad fidem causarum*) or as 'ornamentation for their eloquence' (*ad ornamentum eloquentiae*, 1.8.10); later in the *Institutio* Quintilian reiterates this link between poetic quotation and rhetorical authority, noting that 'speeches are full of…reflections from the poets' by which orators (and, Quintilian says, philosophers) 'seek authority from many a passage of poetry' (5.11.39).[11] Carlozzo himself recognized that Quintilian's own use of quotations often does what Quintilian says it should do: he uses poetry to support his own arguments about how rhetoric should be taught and also adorns his own expressions with poetic phrases. It is true that many of Quintilian's quotations of poetry do not straightforwardly fit either of these uses, most providing examples of stylistic or rhetorical devices that Quintilian is discussing.[12] But of the 320 quotations of poetry I examined, about 65 can be reasonably said to provide ornamentation or lend authority to an argument

8. These include Zinsmaier (2003), Leigh (2004), and Gunderson (2009). My own contributions to developing this line of interpretation are Dozier (2014) and (2018).

9. Carlozzo (1979).

10. Throughout this essay I am quoting from Russell's (2001) translation of Quintilian in the Loeb Classical Library, with only minor modifications.

11. Quintilian's other statements about the usefulness of poetry for orators, discussed by North (1952), 8–14, have less bearing on Quintilian's own use of poetry in the *Institutio Oratoria*, for example that studying poetry helps students learn vocabulary (*Inst.* 1.8.9) or provides subject matter and 'colours' and vocabulary for declamations (2.4.3, 2.10.5, 3.8.53, 8.pr.25, 10.2.21). On Quintilian's claim that poetic quotations provide pleasure to the audience (1.8.11), see Dozier (2012) and, more speculatively, Dozier (2013). Quintilian does not seem to use quotations for poetry to produce humor, as he recommends orators do at, e.g., 6.3.96 with North (1952), 22–4.

12. Carlozzo (1979), 54. For example, at *Inst.* 9.2.6–16 Quintilian illustrates different forms of what we would call 'rhetorical questions' (Latin: *interrogare vel percontari*) with six quotes from Vergil's poetry, a line from Seneca's *Medea*, and one from Terence's *Eunuchus* along with examples from Cicero's speeches.

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(or both),[13] and it is on examples of those kinds of quotation that I will focus here. These present an opportunity to assess Quintilian's practice in relation to his own theories rather than, as has previously been done, in relation to external standards of what quotation should be or accomplish.[14]

That Quintilian has followed his own advice, so to speak, is clear from several quotations of poets that appear at significant moments in his work.[15] When evaluated in light of his own declarations that such quotations should 'ornament his eloquence' and 'support his arguments', we discover that the quotations that Quintilian has employed reflect both his care in selecting them and the sophistication of his understanding of the meanings that the passage he quotes can bear. Indeed, Quintilian has foregrounded the significance of poetic quotation in the *Institutio* by quoting, in the second sentence of the entire treatise, Horace's advice in the *Ars Poetica* that 'publication should not be hurried but "kept in store till the ninth year comes round"' (*Ep. ad Tryph.* 2, quoting Hor. *Ars* 388). This passage has been extensively studied, most recently by Ferriss-Hill, as evidence for the name by which Horace's literary critical poem was known in the first century, but its rhetorical force in Quintilian has hardly attracted any critical attention beyond Calboli's attempt to establish Quintilian's attitude toward Horace.[16] Peirano Garrison, however, has laid the groundwork for understanding the rhetorical significance of this opening quotation by noting that it 'claims for the *Institutio* the literary refinement of poetry' and 'situates the *Institutio* within the prestigious tradition of literary and rhetorical criticism that the *Ars Poetica* exemplified', an analysis that, I would add, corresponds to Quintilian's theories: the quotation makes an argument about the status of the *Institutio* and ornaments it with the expression of a prestigious author.[17] But any assessment of the force of this quotation must also note that whatever prestige its inclusion gains for the treatise is immediately complicated by Quintilian's declaration that he has rejected Horace's advice and published his work more quickly,

13. The distinction between argument and ornamentation itself is often blurry, and illustrative examples may activate one or both: when Quintilian begins his catalogue of Greek poets by saying, 'As Aratus says "let us begin with Zeus", so the proper place for us to begin is with Homer' (10.1.46), he is both making an argument (viz. 'we should begin with the most major figure because Aratus said to') and also accomplishing what he says *ornatus* ('ornament') aims to accomplish, namely distinguishing the orator's style from 'ordinary' speech (*usitata et ceteris similis oratio*). As Quintilian observes, 'with ornament the orator is out to recommend himself as well as his case' (8.3.2), making *ornatus* 'a means of proof' of the orator's learning and authority, which he also says is a source of 'sublimity' (*sublimitas*), 'splendour' (*magnificentia*), 'elegance' (*nitor*), and 'authoritative manner' (*auctoritas*) as well as 'delight' (*uoluptas*, 8.3.3f.).

14. Čulík-Baird's (2021) critique of the preoccupation with attribution and authorship in the study of fragmentary literature is a parallel example of the limitations such traditional concerns put on the study of ancient texts.

15. As recognized by Kennedy (1969), 103.

16. Ferriss-Hill (2019), 6–9. Calboli (1995) finds that Quintilian quotes Horace for critical judgments as much as for other kinds of information, which is perhaps notable but also not surprising since Horace's poetry contains more critical judgments than most other surviving poets. Bloomer (2011), 86, and Laird (2007), 132 n.1, each briefly recognize the quotation as programmatic for Quintilian.

17. Peirano Garrison (2019), 114f.

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because the public's demands for it had become too insistent to ignore (*Ep. ad Tryph.* 3 and *Inst.* 1.pr.2). Quintilian is not merely basking in the glow of Horace's reflected genius but, one senses, asserting a difference between them, as if to say that Horace's advice might make sense for a poet, but that the author of a work on a subject of public significance for which there is widespread demand will not have the luxury to polish it endlessly. Quintilian's citation of this quote and his immediate rejection of its argument is not, as some critics have claimed, apologizing for the *Institutio*'s supposed lack of polish,[18] but an assertion of the greater significance of rhetoric as a discursive form of knowledge over and against Horace's attempt, which I discuss in a forthcoming essay, to make rhetorical theory a subcategory of poetics. At the same time, however, Quintilian's rejection of Horace's nine-year waiting period reflects his understanding that, as Ferriss-Hill puts it, Horace was 'playfully disingenuous in suggesting there is a "magic number" that will suffice to produce a worthy poem.'[19] With this, the rhetorician joins Horace in claiming that the consummate artist, whether poetic or rhetorical, knows how, and how quickly, to produce a masterful work.

Two books later, Quintilian begins the first chapter of his third book, which Russell categorizes as 'the introduction to the main work' (after two books of preliminary material), with another poetic reference, this time to Lucretius' famous description of a doctor putting honey on the rim of a cup to disguise the bitter taste of wormwood as a metaphor for the poet disguising the allegedly bitter concepts of philosophy (*Inst.* 3.1.4, quoting Lucr. 1.936–8/4.11–13).[20] As with the *Ars Poetica* quotation, this appears to be an example of poetry providing ornamentation—Lucretius' lines about honey themselves serve as honey for Quintilian's style—and as an argument that making palatable the technical details of rhetorical theory requires a similar treatment to that which Lucretius used on philosophy. Critical analysis of Quintilian's quote has not progressed much beyond noting this, and that Quintilian has 'inadvertent[ly]' altered Lucretius' text, according to Cole:[21] Quintilian begins with *ac* ('and') where Lucretius, in book one, began with *sed* ('but') and, in book four, with *nam* ('because'), and replaces Lucretius' *contingunt* ('they touch' the rim of the cup with honey) with a different word. Variation in the *Institutio*'s manuscripts makes it difficult to know what word Quintilian used in this latter case, let alone to understand the effect of the change, but Quintilian's alteration of the first word of his quotation may gesture toward the fact that Lucretius himself used two different words in that position the two times he employed this metaphor (which he otherwise repeats word for word). Nethercut has recently argued that any understanding of this much discussed passage must incorporate the fact that although honey

