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QUINTILIAN'S "VIR BONUS" AND THE STOIC WISE MAN

Abstract. Although scholars have acknowledged a Stoic influence on Quintilian, they have been reluctant to see Stoicism as providing the philosophical underpinnings of the *Institutes*. Against this scholarly hesitance, this essay argues that Stoic ideas are at the heart of Quintilian's educational program. Quintilian's ideal orator is the Stoic Wise Man with this difference: he is trained in Ciceronian eloquence. Furthermore, Quintilian's definition of oratory is based on the Stoic view of rhetoric as an essential science that enables the orator to meet the social responsibilities inherent in the Stoic ideal of the virtuous life.

Your uncle, as you know, took from Stoicism that which it had to offer, but he learned to speak from the masters of speaking and trained himself in their methods. (Cicero, *Brutus* 119)

In his Preface to his *Essential Tension*, Thomas Kuhn describes how puzzled he was when he first encountered Aristotle's theory of motion in the *Physics*. Kuhn had found Aristotle's interpretations in biology and politics to be "penetrating and deep"; yet, Aristotle wrote "so many apparently absurd things" (xi). Kuhn came to see that, reading with modern assumptions, he understood Aristotle's vocabulary as if it were our own. Gradually, he came to think like an Aristotelian physicist, and, once he did, terminology and passages that seemed absurd yielded up their logic. Kuhn now advises students to focus on the "apparent absurdities," for these are often hermeneutical keys to meanings of Ancient texts (xii).

My experience in reading Quintilian's *Institutes of Oratory* has been similar to Kuhn's reading of Aristotle's *Physics*. Quintilian, we are authoritatively and correctly told, was a "sensible, prudent, strongly moral, down-to-earth Roman" (Kennedy, *Art of Rhetoric in Roman World*, 497). His advice to teachers often shows a broad perspective and a generous cast of mind. In his encyclopedic work, he manages to be both clear and complete. He adjudicates controversies fairly and effectively. Yet on some basic points, he says seemingly absurd things: most notably, perhaps, that rhetoric is a science and a virtue and is the one because it is the other. And some of the most important views that he advances seem to be incompatible, as when he recommends his orator as a paragon of virtue and then countenances his lying to the judge to free a client that the orator knows to be guilty. Coming to understand these apparent absurdities not only reveals their underlying logic but also often yields to us an important hermeneutical key to the *Institutes*. That key is Roman Stoicism. ¹ I

will argue that not only is Stoicism an important influence on Quintilian but that Quintilian's presentation of his concept of the "good man trained in speaking" is coherent only if we assume that Quintilian intended the "good man" to be the Stoic Wise Man. Indeed, Quintilian's contribution was to synthesize in his ideal two other ideals that existed in tension or contradiction: the Stoic ideal of virtuous character and the Ciceronian ideal of the eloquent statesman.²

"So let the orator whom we are setting up be, as Cato defines him, 'a good man skilled in speaking'; but—and Cato puts this first, and it is intrinsically more significant and important—let him at all events be 'a good man.'" Thus Quintilian begins Book XII (1.1) of the *Institutes of Oratory*.³ Cato the Elder is distinguished in Roman history and lore as the epitome of the "*mos maiorum*," Ancient morals, in Quintilian's time thought to be in decline. In invoking Cato, Quintilian is recalling the Roman tradition of rigorous moral discipline and public service. Cato lived before Stoicism had taken hold at Rome. But he was said to have pre-figured the Stoics, whose moral discipline, commitment to the nation, and acceptance of fate would have appealed to Romans.⁴ Later in Book XII, Quintilian explicitly links his concept of the good man to the Stoic Wise Man: "I should like the orator I am training to be a sort of Roman Wise Man" (XII.2.6-7). These passages have not escaped scholars' notice. In *Quintilian*, George Kennedy notes a number of similarities between Quintilian's ideas and Stoicism (32, 34, 58; 124) and observes that Quintilian is closer to the Stoics than to any other group (127). But he concludes that there is too little evidence to attribute Quintilian's theory to Stoic sources (127). Catherine Atherton, in an article in *Classical Quarterly*, acknowledges that Quintilian's *vir bonus* "undoubtedly has some Stoic blood in his veins" but concludes that Quintilian distances himself from the model of the Stoic Wise Man (423).

How to explain the reluctance of such distinguished scholars as Kennedy and Atherton to take on the strong thesis—to move from Stoic influences to a Stoic model for the ideal orator? There are probably two reasons for their caution. First, the Stoic emphasis on personal autonomy—on achieving a rational and moral equilibrium by freeing oneself from a concern with the unpredictable aspects of life—leads to the stereotype of the disengaged Stoic philosopher. Atherton apparently believes that Quintilian associated Stoicism with Quietism (423). It is true that Quintilian faults philosophers generally for practicing a cloistered virtue. Indeed, in the passage quoted in which Quintilian associates his *vir bonus* with the Stoic Wise Man, Quintilian pointedly insists that his ideal orator is no philosopher because the philosopher does not take as a duty participation in civic life that is constitutive of Quintilian's (and Isocrates' and Cicero's) ideal orator. Philosophy, Quintilian observes, "has withdrawn, first to the porticoes and gymnasias, and then to the school lecture rooms" (XII. 2. 8). With the reference to the "porticoes," Quintilian explicitly includes the Stoics, whose name derives from Zeno's having taught at the *Stoa Polike* or Painted

