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The three elements of the traditional rhetorical triad, *ingenium, ars, exercitatio*—essential ingredients for the attainment of eloquence in any age—, have seldom, if ever, combined themselves as efficaciously as they did in the person of Marcus Tullius Cicero, the undisputed master of oratory in ancient Rome.¹ Endowed with extraordinary natural ability, the beneficiary of an extremely broad and deep education in both rhetoric and philosophy, and a dedicated practitioner of the art, disciplined enough to burn the midnight oil in honing his skills to near perfection (cf., e.g., *Brutus* 312), Cicero stands as one of most successful and abidingly influential orators and rhetorical writers of any age. The man whose name was soon to become synonymous with eloquence itself (*non hominis nomen, sed eloquentiae*; see Quintilian 10.1.112) left to his fellow Romans and to posterity a corpus of speeches that are models of both effective oratorical persuasion and brilliantly lucid prose style. As a rhetorician, Cicero moved beyond merely regurgitating the precepts of the handbooks, insisting in his mature works that his ideal orator be equipped with all the noble arts, calling for a marriage between eloquence and wisdom (rhetoric and philosophy), and providing a pattern, even to this day, of what we sometimes call a 'liberally educated person.' The sixty-odd years of Cicero's life and career coincide almost exactly with the final six decades of the Roman Republic. During most of that time, this 'new man' (*novus homo*), none of whose ancestors had ever

¹ An exhaustive account of Cicero's life and times would be out of place in a volume of this kind. The present essay attempts to give only a basic outline of Cicero's life and career. For detailed analysis, the reader is directed to any of the many fine, comprehensive biographical studies on Cicero, several of which are listed in the bibliography below (21). The best ancient sources include Cicero's own writings, especially his letters and the *Brutus*, as well as Plutarch's *Life of Cato*. The individual essays of this Companion provide valuable background on specific periods of Cicero's life and his oratorical/rhetorical career.

attained any significant office at Rome, remained in the political arena, rubbing shoulders and butting heads with the likes of men such as Crassus, Pompey, Julius Caesar, Mark Antony, and Octavian. Perhaps most remarkable is the fact that in such an environment he was able to survive, indeed often thrive, by relying on a reputation and position in the state that he had attained and maintained almost exclusively by the force of his oratory. While others might appeal to the loyalty of their legions and play power politics backed by the force of arms, Cicero could wield only the weapon of his words. Ultimately, of course, the 'toga' did bow to arms.² Perhaps this was the inevitable outcome; but in the process, the potency that the art of oratory offered to a master practitioner was eloquently illustrated and confirmed for subsequent generations.

Marcus Tullius Cicero was born on 3 January 106 B.C. at Arpinum, a town approximately 70 miles southeast of Rome. His family were members of the local elite and, though no kinsmen had ever held high office in Rome, they lived comfortably and had important connections in the city. When Marcus and his younger brother, Quintus, were still boys, Cicero's father moved the family to the capital, apparently in order to secure for his sons the finest possible education.³ In that connection, Cicero tells us (*De oratore* 2.2) that he and his brother, along with two of their cousins, were received into the house of the famous orator and statesman, Lucius Licinius Crassus, who took an active interest in their education. In that environment, the young Cicero was able to interact not only with Crassus, but also his associates, most importantly Marcus Antonius, the other great orator of that generation, as well as L. Aelius Stilo, the famous Stoic teacher of grammar and rhetoric. These early contacts and connections proved invaluable to the young boy, and would have an abiding effect on the orator throughout his career (cf. *De or.* 2.1-9).

Much of Cicero's youth was undoubtedly spent in the Roman Forum, the center of Rome's political and forensic life. There Cicero could witness first-hand the oratory of Crassus, Antonius, and others who spoke before the courts and in public meetings. After the death of Crassus in 91 B.C., Cicero assumed the *toga virilis*, the 'toga

² The reference is, of course, to Cicero's infamous line of poetry, *Calvus arma togas, consulat laurea laudi* ('Let arms yield to the toga, let the laurel yield to praise').