18. Kennedy (1969), 37f., 124, 128.
19. Ferriss-Hill (2019), 125.
20. Russell (2001), 1.14.
21. Cole (1906), 49.

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and wormwood may appear in book one to be opposites, by the time the metaphor recurs in book four, Lucretius' readers have come to realize that honey and wormwood both consist of mixtures of the same atoms, and are thus not as distinct as they might first have appeared.[22] Quintilian's modification of the one word in Lucretius' text that differentiates Lucretius' two versions of it signals his understanding of this dimension of Lucretius' repetition of the metaphor, as does his refinement of its relevance to his text. Immediately after invoking Lucretius as a model Quintilian acknowledges the inseparability of honey and wormwood, writing that 'I fear my book may appear to have too little honey and too much wormwood, and be more healthy for the student than agreeable' (3.1.5). And as will emerge in the course of my discussion, Quintilian means for the programmatic dimension of Lucretius' metaphor to apply to the *Institutio* as well. According to Nethercut, the metaphor of the honeyed cup is not, as it has usually been understood, a simple statement of the subordination of form to content, but the exemplar of Lucretius' technique of 'provisional argumentation', by which the poet introduces readers to a perspective that, later in the poem, they revise in light of the deepened understanding the poem has given them. This compositional strategy, as I will argue below, is also one that Quintilian employs.

The preface to *Institutio* book four is also marked as a significant passage by a dedication to the emperor Domitian. This passage, too, invokes poetic authority, albeit in a less specific way than the passages so far analyzed. Quintilian justifies the postponement of this dedication until so late in the work (book one had begun with a dedication to Marcus Vitorius) by reference to 'the greatest poets', who invoke the muses 'not only at the beginning of their works, but also later on' (4.pr.4). This bald appeal to poetic precedent, complete with superlative *maximi*, does not, however, specify what poets or passages Quintilian has in mind. Russell suggests that Quintilian means the re-invocation of the muses of the beginning of the catalogue of ships in the *Iliad* or in the second half of the *Aeneid*, but these are not really parallel to Quintilian's postponement of the emperor because Homer and Vergil begin with the muses and re-invoke them later, but Domitian is not mentioned at all until the preface to Quintilian's fourth book. Traditional critics of Quintilian might attribute this vagueness to his shaky grasp of literature; more recently the fulsome praise of Domitian that precedes it has prompted Roche to suspect the presence of irony.[23] More may be said, however, about how this passage reflects on Quintilian as a rhetorician.

The irony that Roche identifies is counterbalanced, if not quite eliminated, by the juxtaposition of the preface to book four with Quintilian's presentation of the theory of how oratorical prefaces should be composed in the first chapter of the very same book this preface introduces. Just as Lucretius' philosophical teachings produced students who could better assess the atomic basis of his own honeyed

22. Nethercut (2019).

23. Roche's (2009) careful discussion should be consulted along with Penwill (2000) on the possibility of irony in Quintilian's praise of Domitian in book ten.

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cup metaphor, this juxtaposition constitutes Quintilian's invitation to assess his rhetorical practice in this book's opening passage in light of his advice about oratorical prefaces. The best prefaces, Quintilian specifies, will do what he does with Domitian in the present passage: they will 'address primarily the persons whom we wish to win over to our side' (4.1.63); they will introduce topics calculated to 'prepare the hearer to be more favorably inclined towards us for the rest of the proceedings' (4.1.5), and will imply, as Quintilian's reference to his obligation to the emperor's nephews does, that the speaker has 'undertaken the case out of a sense of duty to a relative or a friend or (best of all if possible) to his country' (4.1.7). Quintilian's postponement of his dedication to the emperor has allowed him to locate it in a place where Domitian can take pride of place in a preface recognizably constructed to conform to many of the features of the ideal, or at least textbook-perfect, preface. But the student of those instructions who has also found hints of irony in Quintilian's praise of the emperor will also discover that Quintilian advises the orator that 'it would be foolish of me to warn against saying anything explicitly or even hinting at anything unfavorable to [the judge], were it not that this does happen' (4.1.11) and that 'nowhere else is it more necessary [than in the preface] to be careful to avoid suspicion' (4.1.56). Such a reader may also note that the vagueness of Quintilian's poetic justification for the placement of this dedication finds a corresponding vagueness in Quintilian's praise of Domitian's *eloquentia*, which, as Roche has noticed, lacks a specific example even though elsewhere Quintilian shows himself perfectly capable of citing examples of other emperors' rhetorical skill.[24] The preface to book four reveals Quintilian as a master rhetorician, simultaneously conversant in all the textbook-perfect techniques of the oratorical preface and yet willing to break those rules in spectacularly daring ways.

Since these dimensions of Quintilian's rhetoric emerge most distinctly to the student who examines Quintilian's rhetorical performances in light of how Quintilian teaches, it should be unsurprising that the final book of the *Institutio Oratoria* signals in various ways the need to reassess everything that has come before, just at the point when the reader has absorbed most of the author's teaching. The portrait of the orator in retirement that appears at the beginning of the final chapter of the treatise (12.11), so similar to Quintilian's own self-representation as a retired orator in the preface to its first book (1.pr.1–5), is one such signal that Quintilian the rhetorician has been present during the reader's instruction every bit as much as Quintilian the *praeceptor* has,[25] Quintilian's employment of the term *doctus* ('learned' but also 'one who has been taught') in the middle of book twelve, another.[26] But Quintilian also signals this fact in the preface to

24. Roche (2009), 381.

25. Although Winterbottom (2005), 178, recognizes that the final chapter of book twelve serves as a textbook example of the peroration of a speech, he willfully disposes of the self-referential qualities of the portrait of the retired orator in 12.11 and insists, 176, that Quintilian 'had Cicero much in mind'.

26. So Dozier (2014).

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book twelve, where he introduces the final book of his treatise as 'the hardest part of the task I set myself' because it treats topics for which he has 'no predecessor to follow.' He conveys his sense of being lost at sea with a quotation from Vergil's *Aeneid*: 'sky all around, and all around the deep' (3.193, quoted at *Inst.* 12.pr.4). On first glance it is an apt quotation, not only because these words are spoken by Aeneas in a moment of uncertainty at sea but because, as Peirano Garrison notes, it echoes the seafaring metaphors with which Quintilian had begun the treatise in the preface to book one.[27] But a closer inspection of the Vergilian context reveals that this quotation does not just look ahead to the closing book, but also back at the preceding eleven. Aeneas speaks this line as the Trojans depart from Crete, which they visited because they misinterpreted Apollo's prophecy telling them to 'seek [their] ancient mother' (*Aen.* 3.96). That is, the line that Quintilian quotes comes not, as he seems to quote it to mean, at the end of a successful journey through familiar waters before boldly setting out into uncharted territory, but after a foolhardy wild-goose chase that forced the Trojans to endure a 'deadly year' (*letifer annus*, 3.139) of plague and starvation before they realized their error and finally put themselves on the right course. It comes, that is, at a moment when the Trojans must reinterpret information that they had believed they had understood. Quintilian's use of this quotation near the end of the *Institutio* therefore raises the question of how much of the previous books should be reassessed from the perspective the reader has gained by the time they reach the last one. This compositional technique has been observed in other imperial Roman authors,[28] but it is particularly apt for a didactic work like the *Institutio* in which the reader does not fully develop whatever skills the work is teaching until reaching the end of its final book. Here Quintilian notifies his reader that if they wish to achieve a true understanding of what has come before, they must return to the beginning and see what their training allows them to see.