Portico in Athens. But while the stereotypical philosopher was ensconced in his library, the Stoics taught that the Wise Man must be involved in politics. Diogenes Laertius writes that Chrysippus, a Stoic philosopher Quintilian often refers to, holds that that "the wise man will take part in politics, if nothing hinders him . . . since thus he will restrain vice and promote virtue" (VII. 121). And in Book III of Cicero's *De Finibus*, the spokesperson for Stoic ethics, Cato the Younger, insists that involvement in politics is dictated by Nature's rule, an imperative for Stoics: "Again since we see that man is designed by nature to safeguard and protect his fellows, it follows from this natural disposition that the Wise Man should desire to engage in politics and government" (III. 20. 68). That the Stoics of Quintilian's time may not have met this ideal is not an argument that Stoicism itself proscribes political participation. The Wise Man could be true to Stoic principles and be a statesman/orator. Indeed, the Wise Man should be a statesman.

The Stoic view of rhetoric is doubtless another reason for the unwillingness of scholars to accept that the *vir bonus* is the Stoic Wise Man. The Stoics placed rhetoric, with dialectic, as part of logic; it therefore shared the value and limitations of dialectic. According to Diogenes of Laertius the Stoics understood "by rhetoric the science of speaking well on matters set forth by plain narrative, and by dialectic that of correctly discussing subjects by question and answer" (VII. 42). The only difference between them, then, is that rhetoric is monologic and continuous and dialectic a rule-bound exchange. For philosophers to equate rhetoric with the prestigious dialectic accords rhetoric a considerable measure of respect. But this respect comes at a price. Of Aristotle's three proofs, rhetoric, like dialectic, was limited to *logos* according to the Stoics. With regard to style, the Stoics recognized for both rhetoric and dialectic the same five excellences: pure Greek or correctness, lucidity, conciseness, appropriateness, and distinction (Diogenes, VII. 59). At first glance, except for the addition of conciseness, this list might seem Ciceronian. But the Stoic definitions of these excellences differ significantly from Cicero's (Atherton, 411-12). Appropriateness is limited to "a style akin to the subject" (Diogenes, VII. 59), a narrowed form of this stylistic virtue, which for Cicero encompasses the suitability of the orator's words to the character of the speaker and the needs of the occasion, as well as to the dignity of the subject. Even more dramatic is the differences between what Cicero means by a distinguished style and what the Stoics mean by stylistic distinction. For the Stoics, distinction is achieved by the "avoidance of colloquialism" (Diogenes, VII 59). There is no mention of the figures or ornament, which are the basis for distinction in Ciceronian rhetoric.

This impoverished Stoic view of rhetoric and the oratory it underwrites are consistently criticized by Cicero as Atherton points out (401-2). In *De Oratore*, for example, Catulus observes that the Stoic Diogenes of Babylon,

though he "claimed to be teaching an art of speaking well," is in fact "of no help to us." He "does not teach me how to discover what to say; and he actually hinders me, by finding many difficulties which he pronounces quite insoluble, and by introducing a kind of diction that is not lucid, copious and flowing, but meager, spiritless, cramped and paltry" (II. 158-59). The Stoics, who were famously true to their principles, apparently put into practice their austere theory of rhetoric. In the *Brutus*, Cicero's historical review of Roman orators leads him to evaluate a number of Stoics as orators—all negatively. He characterizes the oratory of Rutilius who as a pupil of the famous Stoic Panaetius was "perfectly trained in the doctrines of the Stoics" as having a style that is "meagre and not well suited to winning the assent of a popular audience" (114). Following Cicero's analysis, *Brutus* concludes:

Remarkable how one observes the same thing in our countrymen as in the Greeks, that practically all adherents of the Stoic school are very able in precise argument; they work by rule and system and are fairly architects in the use of words; but transfer them from discussion to oratorical presentation, and they are found poor and unresourceful. (118)

But the stunted theory of Stoic rhetoric and the woeful performance of Stoic orators would not necessarily discourage Quintilian from modeling the *vir bonus* on the Stoic Wise Man. On moral grounds, Stoicism was impressive. Cicero, who became increasingly attracted to Stoicism, identified Stoicism in the *Tusculan Disputations* as the most courageous and truest philosophy (82), and Quintilian frequently praises the Stoics for their discipline and integrity. That they had an inadequate theory of rhetoric that produced uninspired oratory, Quintilian might see (and I will argue *did* see) as an opportunity. After all, not all Stoics failed as orators. Those Stoics who complemented their training in Stoic philosophy with training in oratory from rhetoricians could serve as a model for an ideal of a good man appropriately trained. In the section from the *Brutus* previously quoted, after he observes that Stoics seem universally to be failures as orators, *Brutus* singles out "one exception, Cato [the Younger], in whom though a Stoic through and through," *Brutus* states, "I feel no craving for a more perfect eloquence" (118). Cicero then explains how Cato acquired his excellence as an orator: Cato had a rhetorical education. "There is good reason for [the Stoic's poor performance]; . . . they pay no attention to the qualities of style which range freely, which are discursive and varied." Cato was different, however. He "took from Stoicism that which it had to offer, but he learned to speak from masters of speaking and trained himself in their methods" (119). In *De Oratore*, Crassus makes essentially the same point, when he faults Chrysippus—the most prolific and, except for Zeno, most famous Stoic. Even Chrysippus' philosophy suffered for his error