³ For a more detailed account of Cicero's education, see Anthony Corbeil, 'Rhetorical Education in Cicero's Youth' (below, 23-48) with relevant bibliography.

of manhood'; and served a brief military stint during the Social War (War with the Italian Allies). It was during this period that he was introduced in a formal way to Crassus' father-in-law, Quintus Mucius Scaevola, 'the Augur,' who became his chief mentor, particularly in the study of the civil law. The young Cicero's philosophical pursuits also were kindled at this time. In 88, Philo of Larissa, head of the Academy at Athens, had fled to Rome because of the Mithradatic War. Cicero, 'filled,' as he says, 'with enthusiasm for the study of philosophy,' dedicated himself to this teacher.⁴ Philo's thought was skeptical in nature, holding that nothing could be entirely known for certain, and he advocated debating every issue from all sides. This approach appealed greatly to Cicero and would continue to exert a profound influence on him throughout his life. A few years later, Diodotus, the Stoic philosopher, took up residence in the house of the young Cicero; from him, Cicero received training in diverse subjects, especially in dialectic (*Brutus* 309).

Thus, already as a teenager, Cicero had encountered an impressive array of thinkers—philosophers whose thought was representative of the most important schools, statesmen, and orators, both Roman and Greek. He was practiced in speaking and in writing, both in Greek and in Latin, and he had spent time composing and translating poetry. In fact, considerable fragments of his translation of Aratus' *Phaenomena* are still extant. His teenage years also witnessed the publication of *De inventione* (*On Invention*), his first rhetorical work, most likely completed by 88 B.C. Later in life, Cicero himself would describe the treatise as 'the sketchy and unsophisticated work that found its way out of my notebooks when I was a boy, or rather a youth' (*De or.* 1.5), but it is clear that it had been the young man's initial intention to write a comprehensive handbook on all parts of oratory. He apparently lost interest in the project, and completed only two books. The important thing to note here, however, is the fact that, by age seventeen or eighteen, Cicero had already cultivated assiduously his considerable natural ability (*natura*) through training (*ars*) and diligence (*exercitatio*).

It is somewhat surprising, then, that a young man of such intellect and cultivation, obviously eager to follow in the footsteps of his mentors, Crassus and Antonius, delayed his forensic debut until the

⁴ *Brutus* 306: ... *tamen et me tradidi admirabili quondam ad philosophiam studio concitato.*

age of 24 or 25. After all, Crassus, at the age of 20 or 21, had, in a rather spectacular debut, successfully prosecuted C. Papirius Carbo, one of the best orators of his generation; and Hortensius, Cicero's great rival and later friend and colleague, had addressed the Senate in an impressive speech on behalf of the inhabitants of the Roman province of Africa when he was only 19.³ At least two reasons for this delay can be cited. Cicero's formative years happened to coincide with one of the most violent and bloody decades in Rome's history. As Cicero 'came of age' in about 90 B.C., Rome was embroiled in the War with the Italian Allies (91-87) and its aftermath. Sulla's election to the consulship in 88 was soon followed by his march on Rome and civil war (88-87). His subsequent departure for the East instigated another blood bath, upon the return of Marius and Cinna to the city; during this time (87-84) activity in many of the courts came to a halt or was seriously curtailed. Following the death of Cinna, a new civil war erupted, with Sulla ultimately restoring some semblance of order (82), but again, not without proscription and bloodshed. The violence of this decade would never be forgotten by Cicero. It made a lasting impression upon him, as is evidenced in the prologue to the third book of *De oratore* 3.7-12, wherein with great melancholy he mourns the deaths of Crassus, Antonius, and others of his mentors and models. Needless to say, these were times not very propitious or promising for launching a career in public speaking.

An equally pressing reason for the delay must have been Cicero's own doubts about his level of preparedness.⁴ His penchant for exhibiting great caution before making an important decision or taking any crucial action can be seen on a number of occasions throughout his life.⁵ Now at the beginning of his career, the young Cicero obviously wanted to avoid, as much as humanly possible, any chance at making a less than successful debut. Early on, he had chosen oratory as his preferred vehicle for advancement in Roman public life;

³ This point is made effectively by Ann Vasaly, "Cicero's Early Speeches" (below, 72-73, 98).

⁴ See G. Habicht, *Cicero the Politician* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press 1990: 19-20).

