

BOOK II

LIBER II

- I. TENUIT consuetudo, quae cotidie magis invalescit, ut praeceptoribus eloquentiae, Latinis quidem semper sed etiam Graecis interim, discipuli serius quam ratio postulat, traderentur. Eius rei duplex causa est, quod et rhetores utique nostri suas partes omiserunt et grammatici alienas occupaverunt.
- 2 Nam et illi declamare modo et scientiam declamandi ac facultatem tradere officii sui ducunt, idque intra deliberativas iudicialesque materias (nam cetera ut professione sua minora despiciunt), et hi non satis credunt exceperisse, quae relicta erant, (quo nomine gratia quoque iis habenda est), sed ad prosopopoeias usque ac suasorias, in quibus onus dicendi vel
- 3 maximum est, irrumpunt. Hinc ergo accidit, ut, quae alterius artis prima erant opera, facta sint alterius novissima, et aetas altioribus iam disciplinis debita in schola minore subsidat ac rhetoricen apud grammaticos exercent. Ita, quod est maxime ridiculum, non ante ad declamandi magistrum mittendus videtur puer quam declamare sciat.

¹ *suasoriae* are declamations on deliberative themes (e.g. Hannibal deliberates whether he should cross the Alps).

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I. THE custom has prevailed and is daily growing commoner of sending boys to the schools of rhetoric much later than is reasonable: this is always the case as regards Latin rhetoric and occasionally applies to Greek as well. The reason for this is twofold: the rhetoricians, more especially our own, have abandoned certain of their duties and the teachers of literature have undertaken tasks which rightly belong to others. For the rhetorician considers that his duty is merely to declaim and give instruction in the theory and practice of declamation and confines his activities to deliberative and judicial themes, regarding all others as beneath the dignity of his profession; while the teacher of literature is not satisfied to take what is left him (and we owe him a debt of gratitude for this), but even presumes to handle declamations in character and deliberative themes,¹ tasks which impose the very heaviest burden on the speaker. Consequently subjects which once formed the first stages of rhetoric have come to form the final stages of a literary education, and boys who are ripe for more advanced study are kept back in the inferior school and practise rhetoric under the direction of teachers of literature. Thus we get the absurd result that a boy is not regarded as fit to go on to the schools of declamation till he knows how to declaim.

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- 4 Nos suum cuique professioni modum demus. Et grammaticæ (quam in Latinum transferentes litteraturam vocaverunt) fines suos norit, præsertim tantum ab hac appellationis suæ paupertate, intra quam primi illi constitere, provecta; nam tenuis a fonte assumptis historicorum criticorumque viribus pleno iam satis alveo fluit, cum præter rationem recte loquendi non parum alioqui copiosam prope omnium maximarum artium scientiam amplexa sit;
- 5 et rhetoricæ, cui nomen vis eloquendi dedit, officia sua non detrectet nec occupari gaudeat pertinentem ad se laborem, quæ, dum opere cedit, iam paene
- 6 possessione depulsa est. Neque infitiabor, aliquem ex his, qui grammaticen profiteantur, eo usque scientiæ progredi posse, ut ad hæc quoque tradenda sufficiat; sed cum id aget, rhetoris officio fungetur non suo.
- 7 Nos porro quaerimus, quando iis, quæ rhetoricæ præcipit, percipiendis puer maturus esse videatur. In quo quidem non id est aestimandum, cuius quisque sit ætatis, sed quantum in studiis iam effecerit. Et ne diutius disseram, quando sit rhetori tradendus,
- 8 sic optime finiri credo; cum poterit. Sed hoc ipsum ex superiore pendet quaestione. Nam si grammatices munus usque ad suasorias prorogatur, tardius

The two professions must each be assigned their 4
 proper sphere. *Grammaticæ*, which we translate as
 the science of letters, must learn to know its own
 limits, especially as it has encroached so far beyond
 the boundaries to which its unpretentious name
 should restrict it and to which its earlier professors
 actually confined themselves. Springing from a tiny
 fountain-head, it has gathered strength from the
 historians and critics and has swollen to the dimen-
 sions of a brimming river, since, not content with the
 theory of correct speech, no inconsiderable subject,
 it has usurped the study of practically all the highest
 departments of knowledge. On the other hand 5
 rhetoric, which derives its name from the power of
 eloquence, must not shirk its peculiar duties nor re-
 joice to see its own burdens shouldered by others.
 For the neglect of these is little less than a surrender
 of its birthright. I will of course admit that there 6
 may be a few professors of literature who have
 acquired sufficient knowledge to be able to teach rhe-
 toric as well ; but when they do so, they are perform-
 ing the duties of the rhetorician, not their own.