of relying exclusively on Stoicism for his training in oratory when he should have taken lessons, as Cato did, from the rhetoricians (I. 50).

Cicero's praise of Stoic morals and his criticism of their performance as orators might have inspired Quintilian, and Cato the Younger's example would have provided him something like a model: a Stoic sage who is trained in oratory. I submit that Quintilian intended to ground a notoriously ungrounded, neutral art of rhetoric in Stoic ethos but then liberate Stoic rhetoric with a large dose of Cicero. The Stoic Wise Man would be the basis for the character of the model orator. Rhetoric would take its purpose, its social role, and its norms of ethical practice from Stoic philosophy. But as an art—as a systematic collection of techniques for speaking well in the sense of speaking effectively—rhetoric would be grounded in Ciceronian eloquence.⁵

A good place to begin to make the case for the thesis that Quintilian intended to ground rhetoric in Stoic philosophy is with Quintilian's definition of oratory, especially chapters 15-21 of Book II, a section of the *Institutes* that scholars have long found provocative, as John Monfasani's review of the lively debates over these chapters in the Renaissance demonstrates. In these basic, definitional chapters, however, Quintilian makes some claims and distinctions that appear to be arbitrary, even nonsensical. But the sense becomes clear when Quintilian's distinctions are viewed in the context of Stoic philosophy. Moreover, the Stoic views that Quintilian offers in these chapters provide the justification for his endorsement of what appear to be amoral rhetorical tactics throughout the *Institutes*.

In these chapters from Book II, Quintilian employs the technical vocabulary of Stoicism—in maintaining that rhetoric is a science and a virtue, for instance—and assumes a familiarity with Stoicism. Some elements of Stoicism are well known: that the Stoics taught that the moral life involved living in conformity with nature; that for humans this meant using our unique gifts of reason and speech to achieve self-preservation and offer help to others in consistent with our selfish and social instincts. The Stoics taught that living morally, which was a matter not of will but of understanding, was the *only* good, meaning that health and wealth (in contrast to Aristotle's position in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, for example) were indifferent, not goods. The stereotype of the detached Stoic so aloof from the deprivations of life that he is steadfastly reasonable in the face of suffering is based on these principles, as is the Stoic who is prepared to take his own life: "When a man's circumstances contain a preponderance of things in accordance with nature, it is appropriate for him to remain alive; when he possess or sees in prospect a majority of contrary things, it is appropriate for him to depart from life" (*De Finibus* 3. 60). The Wise Man, who the Stoics sometimes treat as an ideal and sometimes but a rarity, understands these principles perfectly and is infallible in living according to them.⁶

But some aspects of Stoicism are less familiar and more arcane. Knowledge is a matter of grasping what the Stoics call "cognitive presentations" (*phantasia kataleptike*); when fully grasped, as the Wise Man does, these cognitive presentations are true. A *science* is based on unerring and unchanging cognitive presentations. According to the Stoics, the Wise Man and only the Wise Man is in complete possession of a science.

Sciences are virtues, not because they are true but because they are indispensable to living wisely, living in accordance with nature. Dialectic is a virtue because, in the words of Diogenes Laertius,

Without the study of dialectic, they [Stoics] say the wise man cannot guard himself in argument so as never to fall; for [dialectic] enables [the Wise Man] to distinguish between truth and falsehood, and to discriminate what is merely plausible and what is ambiguously expressed, and without it [the Wise Man] cannot methodically put questions and give answers. (VII. 46-7)

Diogenes does not explicitly state how rhetoric is essential to the Wise Man. But as the complement to dialectic as constituting logic, the role rhetoric would play in the enabling the Wise Man is not hard to infer. Participation in politics is an obligation of the Wise Man because nature has endowed humans with a social instinct and the Wise have an obligation to bring others to love virtue. On this basis rhetoric is essential to the Wise Man's living the virtuous life. Like dialectic, then, rhetoric is (in the possession of the Wise Man) a science and a virtue. It is one of the guarantors of the Wise Man's wisdom. Diogenes Laertius summarizes the Stoic's position as follows: Chrysippus "holds that knowledge of good and evil is a necessary attribute of the ruler, and that no bad man is acquainted with this science. Similarly, the wise and the good alone are fit to be magistrates, judges or *orators*, whereas among the bad there is not one so qualified" (VII. 122; my emphasis).