The Master at Work

What they see, at least when they begin examining the ways that Quintilian has used poetry to ornament his text and support his arguments, is a rhetorician deeply versed in literary history and dazzlingly virtuosic in his appropriation of the authority of that tradition in support of his stature. Consider, for example, another passage in which critical study has not advanced beyond noting the differences between Quintilian's text and that of his source material. At *Institutio*

27. Peirano Garrison (2019), 126f.

28. Winkler (1985), 214f., argues that the eleventh book of Apuleius' *Golden Ass* makes the reader reconsider everything that has come before. Whitton (2019), 494, argues that Pliny's letters demand rereading; this expectation could be added to the list of ways, extensively catalogued throughout Whitton's book, that Quintilian has influenced Pliny's work.

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2.13.8, Quintilian signals the culmination of his arguments about the proper balance between doing 'what will help one win' (*quid expediat*) with 'what is honorable' (*quid deceat*) by quoting a Vergilian phrase, 'I shall enjoin, repeat, and urge again, again' (*praecipiam ac repetens iterumque iterumque monebo*). Almost the same line appears at *Aeneid* 3.436, although Quintilian has *praecipiam* ('I shall enjoin') where Vergil has *praedicam* ('I shall foretell'). It is a textbook (so to say) example of using a poetic quotation to ornament a text and bolster an argument because with it Quintilian emphasizes the point he is making. As for the alteration to Vergil's text, an explanation for what Cole called 'the most common type of discrepancy' to be found in Quintilian's quotations of Vergil[29] is not difficult to produce: the speaker in the *Aeneid* is Helenus, a prophet, for whom *praedicam* is appropriate, whereas Quintilian is a 'teacher' (*praeceptor*), for whom *praecipiam* fits better. But this superficial explanation belies the way that Quintilian's modification does not just suit his argument that the expedient should take precedent over the honorable, it actually exemplifies it: changing *praedicam* to *praecipiam* is an expedient change for an 'instructor' (*praeceptor*) to make in quoting the language of a prophet.[30] And if we move beyond a focus on textual matters, we find a suggestive resonance in Quintilian's choice of this particular passage to authorize his claim about the relationship of expedience to honor: Helenus, as Papaioannou has noted, can be understood as a metapoetic figure, his prophecy about the events of Aeneas' life, many of them known from preexisting mythological tradition, a kind of in-text representation of Vergil's own process of 'critical selectivity and re-writing of preexisting material.'[31] And if Helenus serves to highlight Vergil's own power to modify the epic tradition to suit his poetic needs, then Quintilian has similarly employed this passage to highlight his power to do the same with the poetic tradition. Quintilian's choice of passages is anything but unconsidered and his modification of the text of the passage he chooses to quote is germane to his larger argument in the passage in which it appears.

When examined in the context of ancient quotation practices, Quintilian's introduction of changes to a quoted text to serve his rhetorical purposes does not appear to be unusual. Cicero reports (*De Or.* 3.141) that Aristotle mocked Isocrates with a parody of a line from Euripides' *Philoctetes* (a play fragmentary to us but extant in complete copies at least until the time of Dio Chrysostom) that is preserved by none other than Quintilian himself: according to him Aristotle used to say 'shame to keep quiet and let Isocrates speak', replacing Euripides' 'barbarians' with the name of his rival teacher (*Inst.* 3.1.14).[32] Nor were

29. Cole (1906), 50.

30. Russell's punctuation (2001), which places *praecipiam* outside the quotation marks and makes Quintilian quote only *repetens iterumque iterumque monebo*, erases this effect.

31. Papaioannou (2011), 38f.

32. Euripides fr. 796 *TrGF*. Diogenes Laertius 5.3 records that Aristotle used this same line against Xenocrates. Rather than regard this as a textual variant, I prefer to see it as evidence that this was a favorite and repeated joke of Aristotle's.

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pointed alterations the province only of rhetoricians:[33] Plutarch, advising on how to promote virtue through the reading of poetry, endorses examples of philosophers interpolating and rewriting lines of Euripidean and Sophoclean tragedies in order to salvage supposedly immoral lines (*Mor.* 33e–d), and Whittaker identifies a 'persistent inclination of the scholars and writers of the ancient world to introduce into their quotations deliberate alteration' based on the quotations from Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics in the *Didascalicus* of Alcinous, a text composed, roughly speaking, in the same period in which Quintilian wrote.[34]

These intentional modifications of texts must be understood as taking place in a reading culture in which, as Zetzel has argued, 'reading and transcribing were far more interactive processes in antiquity than should make us comfortable.'[35] Citing examples of intentional intervention such as 'hyperarchaism and analogical leveling' in the text of Sallust, interpolations in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Juvenal's *Satires* (the result, according to Tarrant, not of deliberate or accidental error but of imitation),[36] the expurgation of Martial's epigrams in some manuscripts and the omission of prefaces in others, as well as the existence of an alternate ending to Terence's *Andria* known already to Donatus, Zetzel concludes that 'scribes…did not feel any particular compunction about making alterations and additions' to the texts they copied. Thus for ancient readers encountering these scribal copies, variation was commonplace yet meaningful, and at least as likely to result from conscious alteration as from error.

This would be particularly true for the examples discussed here, which involve primarily well-known authors whose texts were probably more stable than obscure ones, rendering deviations from familiar versions all the more obvious.[37] That Quintilian quotes Vergil more than any other poet has been understood as nothing more than 'a genuine tribute to the poet…whom Quintilian wishes Roman students of rhetoric to read',[38] but the care with which Quintilian has selected Helenus' prophecy, as well as that he exhibits in examples I will discuss below, suggests that Quintilian may prefer Vergil because alterations to his text are more noticeable than those of less well-established authors. That is,

33. Cf. North (1952), 30: 'Not infrequently [Cicero] adapts a verse to his own needs.' The parody of the sophistic rhetorician in Lucian's *Rhetorum Praeceptor*, 17, recommends that if you are accused of committing a solecism, 'be ready at once with the name of someone who is not now alive and never was, either a poet or a historian, saying that he, a learned man, extremely precise in his diction, approved the expression' (tr. Harmon [1925]).

34. Whittaker (1989), 64.

35. Zetzel (2005), 154f.

36. Tarrant (2004), xiii, quoted by Zetzel (2005), 155 n.23.

37. Čulík-Baird (2021), 106, points out that Cicero's quotations of works that survive only as fragments strongly suggest that he 'assumed that his audience would be familiar with the cited verse', a salutary reminder not to assume that we moderns possess a broader or deeper knowledge of Roman literature than ancient readers did.

38. According to Odgers (1933), 186f., 'almost three fifths of [Quintilian's] citations of Latin Literature [not just poetry] are from Cicero' and, 186, 'after Cicero the most quoted author is Vergil'.

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the relative textual stability of Vergil was most suited to provoking the kind of scrutiny that I have been arguing Quintilian expected his readers to apply.[39]

The analyses I am proposing, however, require not only that Quintilian's readers expect and attend to these textual changes but also consider the relevance of the quotation's original context to that of the passage in which it is quoted. Suetonius' descriptions of emperors quoting poetry for persuasive ends suggests that this, too, was a common enough practice in Quintilian's day. Mitchell argues that Suetonius uses examples of emperors quoting poetry as a 'metatextual device' to invite his audience 'to sympathize with the emperor-character as a fellow enthusiast for literature.'[40] That such quotations, even from emperors, sometimes failed to produce the desired effects should only strengthen our confidence that audiences attended closely to the appropriateness of such quotations; according to Power, the portrait of Claudius in Suetonius, Tacitus, and Cassius Dio suggests that he 'was well known for quoting passages of Homer that could be turned against him for humorous effect.'[41] The examples given all require that the audience recognized that there was, or could be, more than meets the eye in the quotation of poetry. Quintilian assumes that his readers, especially those who are attuned to the rhetoricality of his performance throughout the *Institutio*, will apply this kind of scrutiny to his quotations as well.