⁵ Perhaps the most vivid example of Cicero's hesitancy in the indecisiveness he displayed for nearly a half a year after the outbreak of the civil war in 49, at one point, he actually engaged in rhetorical exercises designed to help him debate the issue from every angle; see *Ad Atticum* 9.4.

his brief tour of duty as a soldier under Pompeius Strabo in the War with the Italian Allies had apparently done nothing but confirm that decision. Thus, he would wait until he was 25 to appear as a pleader in the courts; and when he did so, he would be confident that he had prepared himself as completely as possible for the challenge. As he himself tells us, 'it was then that I first began to undertake both civil and criminal cases, for it was my intention not to learn in the forum (as most do), but so far as possible to come into the forum already trained' (*Brutus* 311).

Cicero's first published speech dates from 81 B.C., delivered in a private case on behalf of Quinctius; the opposing advocate in this suit was the most distinguished orator of the day, Quintus Hortensius Hortalus. The following year, he entered the public arena in his first criminal case, with a striking and successful defense of Roscius from Ameria, who had been assailed by a certain Chrysoogonus, a freedman and henchman of the dictator Sulla.⁶ At this point, Cicero decided (perhaps somewhat unexpectedly) to interrupt his budding career as a pleader; he sailed for Greece and Asia Minor in 79. Plutarch (*Cicero* 3) asserts that he undertook the trip out of fear of recrimination from Sulla, though Cicero himself maintains that the tour was undertaken for reasons of health and further study. He tells us (*Brutus* 313-314) that, at that point in his life, he was thin and lacking in strength, with a long neck and weak lungs and voice, which he had strained by speaking continually without modulation and by holding his body tense throughout his entire delivery. Determined to gain strength and improve his speaking ability, he arrived in Athens and spent six months studying philosophy with Antiochus of Ascalon, a former member of the Academy, and rhetoric with Demetrius the Syrian. He then traveled through Asia Minor, where he practiced declamation with the most distinguished orators of the region, including Menippus of Sironicea, Dionysius of Magnesia, Aeschylus of Cnidus, and Xenocles of Adramyttium. He moved on to Rhodes where he met Posidonius the Stoic, and spent considerable time with Apollonius Molon, who effectively criticized his speaking and worked to repress the youthful, and sometimes excessively exuberant style evident in his early speeches. Cicero described the

⁶ For these and other speeches of this period, see Vasaly, below, 71-111.

results in this way: 'I returned after two years' absence not only better trained, but practically transformed. My voice was no longer excessively strained, my language had ceased to boil, my lungs had acquired strength, and my body had gained weight' (*Brutus* 316).

Upon his return to Rome in 77 B.C., Cicero married, and once again turned his attention to pleading court cases and preparing for a political career. The next year, at 30 years of age, he was eligible to run for the quaestorship, the first magistracy in the succession of political offices (*curiae honorum*) that culminated in the consulship. He secured election and served as quaestor in western Sicily in 75 B.C., where he supervised the grain supply. His just and upright dealings in Sicily in combination with the connections he had made there during his service made him the Sicilians' first choice as prosecutor when they initiated action against their former governor Verres before Rome's standing court concerned with extortion.

Verres had been governor in Sicily in 73 B.C., but served two additional years because of the extraordinary political circumstances involved in the revolt of the slaves and gladiators led by Spartacus. During that time he was reputed to have extorted more than 40 million sesterces, boasting that one year's proceeds were enough for him, and those gleaned from the second and third years were sufficient for his defenders and his judges. As a member of the senatorial class, he was supported by influential members of the Senate, and defended by Hortensius, Rome's finest orator and, at the time, candidate for the consulship (whom Cicero had faced earlier in his defense of Quinctius). Cicero generally preferred the role of advocate for the defense, but it was something of a practice in Rome for a rising politician to undertake the prosecution of a prominent figure in a noble cause. In this case, even while prosecuting, Cicero could again speak for the injured and cast himself in the role of the defender of the downtrodden. In preparing and carrying out the prosecution, Cicero displayed incredible energy, boldness, and strategic brilliance—conducting the entire case simultaneously while a candidate for the curule-aedileship (which he secured for the year 69). This stunning victory (in 70 B.C.) by the aedile-elect over the consul-elect catapulted Cicero into the position of being one of Rome's premier public speakers.