While rhetoric is demonstrably a science in Stoic terms, whether it meets Stoic tests for an art is less clear. To be classified as an art by the Stoics, an activity must meet two criteria. The first is technical: an art would be a reasoned activity or a systematic collection of methods that produces a predictable result. The Stoics clearly thought that their version of rhetoric, which they defined as the science of speaking well, met this test: conforming to Stoic rhetorical and ethical principles resulted in speaking well, speaking ethically. The second criterion was that the end of an art must necessarily serve a socially beneficial end. Rhetoric would probably not meet this Stoic test, as sciences generally did not (Atherton). A Stoic science is morally neutral. It is *necessarily* a good only when in the full possession of the Wise Man. A Stoic art should inherently have socially beneficial end. Thus, rhetoric, though not an art because morally

neutral, would be, as a science, indispensable to the Wise Man, and a good in full possession of the Wise Man.

When Quintilian writes at II.15.2 that the "first and main difference of opinion is that some think that bad men also can be orators, and others, with whose view I agree, confine this name and the art of which we are speaking to the good" he is taking a position that is basically Stoic. The "others" with whom Quintilian aligns himself are the Stoics, whose view is that "the wise and good alone are fit to be . . . orators" (Diogenes VII. 122). At II. 15. 35, Quintilian provides his definition of oratory: "The definition which will best suit this notion of its real nature is that 'rhetoric is the science of speaking well.' This [definition] includes all the virtues of speech in one formula and at the same time also the character of the orator because only a good man can speak 'well.'" He adds that the definition is essentially the same as that offered by Stoic philosophers, Cleanthes, the student and successor to Zeno, and by Chrysippus. It is only with this definition that the basis for Quintilian's critique of the many competing definitions that constitutes most of this chapter (II. 15) is seen to be coherent and consistent and not an exercise in faultfinding on arbitrary, shifting grounds. Quintilian classifies competing definitions as follows:

some call rhetoric merely a power, some a science but not a virtue, some a practice, some an art, but not one linked with science and virtue, some again a perversion of an art (*kakotechnia*). They almost all believe that the function of oratory lies in persuading or in speaking in a way adapted to persuade. For this can be done by one who is not a good man. (II. 15.2-3)

Quintilian objects to each of these possibilities with reference to one of the three parts of the Stoic definition: "science," "speaking," and "speaking well." For example, he reviews a number of definitions that emphasize persuasion as the distinguishing characteristic of rhetoric and faults them for not emphasizing speaking, as the Stoic definition does: "But money also persuades, as do influence, the speaker's authority and dignity, and even the mere look of a man though he says nothing . . ." (II.15. 7). Those definitions that add speech so that oratory is "'the power of persuading by speaking'" (10) are an improvement but inadequate for two reasons: not all who persuade by speaking—courtesans and flatterers, for example—are orators and orators do not always persuade. "Speaking well" in the Stoic definition addresses both the limitations of the competing definitions by, on the one hand, limiting oratory to virtuous speech and, on the other, not limiting oratory to persuasion.

Quintilian has no doubts about the technical status of rhetoric as an art and exhibits some impatience with those who doubt that rhetoric is an organized body of precepts. It is not only that Cicero and other rhetoricians have set

forth convincingly the art of rhetoric, but also that “both Stoic and Peripatetic philosophers for the most part agree with [the orators]” on the artistic status of rhetoric (II. 17.2). Quintilian may have Chrysippus’s lost treatise “On Rhetoric,” in mind (Diogenes Laertius, VII. 202).

With regard to the moral status of rhetoric, Quintilian’s view is consistent with the Stoics’: rhetoric is a neutral. At II. 16, Quintilian points out that while it is true that oratory has incited sedition and snatched criminals from punishment, it is also responsible for bringing people together to form civilizations and that Cicero’s divine eloquence brought an end to the unjust agrarian laws. When viewed as the power to persuade, rhetoric is morally neutral, Quintilian concedes. But Quintilian maintains, “If, however, [rhetoric] is the science of speaking well (the definition I adopt), so that an orator is in the first place a good man, it must certainly be admitted that it is useful” (II. 16.13). A Stoic gloss of this statement would be as follows: a science is the exclusive prerogative of the Wise Man and as such necessarily good; furthermore, something is designated a science precisely because it is indispensable to the achievement of the Stoic ideal of the Wise Man, in this case, indispensable to Wise Man’s obligation to bring others to virtue through participation in politics. If rhetoric is a science it is, therefore, necessarily useful, necessarily a virtue. Quintilian further signals the Stoic context for his definition by linking, in Stoic fashion, oratory to human nature. Other animals were given abilities that humans lack and that put us at a disadvantage. “And so the creator gave us Reason as our special gift, and chose that we should share it with the immortal gods. Yet Reason itself would not help us much, or be so evident in us, if we did not have the power to express the thoughts we have conceived in our minds” (II.16.15).