Such critical attention does not stop at the question of whether Quintilian's quotation is accurate or not but rather attempts to discern the significance of any deviation from putative sources. An example of how revelatory the latter approach can be is Quintilian's quotation of a phrase that appears nowhere in Latin poetry but that appears to conflate two well-known Vergilian lines. In his discussion of vowel quantity, Quintilian notes that 'a short syllable becomes long when it is followed by another, even a short one, which begins with two consonants' (9.4.85). He illustrates this phenomenon with the phrase *agrestem tenui musam* in which, he says, '*a* is short, and *gre* is short, but will make the preceding syllable long.' Halm, in his edition of 1868, identified in the phrase *agrestem tenui musam* a 'confusion' (*confudit*) of *Eclogues* 1.2 (*siluestrem tenui musam*) and 6.8 (*agrestem tenui…musam*) arising out of Quintilian's supposed penchant for 'quoting from memory' ('*ex memoria citans*').[42] But confusion and a faulty

39. Even Zetzel (2005), 157, in complicating the idea that canonicity can be an index of a text's stability in antiquity, calls Vergil 'the most canonical and protected of all Latin texts'. And during Quintilian's lifetime Probus seems to have attempted to establish a definitive text of Vergil's poetry along something like Alexandrian lines, cf. Tarrant (1995b), 101f., although Probus' edition, if it can be called that, does not seem to have been influential, cf. Zetzel (1981), 41–54. Even the *Aeneid*, however, was subject to modification and reinterpretation, cf. Zetzel (2005), 157: 'certainly whoever wrote the Helen Episode was attempting to offer a helpful supplement to a lacuna in the *Aeneid*'.

40. Mitchell (2015), 333, 350.

41. Power (2011), 730f.

42. Halm (1868) writes, *Quintilianus ex memoria citans confudit uersum cum Ecl.* 6.8. The two lines are unmixed in all manuscripts of the *Eclogues*, although the Bern scholia preserved in a late ninth-century manuscript glosses *siluestris* in *Ecl.* 1.2 with *agrestis*.

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memory begin to seem inadequate explanations for the line when one realizes that the two Vergilian passages that Quintilian has combined themselves repeat two separate Lucretian phrases (*siluestris musa* at 4.589 and *agrestis musa* at 5.1398). No one has doubted that Vergil's imitation of these two lines reflects his exquisite craft, and Quintilian's later combination of those same two lines reveals not his faulty memory but his deep understanding of the literary history of Vergil's imitation.[43]

Quotations without differences from the quoted texts have attracted even less attention than those that exhibit them, yet these also provide Quintilian opportunities to display his literary and rhetorical savvy. When Quintilian criticizes 'harsh metaphors derived from distant resemblances' ([*tralationes*] *durae a longinqua similitudine ductae*, 8.6.17), he gives two unattributed examples, both featuring metaphors involving snow. The first is a familiar enough line, the phrase *capitis niues*, 'snows of the head', which comes from Horace's *Odes* 4.13.12, where the poet mocks the gray hair of an aging woman. The second is a hexameter in which 'Juppiter spat white snow upon the wintry Alps' (*Iuppiter hibernas cana niue conspuit Alpes*, *Inst.* 8.6.17). Porphyrio attributes this line to the poet Furius Bibaculus (fr. 15 Courtney/fr. 80 Hollis) in his commentary on Horace's *Satires* 2.5.41 where Horace appears to parody this line, replacing *Iuppiter* with *Furius* as the spitter and describing him in the previous line as 'swollen with fat tripe'. Much more, however, links these lines then their provocative metaphors of snow. Bibaculus, whose poetry survives only in fragments but whose poems attacking Octavian seem to have been available at least into the time of Tiberius,[44] seems to have been a favorite target of Horace, especially for this line about the Alps; elsewhere in the *Satires*, Horace contrasts his own poetic style with that of 'the pompous poet of the Alps' (*turgidus Alpinus*, 1.10.36), which nearly all critics since Bentley have understood as an unflattering reference to Bibaculus.[45] So Quintilian has strikingly combined two passages that are implicated with each other not just by the imagery of snow but by literary history: one of the poets whose style Quintilian criticizes (Horace) had criticized the other (Bibaculus) on stylistic grounds.[46]

If it strikes a dissonant note for modern readers to find so admired a poet as Horace lambasted for the same stylistic failings as so obscure and maligned a writer as Bibaculus, then perhaps this is Quintilian's point: that any author may be liable to stylistic faults and, in any case, that such judgments are arbitrary. In fact, this is a position that Horace himself, however strident his attacks on

43. Clausen (1994), 181, terms Vergil's imitation 'precise imitation' because 'neither phrase occurs elsewhere in either poet'.

44. Hollis (2007), 128.

45. Porphyrio, however, says that Horace is referring to 'Cornelius Alpinus', whom the Commentator Cruquianus identifies as the poet Gallus.

46. Calboli's (1995), 91f., claim that 'Quintilian, in criticizing Horace, ignores the fact that Horace also mocks in Bibaculus the same harsh metaphor decried by Quintilian himself' misses the possibility that Quintilian made this comparison in full knowledge of how it would look.

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Bibaculus may have been, would probably have agreed with, since he represents himself throughout the *Satires* as being liable to the same poetic faults as those found in the poets he criticizes. *Satires* 2.5 in particular, the poem in which the parody of Bibaculus appears, has been called a 'mock-didactic, pseudo-instructional treatise'; it ends with a cynical assessment of the motives of those who give, and receive, gifts such as homes and farms, which sits uneasily with the opening of the next poem in the book that begins with Horace giving thanks to Maecenas for precisely such a gift.[47] Quintilian's deployment of this quotation shows off his knowledge of literary history and Horace's satiric technique, while representing himself as a critic unafraid to challenge critical orthodoxies by grouping together a canonical author like Horace with an acknowledged hack like Bibaculus.[48]

Productive Dissonance

An even deeper, more intricate knowledge of literary history can be found in Quintilian's quotation of a fragment of a Republican drama that adapts a line from Attic tragedy, although in this case the resonances of the quoted material threaten to complicate Quintilian's claims to rhetorical mastery as much as they confirm them. The quotation comes as Quintilian is defending the extensive course of study that he recommends (*Inst.* 1.12), one that includes a whole range of disciplines, including music, geometry, basic acting, and gymnastics (1.10f.). Quintilian's defense is itself a rhetorical performance that ends (1.12.16–18) with a turn to invective against his critics who argue that his program is too arduous. 'The excuse of "difficulty" is a cloak for our idleness', declares Quintilian; his orator, by contrast, 'will easily persuade himself to spend the time which is wasted [by others] in the theater or the Campus, in gaming or idle talk, not to say sleep and long drawn-out dinners, in listening to the geometrician and the teacher of music.' And the reason that Quintilian's orator will be willing to commit to such extensive study, ignoring the appeal of 'mercenary ends and filthy lucre' (*uilem usum et sordidum lucrum*) that leads others to take shortcuts, is because he has, according to Quintilian, 'formed a real concept of eloquence' that leads him to 'set before his eyes that "speech, queen of the world" (*reginam rerum orationem*) of which the famous tragic poet speaks' as his lofty and honorable objective in undertaking this study.

47. Sharland (2018), 114; Freudenburg (2021), 201f.

48. Thomas's (2011), 241, defense of *capitis niues* against Quintilian's criticism indicates that such orthodoxies remain strong. The parallel metaphors that Thomas cites from elsewhere in Horace's poetry seem to me to reinforce rather than refute Quintilian's implication that Horatian metaphors sometimes go too far.