The careful calculation with which Cicero had planned his early career was mentioned above. Such calculation had proven to be not only prudent, but, for someone of Cicero's background, practically

a necessity. As a young 'new man' (the first man of a family to enter the ranks of the Senate) in Rome, with no ancestral deeds to commend his character or waxen images to decorate his halls, Cicero was forced to operate in the society of his day under conditions far different from those under which the majority of his peers operated, and he was well aware of this fact:

But I am not permitted the same privileges as men of noble birth, who, even while sleeping, still see all the honors of the Roman people laid at their feet; in this state I must live under far different conditions and according to a very different law. (*In Verrem* 2.5.180⁷)

In Cicero's Rome, a man's character and the persona it projected were crucial elements for success in public life. Noble ancestry, a glorious reputation, a character full of dignity and authority were important factors that could persuade people and win votes. But for a *novus homo*, whose birth and familial connections provided no such advantages, the path to prominence in the state was full of obstacles that must have appeared nearly insurmountable. Hard work, virtue, and industry (*labor, virtus, industria*) were required of a 'new man' in order to break into the jealously guarded ranks of the nobility—and sometimes even these proved ineffective. The story of Cicero's early career is, most significantly, a story of the struggle of a very gifted, very well-educated, very hard-working young 'outsider,' fighting to establish a reputation of some authority and prominence among the city's noble 'insiders,' a reputation that would enable him to reach his boyhood goal, 'ever to be the best and preeminent above all.'⁸ His victory over Hortensius and Verres stands as one of the most significant steps toward the realization of that goal.

The decade following the Verrine affair was a particularly eventful time for Cicero. He served as curule-aedile in 69, and was then elected, again ahead of all of his rivals and at the youngest possible age, as praetor in 66. In office as praetor, Cicero presided over the extortion court and presented his first deliberative oration, supporting the proposal of the tribune Manilius to grant command of the war against King Mithradates of Pontus (the so-called Third Mithradatic War) to Pompey (*In lege Manilia* or *De imperio Gai. Pompeii*). Cicero

⁷ *Sed non idem licet mihi quod illi qui nobili genere nati sunt, quibus omnia populi Romani beneficia aemulatio deferuntur; longè alia mihi lex et hae civitatis et conditiones morales est...*

⁸ *Ibid.* 6. 208, quoted by Cicero in a letter to his brother Quintus (*Q.Fr.* 3.5.4).

seems to have been eager to display his allegiance to the general, an allegiance that would endure, in greater or lesser degree, throughout the rest of his life. During this time, too, Cicero lost his father and had, himself, become a father with the birth of his son, Marcus. He continued to plead prominent cases in the courts, building a reputation among his fellow-citizens. All of his actions, all of his energies were now aimed at securing election to the consulship *suo anno*, in the first year of legal eligibility. He carefully assessed the situation,¹¹ and worked hard and continuously to garner support from every possible corner. When the election results for the year 63 were announced, once again Marcus Tullius Cicero's name topped the list. With the help of his considerable oratorical abilities, his hard work, the support of the Roman Knights, along with substantial senatorial backing (gained largely by fear of Catiline's presence on the ballot), Cicero had managed to achieve something extraordinary: a *novus homo*, the son of a Roman knight having no noble ancestors, had secured the aedileship, the praetorship, and now the consulship, first on the ballot and at the earliest possible age—a feat that even the great general Marius had not performed. This accomplishment stands as one of the defining moments in Cicero's life and career. It invested his character with prestige and authority which he would subsequently wield in his oratorical and political career.¹²

Cicero's remarkable rise to *nobilitas* and the consulship was punctuated in another extraordinary way as his consular year drew to a close. Through careful attention, diligent investigation, and the fortunate confluence of a number of circumstances, Cicero uncovered a revolutionary plot to overthrow the government, led by a disenchanted, bankrupt senator of noble descent, Lucius Sergius Catilina, who had been a rival of Cicero's in the consular elections. In a flurry of activity from late October to early December, Cicero managed to expose the conspiracy, obtain from the Senate the decree (*senatus consultum ultimum*) that granted extraordinary powers to the consuls to protect the state, and secure the apprehension of several conspirators along with crucial, incriminating evidence against them. Following a spirited debate in the Senate on December 5, the notes

¹¹ Cf. *Ad Atticum* I.1.