But there are other criticisms of rhetoric on moral grounds, specifically that rhetoric can generate arguments on behalf of falsehood as well as truth. Quintilian casts this objection in specifically Stoic terms: “no art assents to false propositions because [an art] cannot exist without cognitive presentation [*perceptione*] which is invariably true, whereas rhetoric [in arguing both sides] does assent to falsehoods, and therefore is not an art” (II. 17.18), a sentence that resonates with the Stoic claim that *sciences* are built on unerring cognitive presentations.⁷ Quintilian meets this objection with a distinction between deception and self-deception, a distinction that is itself Stoic: “there is a great difference between holding a [false] opinion oneself and making some one else adopt it,” he observes (II. 17.19). Generals deceive the enemy, as Hannibal deceived Fabius, but Hannibal “knew the truth himself.” Similarly, Quintilian concludes, “an orator when he substitutes a falsehood for the truth, knows it is false and that he is substituting it for the truth; he does not therefore have a false opinion himself,” which, of course, the Wise Man could not, “but he deceives the other person” (II. 17.20). A Stoic teaching found in Armin’s fragments reads, “The wise man will sometimes use falsehood without assenting

to it—in war, against his adversaries, or because he foresees benefit from it” (*Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*, 3, p. 148; trans. Donald Russell, V. 1.39; note 28). As long as the Wise Man is not fooled himself—has not assented to the falsehood as a truthful cognitive presentation—he can with impunity lead others to infer what is not true, with the proviso that he needs a good reason.

According to the Stoic provisions, a lie is justified only when the Wise Man is in possession of the truth and has a good reason for misleading a listener, including a judge. Broadly conceived, these provisions could license an ethic in which the ends justify the means. But Stoicism would limit the circumstances in which lying would be permitted. First, only the Wise are allowed to lie. One can easily imagine the type of moral dilemmas that a Wise Man, under obligations both to tell the truth and to serve justice, particularly leading others to wisdom or justice, might face. A judge might be incapable or a law unjust; the law against tyrannicide is one Quintilian often cites. In these cases the Wise Man must weigh competing claims and make a difficult decision. This process would not be a Benthamite calculation on the basis of pleasure and pain but a rule-based utilitarianism that allows exceptions to general moral principles only in cases in which the Wise Man, in pursuit of his obligation to bring others to wisdom, has no other choice.

Quintilian’s practice would seem to be less scrupulous than this Stoic doctrine. Indeed, rather than starting with the extraordinary cases, Quintilian starts with ordinary effective rhetorical tactics and seeks to find Stoic justification for them, as “speaking well” for him means “speaking effectively,” as much as it does speaking ethically. Thus, he observes at XII. 1. 38 that

everyone must grant me what even the sternest of Stoics admit, namely that the good man will go so far as to tell a lie on occasion, and sometimes even for quite trivial reasons: with sick children, for example, we pretend many things for their good and promise to do many things which we are not going to do; even more justifiably, we lie to stop an assassin from killing a man, and deceive an enemy to save a country. Thus lying, which in some circumstances is blameworthy even in slaves, in others is praiseworthy in the Wise Man himself. (XII.1. 38-39)

In beginning with “trivial reasons” that can justify lying, Quintilian appears to be setting the groundwork for cruder utilitarianism than the Stoic would probably sanction. But the important point is that he requires Stoic authority to justify a questionable rhetorical tactic.

This passage (XII. 1. 38) appears in a section that begins and ends with Quintilian’s effort to justify defending a client known by the orator to be guilty. Some have argued that the “good man only pleads good Causes,” but the good man “may sometimes have reason to undertake the defense of the

guilty" (XII. 1. 33-4). Later Quintilian's considers some standard examples: clients who have plotted against tyrants, for example (XII. 1. 40). But then he cites an example that is far more controversial, but one that is specifically backed by Stoic authority:

no one is going to doubt that, if the guilty parties can somehow be converted to a right way of thinking (and it is conceded that this is possible), it is more in the public interest that they should be acquitted than that they should be punished. So if it is clear to the orator that a man against whom true charges are brought will become a good man, will he not work to secure his acquittal?" (XII. 1. 42-43)

In this case, Stoic precedent can be found in Cicero's summary of the views of the Stoic philosopher Panaetius in *De Officiis*: "And yet, while we should never prosecute the innocent, we need not have scruples against undertaking on occasion the defense of a guilty person, provided he be not infamously depraved and wicked. For people expect it; custom sanctions it; humanity also accepts it. It is always the business of the judge in a trial to find out the truth; it is sometimes the business of the advocate to maintain what is plausible, even if be not strictly true, though I should not venture to say this, especially in an ethical treatise, if it were not also the position of Panaetius, that strictest of Stoics" (II. 51).