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The phrase that Quintilian quotes here—'speech, the queen of the world'—is known from a passage of Cicero (*De Or.* 2.187)[49] to come from Pacuvius' *Hermiona* (fr. 187 Warmington). Given the fragmentary state of that text it is impossible to be certain what meaning Pacuvius attached to that line, but it looks like an adaptation of a line of Euripides, not from that poet's *Hermione* but from his *Hecuba* (816), where the deposed queen of Troy describes 'rhetoric' as the 'sole ruler where mortals are concerned' (πειθὼ δὲ τὴν τύραννον ἀνθρώποις μόνην). Quintilian's brief citation of Pacuvius' quote does not indicate whether he had both versions in mind, although his refusal to say which of these two authors he is actually quoting is not evidence for his lack of familiarity with his sources, but part of the effect: by saying that the line comes from 'the famous tragic poet' (*non ignobilis tragicus*) and not from Pacuvius specifically, even though elsewhere he is perfectly happy to name Pacuvius as his source,[50] he allows both the Pacuvian and Euripidean versions to be operative.

But any reader who is familiar with the Euripidean context in which Hecuba describes rhetoric in this way—as I have argued both Quintilian and his audience likely would have been given the Roman penchant for scrutinizing quotations—will notice that Hecuba's argument is exactly the opposite of what Quintilian has cited the line of Pacuvius to support. Hecuba, newly enslaved after the fall of Troy and begging Agamemnon to help her take revenge on the man who had killed her son Polydorus, reflects that, in her powerlessness, she has recourse only to persuasion and wonders 'why is it that we mortals take pains to study all other branches of knowledge as we ought, yet we take no further pains, by paying a fee, to learn thoroughly the art of persuasive speaking, sole ruler where mortals are concerned, so that we might be able to persuade people of whatever we wish and gain our ends?' (Eur. *Hec.* 814–19)[51] For Hecuba, the fact that persuasion is sole 'ruler' (τὴν τύραννον, Pacuvius' *regina*) means that students should not waste their time studying anything else, but Quintilian has cited this line to mean exactly the opposite: that rhetoric, as 'queen', encompasses all other forms of knowledge. There can be no question that Quintilian was unaware of the Euripidean context: the diametrical contradiction between Quintilian's claim and the argument of the source of the fragment he quotes could hardly be the product of coincidence, especially given the care that I have demonstrated that Quintilian takes in selecting poetic passages. Quintilian knew both Pacuvius (whatever he said about rhetoric) and Euripides. The question is why he would quote them in a way that so blatantly contradicts not only his specific

49. Cicero quotes a fuller version of the line: *o flexanima atque omnium regina rerum oratio*, 'mind-bender speech, queen of the world'.

50. *Inst.* 1.5.67: 'Pacuvius seems to have made some very awkward compounds out of a preposition and two words: *Nerei repandirostrum incurvicervicem pecus* ("Nereus' upturn-snouted and roundcrooknecked flock")'—sc. dolphins.

51. Tr. Kovacs (1994–2002).

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argument in this passage but his general claim that the utility of poetry for orators is as a source of authority for their arguments.

But this is not the only example of Quintilian quoting texts that, when measured against Quintilian's own theory that quotations of poetry should ornament a text and lend support to arguments, appear to refute or complicate those arguments.[52] For example, when Quintilian argues that teachers should be strict with young children because it is hard to change bad habits once they are formed (*Inst.* 1.3.12f.), he cites a line from Vergil's *Georgics* in support of his argument: 'so strong is habit in the tender plant' (2.272). Peirano Garrison is surely right that with this quote Quintilian signals the significance of poetry to his work by 'filtering' agricultural metaphors from earlier rhetorical treatises 'through the didactic tradition of Vergil's *Georgics*',[53] but this process also involves an inversion, not to say outright distortion, of Vergil's meaning. In the passage Quintilian is quoting, Vergil argues exactly the opposite of Quintilian, namely that young plants need special care and attention because they are fragile. For example, he says we should never shock them by transplanting them suddenly into unfamiliar soil, because such sudden changes will kill them, 'so strong is habit in the tender plant.' Anyone who knows the *Georgics* well, or who takes the time to investigate, will have reason to question Quintilian's claim.

Or consider several of the Vergilian quotations discussed above. Quintilian's invocation of the figure of Helenus as a model for his modification of the poetic traditions he quotes may serve, as I claimed above, as a confident declaration of Quintilian's literary power and autonomy, but could equally be understood as a bald admission of his distortion of the material he quotes. The plausibility of such an interpretation increases when one notes that elsewhere in the passage Quintilian recommends that 'some things should be covered up in a speech' (2.13.12), and that later in the *Institutio* Quintilian advises his students that 'lines [of poetry] can be invented resembling well-known ones' (*ficti notis uersibus similes*, 6.3.97). These more cynical perspectives on the orator's ability to alter the meaning of quoted material find resonance in the Vergilian passage as well, because Helenus' prophecy, which fails to notify Aeneas that he will visit Carthage and predicts routes of travel different from those he will actually follow, is recognizably partial and inaccurate.[54] And although Quintilian's understanding of the Lucretian background to the two lines of the *Eclogues* that Quintilian combines (9.4.85) seems to me to establish definitively the depth of his literary knowledge, the line he has produced only imperfectly supports the

52. Not all of Quintilian's quotations of poetry respond to the type of analysis I pursue in what follows, but of his sixty-five quotations of poetry that either support arguments or provide ornamentation (as opposed to serving as stylistic illustrations) nearly all display at least some degree of incongruity with the quoted text, whether in the form of textual differences or in the form of dissonance with the quotation's original context, suggesting that such incongruities are, whatever their effect, a significant feature of Quintilian's quotational practice.

53. Peirano Garrison (2019), 117.

54. Papaioannou (2011), 38f.

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metrical point he is ostensibly making, that two consonants will lengthen a preceding short vowel. The first syllable of the word *agrestis* will not, in fact, necessarily be lengthened by the following syllable because the cluster *gr*, being made up of a mute followed by a liquid, does not always have this effect.[55] In fact, the word *agrestis* in Vergil scans with a short first syllable more often than it does with a long one, a problem that Quintilian could have avoided if he had just confined his quotation to *Eclogues* 1.2, which begins with the metrically unambiguous *siluestrem.*[56]

Quintilian wanted, as I have shown, to combine the lines to signal his literary sophistication, but engaging the literary history of the lines also produces problems for the orator attempting to present himself as an authority on poetry. The Lucretian lines in which the two phrases appear, as Buchheit has shown, stand in contradictory relationship to each other, the one (4.589) describing how rustic people (*genus agricolum*) mistake echoes for music performed by satyrs and nymphs (*siluestris musa*), the other (5.1398) describing the origin of music in a kind of golden age when 'the "rustic muse" (*agrestis musa*) was in its prime.'[57] That is, the first passage debunks rustic beliefs about such music, and the second purports to provide a true origin story for it, providing an unstable basis for the kind of authority Quintilian is using these passages to authorize. This ambivalence in Lucretius had already been recognized by Vergil, who referred, as Breed has observed, to these contradictory lines (along with Theocritus) in programmatic positions in the *Eclogues* in order to invoke, simultaneously, two sources of authority for pastoral poetry, the one primal and originary (Lucretius' *agrestis musa*), the other imitative and adaptive (his *siluestris musa*).[58] Such a multidimensional and self-contradictory gesture of authorization might make sense in a book of pastoral poems, but to introduce the same complexity into a technical didactic passage of a rhetorical treatise where Quintilian expects his audience to recognize and accept his authority should provoke surprise, especially when Quintilian gives that same audience further reason to question his expertise by providing a flawed example of the technical point he is asking them to learn.

It is not even necessary to probe so deeply into the intricacies of Quintilian's quotational practice to find examples of quotations that are flawed in this way. Sometimes such incongruities are evident even on casual examination, as can be seen in an example of a quotation taken from Ovid. As an illustration of how 'place' is 'a powerful means of giving a favorable or invidious turn to a case', Quintilian quotes two lines from the speech given by Ajax in

55. Raven (1965), 25.

56. First syllable of *agrestis* long in Vergil: nine times (*Ecl.* 6.8, 10.24; *Geo.* 1.10, 1.160, 1.343, 2.531; *Aen.* 7.111, 11.67, 11.682); first syllable of *agrestis* short in Vergil: fourteen times (*Ecl.* 1.10; *Geo.* 1.41, 2.493, 3.163; *Aen.* 3.34, 5.40, 7.482, 7.504, 7.523, 7.679, 7.681, 8.349, 9.11, 10.310).