¹² For a detailed account of Cicero's oratorical activity during his consulship, see Robert Cape, "Cicero's Consular Speeches" (below, 113-158).

of December, Cicero, buoyed by the vigorous support of Marcus Cato and invoking the authority of the Senate and its decree, took firm and decisive action in the midst of the danger; he ordered, without a trial, the execution of the conspirators who were in custody (including Publius Cornelius Lentulus Sura, ex-consul and praetor for the second time). A public thanksgiving was declared and Cicero was hailed as *Pater Patriae* ('Father of the Fatherland').

The Catilinarian crisis had presented the consul with an arena in which to showcase his abilities as a leader, and he had, as it seemed, made the best of it: he not only saved the state from a serious threat, but in doing so, fashioned for himself a public persona of power and authority, as the *dux* or *imperator togatus* ('civilian commander'); what others had accomplished on the field of battle, Cicero had managed in the forum in the garb of a citizen. Cicero makes the comparison with great military commanders of the past and with Pompey explicitly,¹³ and shortly thereafter, he will go so far as to suggest an alliance between the *imperator militaris* and the *imperator togatus*, the soldier and the statesman, the 'Scipio' and the 'Laelius'.¹⁴ Indeed, the consul's expeditious handling of the attempted coup was stunning enough to have provoked the envy of Pompey, and Cicero had every right to be justly proud of his accomplishment, of which he boasted, as Seneca later commented, *non sine causa sed sine fine*.¹⁵ The parvenu from Arpinum had, by the age of 43, secured for himself a lasting place in the annals of Roman history.

The Nones of December, however, did more than merely ruffle the feathers of Pompey the Great. The execution of the conspirators without a trial provoked the hostility of the *populares* (those whose political power tended to derive from their influence with the common people), who believed that the consul and the Senate had overstepped the bounds of their legal authority—an hostility that would

¹³ Cf. *In Catilinam* 3.26; 4.21. For the *imperator togatus* theme, cf. e.g., *In Cat.* 3.15, 23, 26; 4.5, 21, 23; *Pro Murena* 84; *Pro Sulla* 85; see also Cl. Nicolet, "Consul togatus," *Revue des études latines* 39 (1961): 236-263; J. M. May, *Trials of Character: The Eloquence of Ciceronian Ethics* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press 1988): 56-58.

¹⁴ *Ad Familiares* 5.7.3 (addressed to Pompey, April 62 B.C.): *Sed scito in, quae nos pro salute patriae gerimus, ubi tenes iudicio ac iustitiam imperatoris; quae cum auctoritate, tanta consilio tantaque aequae magnitudine ac non grata esse viderentur, ut tibi multo maiori, quam Africanus fuit, ne non multo minorum quam Laelius fuisse et in re p. et in amicitia adiunctum esse putares.*

¹⁵ *Dialoq.* 10.5.1.

ultimately result in personal disaster for Cicero. Only a few weeks after the public thanksgiving decreed in his honor, when laying down his office on 31 December, he was prevented by the tribune Q. Metellus Nepos from addressing the people in customary fashion, on the grounds that, by executing the conspirators, he had put to death Roman citizens without a trial. Making the best of the situation, Cicero confined himself to the oath that he had performed the duties of the consulship faithfully, swearing that by his efforts the city and the state had been saved. The people roared their approval, but storm clouds lingered on the horizon. A year later, P. Clodius Pulcher, a patrician descended from one of the noblest families of Rome,¹⁶ was caught disgracefully dressed as a woman at the festival in honor of the Bona Dea, which, incidentally, had been held at the house of Julius Caesar. In the subsequent judicial investigation, Clodius, on trial for sacrilege, claimed to have been 90 miles away from Rome at the time. Cicero, however, had seen him in Rome within three hours of the time of his alibi, and testified to that effect. Despite this testimony and the obvious guilt of Clodius, a bribed jury acquitted the perpetrator. Contributing further to the enmity between them, Cicero, on another occasion, employing his characteristic quick repartee and caustic wit, humiliated Clodius publicly in the Senate. Personal hatred would soon turn into public vindictiveness.