According to Stoic teaching, "the wise and the good alone are fit to be magistrates, judges or orators, whereas among the bad there is not one so qualified" (Diogenes 122). This ideal was, of course, rarely met in the courtroom of Quintilian's day: judges and jurors and senators are not necessarily wise by any measure, and Quintilian exploits the discrepancy between the Stoic ideal and the reality of Rome in the first century to justify rhetorical practices that the Stoics would not ordinarily sanction—all so that his *vir bonus* can meet the test of effective orators and the ethical test of the Stoic Wise Man. For example, appealing to the emotions is not included in Stoic rhetoric and is generally suspect. But Quintilian maintains that appealing to the emotions is not "disgraceful when it is done for a good reason." The

orator is bound to do this [rouse the emotions] if the judge cannot be brought to give a fair judgement by other means. Judges can be inexperienced people who frequently need to be deceived, to save them from being wrong. If we had wise men as judges and assemblies and councils of all kinds were made up of the wise, if hatred, influence, prejudice and false witness had no power, then the scope for eloquence would be very small. . . . But as the feelings of audiences are fickle and the truth is exposed to so many evils, we must fight with the weapons of art, and employ whatever means serve our purpose. (II. 17. 28-29)

Similarly, while Stoics would ordinarily limit the peroration to a summary of the facts (Atherton, 404-5), foregoing the use of flattery and emotional appeals that "prepare the judge" that the rhetoric books generally recommend, Quintilian justifies traditional rhetorical practices by an appeal to Stoic ethics:

Most of the Attic orators, and almost all philosophers who have left writings concerning the art of rhetoric, have held that this [a recapitulation of the facts; *aut in rebus*] is the only form of Peroration. I imagine that the Attic orators thought this because, at Athens, appeals to the emotions were actually forbidden by public announcement. I am less surprised by the philosophers, in whose minds emotion is a vice, and it seems immoral for a judge to be distracted from the truth, and inappropriate for a good man [*bono viro*] to take advantage of vices. None the less, they will admit that emotional appeals are necessary if truth, justice, and the common good cannot be secured by other means. (VI. 1. 7-8)

Quintilian uses a similar strategy of finding in Stoicism a warrant for supporting exceptions to what Stoicism proscribes in arguing on behalf of appeals to expediency in deliberative rhetoric. The Stoics maintained that nothing that is dishonorable could ever be expedient (*e.g.*, *De Officiis* II. 9). Quintilian agrees with this Stoic tenet in principle. But the Stoics assume an audience of the Wise, which unfortunately is not the audience that his orator will face in the Assembly:

And this principle is perfectly sound, if we are fortunate enough always to be addressing a council of the good and wise. With the inexperienced however (to whom one often has to give advice) and especially with the people, which contains an uneducated majority, we have to keep the two things [the honorable and the expedient] separate and conform to ordinary understandings. (III. 8. 2-3)

The *Institutes* is, then, a synthesis of Cicero's ideal of the liberally educated orator with the Stoic ideal of the Wise Man. Indeed, in Prooemium to Book XII Quintilian virtually states that his contribution to the rhetorical tradition is his wedding of Stoic ethical theory and rhetoric. Quintilian confesses that he begins Book XII in trepidation because while in the previous books, he has drawn on familiar rhetorical doctrine, Book XII constitutes his unique contribution to the tradition (Logie). He will enter uncharted waters that are decidedly philosophical (Winterbottom, 1998). Having completed the sections in the *Institutes* concerned primarily with education in oratory, Quintilian must now seek "greater assistance from the innermost shrine of philosophy," a shrine that has a distinctly Stoic cast. Quintilian writes that even Cicero, who has been his guide to this point, was "content to speak merely about the type of

style which his orator is to use." By contrast, Quintilian, "in my rashness, will seek to give him also moral principles, and assign him duties. Thus I have no predecessor to follow" (Prooemium 3-4). Later, in chapter five of this book, in the course of his effort to undertake the challenge of providing a curriculum that would form the character of the orator, Quintilian characterizes the distinction he is making between Cicero and himself as a distinction between an approach that features the art of oratory (Cicero's) and his approach, which features the character of the orator, as well as the art: "These are the tools which I promised to explain, tools not of the art, as some have thought, but of the orator himself" (XII.5.1).⁸ In Book XII, he is concerned *not* with "facility with words and Figures, an understanding of Invention, practice in Disposition, a good Memory and charm of Delivery," which constitute the art, but with the forming of a character that "fear cannot break, disapproval cannot dismay, and the authority of the audience has no power to inhibit," without which "no art . . . will be of any use" (XII. 5.1). This is the character of the Stoic Wise Man—a person whose courage is grounded in an exclusive commitment to virtue that makes him indifferent to the vagaries of fortune. This character is formed by an education, which, as described in the first nine chapters of Book XII, has a decidedly Stoic color.

It is noteworthy that Quintilian considers the contribution that the study of history and philosophy can make to the education of the orator at two different points in the *Institutes*. In the earlier books, Quintilian takes a Ciceronian approach—how history and philosophy can increase an orator's command of copia and style—while in Book XII, history and philosophy are recommended as a means to the development of character. For example, in Book X, history was recommended as a way to increase the orator's "stock of ideas and stock of words" (X. 1.6). Furthermore, because history is written to tell a story and to preserve our memories of the past, it is important that it "avoids tedium in Narrative by employing more out-of-the-way words and freer Figures" (X.1.32). History provides both useful models and caveats to the orator whose different purpose would make "the famous conciseness of the Sallust" or "Livy's creamy richness" inappropriate (X.1.32-3). Quintilian then proceeds to compare the style and the presentation of emotion of specific historians in detail (X.1.102). The point is, Quintilian treats history as a way to foster the development of eloquence—to increase the orator's command of ideas and an appropriate style. In Book XII, by contrast, Quintilian recommends history because it is filled with exemplary characters who are worthy of imitation: "Could there be any better teachers of courage, loyalty, self-control, frugality, or contempt for pain and death than men like Fabricius, Curius, Regulus, Decius Mucius, and countless others?" (XII.2.30). The ideal orator studies history in Book XII, not only to learn the "language of honour," but also to acquire "the courage to use it" (XII. 2. 31).