57. Buchheit (1984), 151; tr. Rouse and Smith (1924).

58. Breed (2006), 97–101.

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Metamorphoses book thirteen, in which the warrior argues that he, and not Ulysses, should receive the arms of Achilles: 'Is it before the ships that we plead our case, and here that I'm confronted with Ulysses?' (13.5f., quoted at *Inst.* 5.10.41) Ajax's reference to where he is speaking does indeed seem effective, since it calls attention to the fact that Ajax is being forced to defend his claim to Achilles' arms in the very place where he saved the Greek fleet from destruction while Ulysses hid. But Ajax is nevertheless a strange choice to hold up as a rhetorical model because, as everyone would have known,[59] he loses the contest of words to Ulysses, who, in most versions of the story, uses his superior rhetorical ability to produce an unjust verdict against the honorable but ineloquent Ajax.[60] It could be argued that Quintilian endorses Ajax as a model because he provides a kind of mythological prototype of the *uir bonus dicendi peritus*, the 'good man skilled in speaking', that appears as the ideal orator throughout the *Institutio*, but, although Ovid portrays Ajax as a competent speaker, if not quite *dicendi peritus*, this explanation of Quintilian's choice, by linking the rhetorically ineffective Ajax with the *uir bonus*, serves only to weaken Quintilian's promotion of a concept of moral oratory that was already counterintuitive, as the laboriousness of Quintilian's definition of the *uir bonus* in *Inst.* 12.1 reveals. If the preceding analysis of Quintilian's quotational practice has demonstrated anything, it is that Quintilian knows exactly what he is doing whenever he quotes poetic sources, and whatever interpretation we propose of a passage where Quintilian appears to endorse a failed speaker as a model must reflect that.

Again it proves useful to consider the larger context of the passage that Quintilian has quoted. Tarrant has argued that Ovid, throughout his career, programmatically articulates an 'ironic and sceptical view of formal rhetoric'.[61] Ajax's speech is only one in Tarrant's catalogue of Ovidian speakers whose attempts at persuasion produce a 'striking lack of success' and, although Tarrant understands this representation of rhetoric as a generic reflex of elegy's requirement that the *amator* be powerless, he notes in the case of the contest over the arms of Achilles that Ovid seems to be 'showing how dishonest rhetoric can extort an unjust victory from an audience wanting in discernment' by 'award[ing] victory to the speaker more adept (or unscrupulous) in using the tricks of the orator's trade.'[62] Such a view of formal rhetoric might be unsurprising in a poet known as a provocateur and who, according to his self-representation,

59. Hopkinson (2000), 81 *ad loc.*, argues that the fact that Quintilian quotes this scene twice (in the section being considered and 1.5.43) shows that 'the passage was very well known, singled out perhaps for study in the schools because it was Ovid's most obviously rhetorical set piece.'

60. Hopkinson's (2000) commentary on Ulysses' speech (Ov. *Met.* 128–381) gives many examples of Ulysses' deceit. For example, he omits mention of his notorious grandfather Autolycus, claims for himself the bravery of Agamemnon, overstates the significance of the warriors he defeated, and suppresses Diomedes' role in his exploits. Most significantly for my analysis, Hopkinson identifies several places in which Ulysses tendentiously interprets familiar passages from Homeric epic, just as Quintilian seems to have done with the material he quotes.

61. Tarrant (1995a), 71.

62. Tarrant (1995a), 64, 72.

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rejected an oratorical career in favor of a poetic one (*Tr.* 4.10.17–30), but this perspective would seem to strike a more discordant note in the work of a teacher of rhetoric like Quintilian, especially one famous for his commitment to formulating a moral basis for rhetoric. But as Halsall has reminded us, quoting an unpublished lecture delivered by Vickers in 1993, Quintilian's reputation as a moralist is as much a misrepresentation of him as the dismissive criticisms with which I began this article: if one attends, Halsall writes, the 'flagrant disregard for ethical principles' that can be found throughout the *Institutio* (just not in the passages promoting the *uir bonus*), it becomes 'difficult to see Quintilian as the pillar of honest rhetorical practice' that he is usually assumed to be.[63] It is beyond the scope of this paper to demonstrate this fully; my argument elsewhere that Quintilian's representation of the *uir bonus* itself should be understood not as his most deeply held oratorical ideal but as a flagrantly self-undermining parody of attempts to develop a moral rhetoric, complete with a clichéd call-back to the mythologized father figure of Roman eloquence Cato the Elder, may serve as an example of what such a demonstration might entail.[64] For the present discussion it is sufficient to note that throughout the *Institutio* Quintilian represents the quotation of poetry as a rhetorical technique much more worthy of a Ulysses than an Ajax.

For example, in the same passage where Quintilian recommends that students learn poetry by heart because it will be 'useful in court', he emphasizes that part of this utility derives from the fact that 'things which "have been said well by someone else" (*bene a quoque dicta*)…have "more authority" (*plus auctoritatis*) and often win "more praise" (*laudem maiorem*) than if they were our own', because they 'have not been contrived for the sake of the case in hand' (2.7.4). Quintilian reiterates this point several times, including in his discussion of sources of rhetorical authority, where he argues that such quotations are more persuasive because the orator's own compositions will be assumed to be biased, but 'opinions which can be attributed to nations, people, wise men, distinguished citizens, or "famous poets" (*inlustribus poetis*)' are 'in a sense testimonies' (*testimonia*) that 'are actually "all the more effective" (*potentiora*) because they are not given to suit particular cases' (5.11.36f.). The comparative language Quintilian uses in both passages (*maiorem*, *potentiora*) makes clear his position that quotations from poets are more authoritative, more effective, and, in a word, more persuasive than the orator's own formulations. In book twelve he goes even further, saying that references to historical *exempla* can 'take the place of evidence or even legal precedents', but that 'the fictions of the great poets' are just as good, because they 'are either sanctioned by the guarantee of antiquity or believed to have been invented by great men as moral lessons' (12.4.1f.). Quotations of poetry, for Quintilian, are what maxims were for Aristotle, who said

63. Halsall (1998), 635.
64. Dozier (2014).

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that such sententious expressions 'have one great benefit in speeches that comes from a lack of sophistication in their hearers' (*Rhet.* 1395b1f.). Quintilian argues that audiences will accept the evidence that quotations offer without questioning it: they 'are believed' (*creduntur*, 12.4.2) because they seem to be 'spoken or given by minds free of prejudice and favor for the simple reason that they seemed either very honorable or very true' (5.11.36f.). Inherent in Quintilian's recommendation that orators use poetry for ornamentation and support for arguments, then, is a recognition that the speaker should attach such quotations to his more tendentious or questionable arguments, because such quotations are not subject to the same scrutiny that other kinds of evidence will be.[65] Quintilian leaves no doubt that he understands this by illustrating the power of poetic quotation with a notorious case of fabrication: '[a] famous example [of seeking authority in a quotation of poetry]', writes Quintilian, 'is the way in which the Megarians were defeated by the Athenians in their dispute over Salamis by means of a line of Homer (not in fact found in every edition) which showed that Ajax had united his fleet with the Athenians' (5.11.40). Already in the time of Aristotle the lines in question (*Il.* 2.557f.) were known to have been interpolated (*Rhet.* 1375.b29), and Quintilian makes clear that he knows this by mentioning the weak attestation of the line.