A further point into which we must enquire con- 7
 cerns the age at which a boy may be considered
 sufficiently advanced to profit by the instructions of
 the rhetorician. In this connexion we must consider
 not the boy's actual age, but the progress he has
 made in his studies. To put it briefly, I hold that
 the best answer to the question "When should a
 boy be sent to the school of rhetoric?" is this,
 "When he is fit." But this question is really depen- 8
 dent on that previously raised. For if the duties of
 the teacher of literature are prolonged to include
 instruction in deliberative declamation, this will

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rhetore opus est. At si rhetor prima officia operis
 sui non recusat, a narrationibus statim et laudandi
 9 vituperandique opusculis cura eius desideratur. An
 ignoramus antiquis hoc fuisse ad augendam eloquen-
 tiam genus exercitationis, ut theses dicerent et
 communes locos et cetera citra complexum rerum
 personarumque, quibus verae fictaeque controversiae
 continentur? Ex quo palam est, quam turpiter
 deserat eam partem rhetorices institutio, quam et
 10 primam habuit et diu solam. Quid autem est ex iis,
 de quibus supra dixi, quod non cum in alia, quae
 sunt propria rhetorum, tum certe in illud iudiciale
 causae genus incidat? An non in foro narrandum
 11 est? qua in parte nescio an sit vel plurimum. Non
 laus ac vituperatio certaminibus illis frequenter in-
 seritur? Non communes loci, sive qui sunt in vitia
 directi, quales legimus a Cicerone compositos, seu
 quibus quaestiones generaliter tractantur, quales
 sunt editi a Quinto quoque Hortensio: ut, *Sitne*
parvis argumentis credendum, et pro testibus et in
 12 testes, in mediis litium medullis versantur? Arma
 sunt haec quodammodo praeparanda semper, ut iis,
 cum res poscet, utare. Quae qui pertinere ad ora-

¹ *communes loci* = passages dealing with some general principle or theme. For *theses* see II. iv. 24.

² *controversiae* are declamations on controversial or judicial themes. A general rule or law is stated: then a special case, which has to be solved in accordance with the law. An abbreviated *controversia* is to be found in I. x. 33, and they occur frequently hereafter (cp. esp. III. vi. 96).

postpone the need for the rhetorician. On the other hand if the rhetorician does not refuse to undertake the first duties of his task, his instruction will be required from the moment the boy begins to compose narratives and his first attempts at passages of praise or denunciation. We know that the orators of 9 earlier days improved their eloquence by declaiming themes and common-places¹ and other forms of rhetorical exercises not involving particular circumstances or persons such as provide the material for real or imaginary causes.² From this we can clearly see what a scandalous dereliction of duty it is for the schools of rhetoric to abandon this department of their work, which was not merely its first, but for a long time its sole task. What is there in 10 those exercises of which I have just spoken that does not involve matters which are the special concern of rhetoric and further are typical of actual legal cases? Have we not to narrate facts in the law-courts? Indeed I am not sure that this is not the most important department of rhetoric in actual practice. Are not eulogy and denunciation 11 frequently introduced in the course of the contests of the courts? Are not common-places frequently inserted in the very heart of lawsuits, whether, like those which we find in the works of Cicero, they are directed against vice, or, like those published by Quintus Hortensius, deal with questions of general interest such as "whether small points of argument should carry weight," or are employed to defend or impugn the credibility of witnesses? These are weapons which we should always have 12 stored in our armoury ready for immediate use as occasion may demand. The critic who denies that

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