A similar contrast marks the perspectives taken on the teaching of philosophy in Book X, where philosophy is presented as useful for the purpose of generating and testing arguments, and in Book XII, where philosophy, and Stoic philosophy particularly, is recommended as a means to the formation of character. Reading philosophers was recommended in the earlier book because philosophers' discussions of the four cardinal virtues provide useful information to the orator who must argue points of justice, for example. Moreover, philosophers have much to teach the orator about refutation and defense, for they "argue keenly; they provide the future orator with an excellent preparation for cross examination and debate," though the orator needs to develop the rhetorical judgment to appreciate the difference between the demands of a legal case and philosophical debate (X. 1. 36). In Book XII, however, philosophy is recommended as a means of developing character: "Authors who give instruction on virtue must be studied in depth, so that the orator's life can be enriched by the 'science of things human and divine'" (XII. 2. 9). As Donald Russell's note points out, the "science of things human and divine" is the Stoic definition of philosophy that Cicero provides in *De Officiis* (II.6).

Quintilian's understanding of his specific contribution to rhetorical theory becomes even clearer when he asks at XII. 2 which moral philosophy is most appropriate for the formation of his good man. Quintilian quickly dismisses Epicureanism, since Epicurus rejected the liberal education that Quintilian regards as essential; he also summarily dispatches the Skeptics, whose views might lead the orator to doubt the "existence of the judges before whom he is to appear" (XII.2.25). Some, Quintilian continues, would recommend the philosophers of the New Academy for their habit of arguing both sides or the Peripatetics whose instruction and sample theses would be useful models for orators to imitate. When it comes to selecting good oratorical models for the purpose of education in the *art* of rhetoric, these and others would all be useful; the orator need not "swear allegiance" to any particular philosophical school. But for the purposes of "forming his character, [the teacher] will choose the noblest possible precepts and the most direct road to virtue" (XII.2.28). In this regard, he must "devote himself primarily to whatever is highest and naturally finest. And what subject can be found richer in material for weighty and copious eloquence than Virtue, the State, Providence, the Origin of the Soul, or Friendship"—five major themes in Stoic ethics. "Here are themes to elevate the mind and language alike" (XII.2.28).

In the Preface to Book I of the *Institutes*, Quintilian offers his version of the Ciceronian account of the divorce of rhetoric and philosophy. Philosophy and oratory, once a single art, split into two, to the detriment of both arts, for orators became so enamored of "making a living" that they were willing to make "bad use of the good gifts of eloquence" and "abandoned moral concerns" (14), while the "weaker minds" who failed as orators took up "the business of

forming character and establishing rules of life" (14), assuming to themselves an exclusive claim to being "'students of wisdom'" (15). Quintilian's goal is to restore the lost ideal—to unite in one person the knowledge of moral philosophy and the commitment to morality, currently cloistered in the philosopher's study, with the eloquence of the orator, who is active in the courts and assemblies. Toward this end, Quintilian will "use some ideas found in philosophical books" (12). A repository for this wisdom can be found in the ideal of the "wise man" that the Ancients held out, even while believing that "no wise man had yet been found" (20). This ideal can be complemented by the ideal of "consummate eloquence" and a commitment to civic engagement (20). The result will be "a sort of man who can truly be called 'wise,' not only perfect in morals . . . but also in knowledge and in his general capacity for speaking" (19).

By uniting Cicero's conception of the ideal orator with the Stoic ideal of the Wise Man, Quintilian hoped to fill voids in each discipline. The Stoics were notoriously ineffective speakers and writers because they were untrained as orators. Orators, talented as they often were, typically made bad use of good gifts because they had "abandoned moral concerns." A conception of an orator as a Stoic Wise Man with training in Ciceronian eloquence would address the needs of both philosophy and rhetoric and reunite them. To this end, Quintilian grounds oratory in a Stoic ethic, conceiving it as a science and a virtue in their terms. At the same time, the oratorical training of the orator is modeled generally on Cicero's views. To a philosopher or anyone else accustomed to theoretical coherence this marriage must look more like a shotgun affair than the marriage of true minds. And while Quintilian expressed a rhetorician's contempt for the value that philosophers placed on maintaining the consistency and coherence of their systems (XII. 2. 27), he nevertheless felt sufficient anxiety uniting rhetoric with its commitment to efficacy and Stoicism with its commitment to virtue to attempt to find in Stoic exceptions a basis for justifying some questionable rhetorical tactics. If Quintilian cannot be credited with solving the ethical problems inherent in rhetoric, he did produce a philosophic-based rhetorical theory that is coherent in its own terms.