I have argued throughout that Quintilian intends his readers to learn how to use poetry in oratorical contexts from him and then to analyze Quintilian's own use of poetry in light of his theories. If I am correct, this means that such readers will recognize not only Quintilian's virtuosity but the dissonances and incongruities that such quotations sometimes produce. It means, that is, that Quintilian has composed such passages in the full knowledge of the dissonances and incongruities they contain.[66]

'Personally, I should be happy simply to accept the view of antiquity': A Case Study

Critics who have recognized these dissonances have not typically adopted this position, resorting instead to positing interpolation or textual corruption, for example, when a quotation appears to fail to illustrate the figure Quintilian

65. An extreme statement of this position can be found in Sextus Empiricus, who writes that those who 'use poetic testimonies' are doing nothing more than 'swindl[ing] the great mobs in the marketplace' (*Adv. Gram.* 1.280, tr. Blank [1998]).

66. Quintilian's desire to attract scrutiny to his quotational practice is one way of explaining certain peculiar patterns of quotation that older scholarship already observed, e.g. Cole (1906), 51: 'It is an interesting fact, though not an important one, that four of the cases [of inaccurate quotation] …are to be found within the compass of three of Meister's [edition's] pages (vol. ii pp. 119–21).' Odgers (1933), 186: 'There are two different versions of the same quotation from a lost letter of Cicero within a few pages of each other' (*Inst.* 8.6.20 and 8.6.55).

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quoted it to illustrate.[67] In what follows, I present one of the most citationally dense passages of the *Institutio Oratoria* as a case study in how simply assuming that Quintilian knows what he is doing, however perverse or dissonant his deployment of quotations may at first appear, can be understood to be a fundamental component of his pedagogical purpose.

In the twelve paragraphs from *Institutio* 1.10.9 to 1.10.21 Quintilian refers to Orpheus, Linus, Timagenes, Homer, Vergil, Pythagoras, Plato, Socrates, Sparta, Stoicism, Lycurgus, Archytas, Euenus, Sophron, Eupolis, Aristophanes, Menander, Cicero, the Salian hymns, and a Greek proverb, all in support of the idea that music should be part of the orator's education. Just the sheer number of references (not all with quotations) indicates that this is a section in which Quintilian feels the need to exert considerable rhetorical pressure on those he seeks to persuade. As in some of the other passages I have considered, problems with Quintilian's argumentation arise as soon as one scratches the surface of many of the authorities he names (both poetic and otherwise), as Colson had already observed in his 1924 commentary on this section.[68] Quintilian's claim that music is important because Socrates learned to play the lyre as an old man (1.10.13) distorts the focus of a well-known story that is usually cited to emphasize the value of learning late in life, not the value of learning music specifically.[69] When Quintilian says the '"greatest generals" (*maximi duces*) played on the lyre and the pipe' (1.10.14) the sources he may have in mind fail to support him in various ways: Cicero describes only one general, Epaminondas, who was musical (*Tusc.* 1.4), and if Quintilian has Alcibiades in mind, Plutarch agrees he learned the lyre but says he never played the pipe (*Alc.* 192D). Colson cannot find any passage in Plato where the philosopher says music is 'essential for his statesman, or *politikos* as he calls him', as Quintilian claims he does (1.10.15), nor can he find any Stoic saying what Quintilian says they said, namely, 'that some of their wise men might give some attention to [music]'. There is an

67. For example, Halm (1868) deleted a quotation of *Aen.* 4.495f. at *Inst.* 8.6.29 because it does not contain an example of antonomasia, which is what Quintilian is discussing. Radermacher (1907), not finding any ambiguity in the passage of Cicero's *Brutus* that Quintilian quotes to illustrate ambiguity at 7.9.12, deleted the discussion as an interpolation. Sometimes these emendations have even influenced the establishment of the texts Quintilian quotes. Quintilian quotes *Ecl.* 4.62f. and Persius 1.9f. as examples of a singular word in apposition with a plural one (9.3.8). But the passage of the *Eclogues* as it appears in the MSS of both Vergil and Quintilian does not illustrate this: Vergil has a relative clause beginning with singular *cui* with antecedent *hunc*. Politian emended Quintilian's quotation to fit what Quintilian said the quotation illustrated by giving plural *qui* followed by *hunc*, and this emendation of Quintilian is now accepted by many editors of the *Eclogues*, despite the lack of support for the reading in the manuscripts of Vergil (Clausen [1994], 144). As for the quotation of Persius that Quintilian says illustrates the same phenomenon, it illustrates nothing of the sort (it contains only singular words), and editors have posited a lacuna in which they believe Quintilian gave some other reason for including the quotation. Russell, in his Loeb edition (2001), has more recently taken a more moderate approach, pointing out but not altering places where he believes Quintilian's quotations are somehow inapt, e.g. at 8.2.3, 8.3.19, 9.2.49, and 9.3.14.

68. Colson (1924), 125–9.

69. I have discussed elsewhere, Dozier (2019), 402f., how the problems in this passage should inform our understanding of Quintilian's construction of the figure of Socrates.

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overarching problem, too, as Colson points out, which is that in his use of Greek sources Quintilian seems not to distinguish the broad sense of 'music' as 'everything associated with the muses' (thus including all the arts) from the narrower sense (of producing and understanding melodies) in which Quintilian clearly means it. Colson's overall assessment of these 'dubious and half-hearted' quotations is that Quintilian 'shows little of the conviction that appears in the *Republic*, the *Laws*, and the *Politics*, that music really affects the character permanently.'[70]

On my reading, however, this is not a problem of conviction, but a problem of our interpretive frame. If we believe that Quintilian sincerely hopes to convince us that the poetic tradition supports the inclusion of music in rhetorical training, then the passage is indeed unconvincing. But if Quintilian's purpose is to dramatize, in a way that a well-trained orator cannot fail to recognize, how an orator might need to employ the authority of poetic quotations to sustain what Kennedy calls the rhetorical 'strain' of such a 'farfetched' argument,[71] then we find a bevy of such quotations that seem calculated to highlight just how far such an orator would have to be willing to go to make his case. Quintilian claims that Aristophanes 'in more than one work, shows that boys were brought up in music in the old times' (1.10.18); he does not name a passage specifically but 'in the old times' (*antiquitus*) suggests he is thinking of the scene in *Clouds* where 'Better Argument' describes 'old education' (τὴν ἀρχαίαν παιδείαν), including the education in music 'that their fathers bequeathed them' (ἁρμονίαν ἣν πατέρες παρέδωκαν, 961–8). But the Greek education that Quintilian is trying to make a model for his proposed system is pretty clearly mocked in the play; Better Argument's speech contains, as Dover has pointed out, 'a good deal of nonsense', including anachronism and nostalgia, that mark it as parody.[72] Quintilian then cites Menander's 'Foundling' (*Hypobolimaeus*) as further evidence of the antiquity of musical education, since in that play, Quintilian says, the old man, in giving an account to the boy's real father (who is claiming him back) of the expenses he has incurred on his education, notes that he has paid large sums to 'teachers of the lyre, and teachers of geometry' (1.10.18). I do not agree with Colson that the 'situation alluded to seems very uncertain.'[73] Quintilian explains just enough to make us doubt the appropriateness of his reference: an old man has raised a foundling—Quintilian uses the title *Hypobolimaeus* and not the other attested title, *Agroecus* ('The Country-Dweller') in order to emphasize this relationship—and is demanding that the biological father pay for the boy's education if he wants to reclaim him. That education, the old man says, included expensive music lessons, so the reference does in a narrow sense support Quintilian's contention that music was part of Greek education, but it hardly supports his overall argument that

70. Colson (1924), 125–7.
71. Kennedy (1969), 46.
72. Dover (1968), lxiii.
73. Colson (1924), 128.

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music should be taught. For the scene to make sense, the old man must be complaining about the expense (and possibly the uselessness) of the education he was forced to give the boy. Again and again, the poetic, philosophical, and historical material Quintilian quotes in this section as evidence that music should be part of the orator's education fails to support his argument or even contradicts it.

