

QUINTILIAN

BOOK I

M. FABIVS QVINTILIANVS TRYPHONI SVO  
SALVTEM

EFFLAGITASTI cotidiano convicio, ut libros, quos ad Marcellum meum de Institutione oratoria scripseram iam emittere inciperem. Nam ipse eos nondum opinabar satis maturuisse, quibus componendis, ut scis, paulo plus quam biennium tot alioqui negotiis districtus impendi; quod tempus non tam stilo quam inquisitioni instituti operis prope infiniti et legendis 2 auctoribus, qui sunt innumerabiles, datum est. Usus deinde Horatii consilio, qui in arte poetica suadet, ne praecipitetur editio *nonumque prematur in annum*, dabam iis otium, ut, refrigerato inventionis amore, diligentius repetitos tanquam lector perpenderem. 3 Sed si tanto opere efflagitantur quam tu adfirmas, permittamus vela ventis et oram solventibus bene precemur. Multum autem in tua quoque fide ac diligentia positum est, ut in manus hominum quam emendatissimi veniant.

MARCUS FABIVS QVINTILIANVS TO HIS  
FRIEND TRYPHO, GREETING

You have daily importuned me with the request that I should at length take steps to publish the book on the Education of an Orator which I dedicated to my friend Marcellus. For my own view was that it was not yet ripe for publication. As you know I have spent little more than two years on its composition, during which time moreover I have been distracted by a multitude of other affairs. These two years have been devoted not so much to actual writing as to the research demanded by a task to which practically no limits can be set and to the reading of innumerable authors. Further, following the precept of Horace who in his Art of Poetry deprecates hasty publication and urges the would-be author

“To withhold

His work till nine long years have passed away,” I proposed to give them time, in order that the ardour of creation might cool and that I might revise them with all the consideration of a dispassionate reader. But if there is such a demand for their publication as you assert, why then let us spread our canvas to the gale and offer up a fervent prayer to heaven as we put out to sea. But remember I rely on your loyal care to see that they reach the public in as correct a form as possible.

# M. FABII QUINTILIANI INSTITUTIONIS ORATORIAE

## LIBER I

### PROOEMIUM

Post impetratam studiis meis quietem, quae per viginti annos erudiendis iuvenibus impenderam, cum a me quidam familiariter postularent, ut aliquid de ratione dicendi componerem, diu sum equidem reluctatus, quod auctores utriusque linguae clarissimos non ignorabam multa, quae ad hoc opus pertinerent, diligentissime scripta posteris reliquisse. Sed quae ego ex causa faciliorem mihi veniam meae deprecationis arbitrabar fore, hac accendebantur illi magis, quod inter diversas opiniones priorum et quasdam etiam inter se contrarias difficilis esset electio; ut mihi si non inveniendi nova at certe iudicandi de veteribus iniungere laborem non iniuste viderentur.

3 Quamvis autem non tam me vinceret praestandi,

# THE INSTITUTIO ORATORIA OF QUINTILIAN

## BOOK I

### PREFACE

HAVING at length, after twenty years devoted to the training of the young, obtained leisure for study, I was asked by certain of my friends to write something on the art of speaking. For a long time I resisted their entreaties, since I was well aware that some of the most distinguished Greek and Roman writers had bequeathed to posterity a number of works dealing with this subject, to the composition of which they had devoted the utmost care. This<sup>2</sup> seemed to me to be an admirable excuse for my refusal, but served merely to increase their enthusiasm. They urged that previous writers on the subject had expressed different and at times contradictory opinions, between which it was very difficult to choose. They thought therefore that they were justified in imposing on me the task, if not of discovering original views, at least of passing definite judgment on those expressed by my predecessors. I was moved to comply not so much because I<sup>3</sup> felt confidence that I was equal to the task, as

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quod exigebatur, fiducia quam negandi verecundia, latius se tamen aperiente materia plus quam imponebatur oneris sponte suscepti, simul ut pleniore obsequio demererer amantissimos mei, simul ne vulgarem viam ingressus alienis demum vestigiis insisterem.

4 Nam ceteri fere, qui artem orandi litteris tradiderunt, ita sunt exorsi, quasi perfectis omni alio genere doctrinae summam in eloquentia manum imponerent, sive contemnentes tanquam parva, quae prius discimus, studia, sive non ad suum pertinere officium opinati, quando divisae professionum vices essent, seu, quod proximum vero, nullam ingenii sperantes gratiam circa res etiamsi necessarias procul tamen ab ostentatione positas; ut operum fastigia spectantur,

5 latent fundamenta. Ego, cum existimem nihil arti oratoriae alienum, sine quo fieri non posse oratorem fatendum est, nec ad ullius rei summam nisi praecedentibus initiis perveniri, ad minora illa, sed quae si negligas, non sit maioribus locus, demittere me non recusabo; nec aliter, quam si mihi tradatur educandus orator, studia eius formare ab infantia incipiam.

because I had a certain compunction about refusing. The subject proved more extensive than I had first imagined; but finally I volunteered to shoulder a task which was on a far larger scale than that which I was originally asked to undertake. I wished on the one hand to oblige my very good friends beyond their requests, and on the other to avoid the beaten track and the necessity of treading where others had gone before. For almost all others who have written on the art of oratory have started with the assumption that their readers were perfect in all other branches of education and that their own task was merely to put the finishing touches to their rhetorical training; this is due to the fact that they either despised the preliminary stages of education or thought that they were not their concern, since the duties of the different branches of education are distinct one from another, or else, and this is nearer the truth, because they had no hope of making a remunerative display of their talent in dealing with subjects, which, although necessary, are far from being showy: just as in architecture it is the superstructure and not the foundations which attracts the eye. I on the other hand hold that the art of oratory includes all that is essential for the training of an orator, and that it is impossible to reach the summit in any subject unless we have first passed through all the elementary stages. I shall not therefore refuse to stoop to the consideration of those minor details, neglect of which may result in there being no opportunity for more important things, and propose to mould the studies of my orator from infancy, on the assumption that his whole education has been entrusted to my charge. This work I dedicate

# END OF SAMPLE TEXT



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