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Notes

¹ The history of Stoicism in the ancient world of Greece and Rome covers at least the period from Zeno (333-262 BCE) until the death of Marcus Aurelius in 180 CE. Except for the relatively later works of Seneca the Younger (1 CE – 65 CE), Epictetus (late first century) and Marcus Aurelius, most of the Stoics' works are lost, including the

works of the Greek Stoics Cleanthes, Chrysippus, Panaetius, and Posidonius to whom Quintilian often refers. The major sources for our knowledge of Greek Stoicism are the Stoic works of Cicero, including *De Officiis* [On Duties], *De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum* [About the Ends of Goods and Evils], *Tuscularo Disputationum* [Tusculan Disputations], *Paradoxa Stoicorum* [Stoic Paradoxes], and *De Fato* [On Fate]; also very important is the third century compilation of Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers* (Book 7) and the criticisms by Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Dogmatists* (Books 7-11) and *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* (Book 3). Stoic fragments collected by Hans von Arnim were published as *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta*, 1902-05. A helpful modern introduction is F. H. Sandbach, *The Stoics*. Basic concepts of Stoicism helpful to understanding Quintilian are explained in the course of my essay.

² Quintilian's intentions in developing and promoting his concept of the *vir bonus dicendi peritus* have been the subject of some scholarly attention. In an influential essay, Michael Winterbottom (1964) argued that Quintilian developed the conception of the *vir bonus dicendi peritus* to counter the influence of the *delatores* (informers), whose ethics, conception of rhetoric, and style of oratory Quintilian felt threatened the Ciceronian tradition. In a neglected essay, Prentice A. Meador, Jr. argues for the influence of Stoic views of duty as significantly influencing Quintilian's ideal. Alan Brinton provides an in-depth reading of Book XII of the *Institutes* in an essay that argues for Platonic influences in Quintilian's doctrine of the *vir bonus*. Many helpful essays on Quintilian were published in the proceedings of a conference held in Calahorra in 1995 on the nineteenth-hundredth anniversary of the publication of the *Institutes*. Two that bear directly on the *vir bonus* are by Garcia Castillo, who traces Platonic, Aristotelian, and Stoic influences in Quintilian's conception of the *vir bonus*, with Platonic influences as the most important; and Ramón Pont's exploration of the resonances in Quintilian's description of the *vir bonus*, especially at XII. 1. 27, to the opening lines of the *Aeneid*.

³ All quotations from the *Institutes* in this paper are from Donald A. Russell's new Loeb edition (Cambridge: Harvard, University Press, 2001). Russell's introduction, bibliography, and notes are an invaluable resource for Quintilian scholars. My debt to Russell is considerable, for his text made my task of tracing Quintilian's relationship to Stoicism much easier than it otherwise would have been.

⁴ In the Preface to his controversial declamations, Seneca the Elder recalls Cato when Seneca defines an orator for benefit of his son Marcus: "That well-known saying of Cato was really an oracle . . . An orator, son Marcus, is a good man skilled in speaking" (I. Preface, 9). For Cato the Elder's relationship to the Ancient mores, see Earl, 36-9.

⁵ I do not mean to imply that there are not differences in emphasis between Cicero's views on style and Quintilian's. There are—for example, in Quintilian's greater emphasis on an art that conceals art. But Quintilian obviously endorses Ciceronianism. The long summarizing quotation from *De Oratore* at IX. 1. 26-45 of the *Institutes* makes this clear.

⁶ Good summaries of Stoic ethics can be found in Book III of Cicero's *Finibus Bonorum et Malorum* and in Diogenes Laertius, VII. 39-134.

⁷ Quintilian seems to be applying the Stoic criteria for a science to an art in this section. The Stoic distinction between a science and art as it has come down to us

is unclear; Atherton discusses the difficulties (420). But Quintilian's categorization of rhetoric is sufficiently clear. He has earlier made the distinction between an art linked to a science and virtue and an art *not* linked to a science and a virtue (II. 15. 2). Since he has defined rhetoric as a science, then, when he considers rhetoric as an art (a productive, reasoned activity), he probably intends that we understand rhetoric as an art linked to this science of speaking well. John Monfasani finds Quintilian's combining of a conception of rhetoric as a neutral art to his conception of the *vir bonus* incoherent (121), but Quintilian's view is no more or less incoherent than the Stoicism from which he derives his distinctions.

⁸ In Book II (14.5), Quintilian states that rhetoric is best divided into (1) the art, (2) the artist, (3) the work. Books III-XI are concerned predominately with the art of rhetoric. Book XII, chapters 1-9 are concerned with the artist—the formation of the orator. Book XII chapter 10 is concerned with the work of art—the general style of speeches. See Donald Russell's "General Introduction," pp. 7-8 to the first volume of the Loeb edition of the *Institutes* for a helpful discussion.

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