But this is not because Quintilian has a bad memory, or is insufficiently familiar with Greek literature (as Odgers or Goodyear might say), or just lacks conviction in his claim (so Colson). It is because Quintilian himself is providing his students with examples of the way rhetoricians, in his own telling (2.7.4, 5.11.3638, 12.4.1f., discussed above), use quotations from poets to support their arguments, namely, when they want their audience to accept their arguments unquestioningly and without scrutiny. He all but announces this in the heavy-handed remark at the beginning of his discussion that '[p]ersonally, I "should be happy" (*contentus esse*) simply to accept the view of antiquity' that music should be part of rhetorical training (1.10.9), a line that baldly invites his audience not to question the authorities he cites, and he continues to strike this note when he claims that a passage from Vergil should be taken as 'open confirmation of a "very great writer" (*auctor eminentissimus*) that music is connected also with the knowledge of things divine', even though the passage he refers to—Iopas' song in the first book of the *Aeneid*—'omits the gods altogether' and so fails to provide support for the divine link with music that Quintilian is attempting to make.[74] These references to the assumed persuasiveness of poets, here articulated as part of Quintilian's rhetorical performance and not as a lesson in technique, only throw into relief how unpersuasive the quotations he uses actually are.

But in failing to provide proof that music should be taught, Quintilian has in fact succeeded in what I believe his true goal to be, both here and throughout the *Institutio Oratoria*: not (only) to train budding rhetoricians in the use of rhetorical techniques, but (also) to teach them to recognize when others are using rhetoric on them. Aristotle had already advocated something like this as the purpose of rhetorical training, writing that 'one needs to be capable of being persuasive about opposite things…so that the way things are might not go unnoticed, and in order that, if someone else uses arguments unjustly, we ourselves might have the means to refute them' (*Rhet.* 1355a29–33).[75] And closer in time to Quintilian is the example of Aulus Gellius, who, according to Tischer, employs 'a rhetorical strategy to provoke critical consideration of quotations.' For example, Gellius' 'omission of an explanation' for an error of attribution in Cicero's *De Gloria* produces a 'blank space that prompts the reader to supplement what is missing.'[76] Quintilian's performance of the rhetoric of poetic quotation is a

74. Perkell (1999), 49.

75. Tr. Sachs (2009).

76. Tischer (2013), 411, 417. Cicero had attributed to Ajax something spoken by Hector (Hom *Il.* 7.89). According to Tischer (2013), 419, Spahlinger (2005), 192, argues that Cicero intentionally

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case study in these dimensions of his pedagogy. Sometimes the analysis of Quintilian's quotations redounds to his credit, by showcasing the intricacy and sophistication of his selection and his productive modification of the Latin poetic tradition. To return to his schema of quotations as sources of ornamentation and argument, this type of passage illustrates the former, providing a masterclass in the adaptation of poetry for rhetorical purposes. But sometimes the scrutiny Quintilian invites catches him in the act of deploying poetry in coercive and even dishonest ways in order to demand deference to his authority, because that is, by Quintilian's own reckoning, one of the primary reasons an orator might use such quotations. No authority is absolute, Quintilian seems to say. Even the best rhetorician's constructions are susceptible to analysis and deconstruction.

Conclusion: A Quintilian for the First (and Twenty-first) Century

Calling attention to his own coercive deceptiveness may seem to undermine Quintilian's claim to rhetorical mastery and his authority as a teacher, and perhaps it does from the point of view of modern expectations—some of them derived from a misunderstanding of Quintilian!—that a teacher must possess exemplary morality.[77] I would prefer, however, to recognize in Quintilian a realistic assessment of the needs of his students not just in their careers as orators but more generally in the rhetorical landscape of late first-century Rome, where all Romans were subject to a continuous onslaught of rhetorically sophisticated, imperial propaganda in support of the emperor's vision of the world.[78] It should go without saying that the agents of imperial propaganda did not concern themselves with honor or morality, but with naturalizing and maintaining the regime's power by any means necessary. For Roman men seeking political advancement, or even survival, in such an environment, the ability to recognize, understand, deconstruct, and, if they chose, to reproduce such rhetoric was paramount. Quintilian gives them a training ground to develop their acumen for this work in the *Institutio*, replete as it is with rhetorical performances, including those

misattributes the quotation. A further parallel from a different but arguably even more politically charged cultural sphere might be found, according to Zetzel (2005), 155, in the 'numerous cases in which we can see that the version [of a law recorded] in the *Digest* says the exact opposite of the text from which it was drawn'.

77. Katula and Wiese (2021) survey the reverence for Quintilian in the American educational landscape from colonial times to the present. The special issue of the journal *Advances in the History of Rhetoric* entitled 'An Ancient Teacher Speaks to the Modern World: What Quintilian Can Tell Us About Modern Pedagogy' (2016) provides an example of the continued vitality of this concept of Quintilian.

78. To speak only of the age of Domitian, the addressee of the *Institutio*, such propaganda found rhetorical expression in monuments (Heslin [2010]), coinage (Sobocinski [2006]), ritual (Escámez De Vera [2019]), literature (Gunderson [2021]), and doubtless many other media and cultural spheres.

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that attune them to the elisions and fractures that are inherent in any deployment of rhetorical force.[79]

This is a strikingly different Quintilian than the traditional conception of him as an anachronistic and somewhat naïve thinker, a 'Pollyanna about Flavian oratory' who 'doubtless looked the other way more than was good for his conscience.'[80] If the sophisticated, utterly up-to-date, and provocative Quintilian I have been describing has escaped our notice for so long it is at least in part because the traditional Quintilian, more than any other ancient author, looks like the people who study him: in this Quintilian we find a professor of Latin language and literature, advocating the importance of his subject as part of a broad educational program in a world in which, if we believe his (patently rhetorical)[81] complaints about it, few people value that type of education as much as they should. There is a part of us that needs Quintilian to be who we have always thought he is. Advocates for the traditional understanding of Quintilian as a last defender of moral rhetoric looking back on a lost golden age of oratory from the vantage point of a degenerate present argue that '[m]odern readers… will find [Quintilian's] ideas as useful today as they have been in many centuries for nearly two thousand years.'[82] But such nostalgia as has been ascribed to Quintilian was as ill-suited to the political landscape of the high Roman Empire as it is to ours, where instantaneous and multimedia communication across vast distances allows an infinite number of often coercive and deceptive arguments to reach mass audiences. Quintilian's self-aware, deconstructive, and even subversive understanding of, and performance of, rhetoric does indeed remain useful. We have only to recognize it for what it is.

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79. A Derridean or de Manian critic might note that, because of the polysemous nature of language, the very act of removing language from one context and putting it into another will inevitably produce dissonances of one kind or another. If this explanation is offered for the examples I discuss in this paper, Quintilian still, I believe, emerges as a prescient commentator on this phenomenon.

80. Kennedy (1969), 18, 139. As an example of how my proposed way of reading Quintilian can transform not only our general impression of him but our evaluation of his place in intellectual history, consider the widely held view, exemplified by Walzer (2003), 25, that 'Stoic ideas are at the heart of Quintilian's educational program'. As Blank (1998) observes, the Stoics were 'notorious for their overuse of poetic citations' (305) and 'looked to appropriate for themselves the authority of poets' (286). If we simply observe that Quintilian cites poetry in support of his arguments, this may look like an adoption of that Stoic method. But Quintilian's exposure of how easily such appropriations of poetic authority can collapse under scrutiny looks more like an indictment of it.

81. Quintilian's criticism of contemporary childrearing (1.2.6–8), modern music (1.10.31), the decadence of contemporary style (8.pr.25f., 8.3.6–11), excessive luxury (12.1.6), and popularity-seeking (12.10.73–6) are all recognizable examples of the common declamatory theme known as the *locus de saeculo,* the 'commonplace on the current age', in which speakers criticize the decadence of the modern world. Seneca the Elder lists this and other themes at *Contr.* 1.pr.23.

82. Murphy and Wiese (2016), vii.

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