At about this same time, the Senate obstinately (and shortsightedly) snubbed the requests of three of its most powerful members, Pompey, Caesar, and Crassus, actions which led to the formation (in 60 B.C.) of the coalition among these men known generally to history as the 'first triumvirate.' Cicero himself was courted by Caesar as a fourth member of the group, certainly on the strength of his legal knowledge and powers of persuasion, but the orator could not bring himself to support in an active way Caesar's manipulation of the constitution. In fact, he spoke out against it. In 59 B.C., Clodius, still bent on revenge, arranged to have himself adopted into a plebeian family in order to allow him to run for the office of tribune (which was open only to plebeians). Cicero surely saw the handwriting on the wall, but he seemingly refused to acknowledge it. As

¹⁶ For a detailed account of Clodius' life and career, see W. J. Tatum, *The Patrician Tribune: Publius Clodius Pulcher* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press 1959).

late as November of 59, he expressed confidence in his future. He even went so far as to refuse a generous offer from Caesar to become one of his deputies (*legatus*) in Gaul or a commissioner for supervising the division of public lands. Clodius secured the office of tribune and the support of the consuls for 58 B.C., L. Piso and A. Gabinius, in order to avenge himself. Finally in March of 58 B.C., Clodius, who had earlier garnered support from the urban crowd by proposing a law that granted them free grain, secured the adoption of a bill that outlawed from Rome anyone who had put Roman citizens to death without a trial. The Senate was powerless, and help from the consuls and triumphs (who were angered by Cicero's rejection and content to have him removed from the scene for a time) was not forthcoming. Cicero decided to leave Rome, retiring into exile in northern Greece. A second law, naming Cicero specifically (and hence unconstitutional) was passed shortly thereafter. Clodius then engineered the razing of Cicero's house on the Palatine, managing to have part of it consecrated to Liberty. Other of his property suffered damage, and his wife and children were forced to take shelter with relatives.

It was psychologically devastating for Cicero to deal with the fact that his crushing of the Catilinarian conspiracy, the crowning glory of his consulship, was, likewise, the cause of his forced departure from Rome. The year and a half which he spent in exile was the low point of his life. Letters from that period to his friend and confidant Atticus reveal an unseemly yet understandable mood of depression that led him even to contemplate suicide. Friends and supporters, however, were not lacking back in Rome. The consuls and tribunes of 57 B.C. were favorable to Cicero's cause; Pompey, who had done nothing to throttle Clodius' previous attacks, now became irritated by his actions and actively supported the recall. On 4 August 57 B.C. the law was passed authorizing his return; a month later, Cicero arrived in Rome amid an atmosphere of great triumph.

Despite the glorious occasion of his return,¹⁷ the exile was obviously a devastating setback for Cicero, who had invested so much of his time and energy up to that point to establish a public persona invested with dignity, authority, influence, and reputation. His personal *dignitas* was seriously diminished, and his consular ethos as

¹⁷ Cicero describes the event in great detail in a letter to Atticus, *Ad Atticum* 4.1.

the *imperator togatus*, who had saved the state without recourse to arms, was nearly destroyed. Once again, Cicero was forced to scramble with all of his energy, this time to re-establish his private and public standing, to regain his *auctoritas* and reconstruct a persona befitting his station in Roman society. His public speeches delivered during this time, generally known collectively as *post reditum*,¹⁸ are, among other things, calculated to accomplish this goal. They often seem to be as much apologies on behalf of Cicero as political deliberations or defenses of clients. Cicero now adds a new dimension to his ethos: he presents himself as the consular orator who has now saved the state twice without resorting to arms—once through his efforts to thwart Catiline and his conspiracy, the second time by his voluntary withdrawal from Rome to maintain the public peace. At times he identifies himself closely with the state; at other times, he portrays himself as the sacrificial victim who was offered, as a kind of *devotio*, on its behalf.¹⁹

Events immediately subsequent to his successful recall, including the recovery of his building site and damages for the loss of his house and estates, as well as a stunning success in his defense of Publius Sestius, instilled Cicero with an overconfidence in his position. Encouraged by what he perceived as a growing rift among the triumvirs, Cicero proposed, in early April of 56, that the Senate should, the following month, re-open the discussion of Caesar's distribution of the Campanian land. Once again Cicero had miscalculated the strength and willingness of the senatorial establishment to support him in the face of the triumvirs. His action precipitated the so-called conference of Luca, a meeting held in order to patch up their differences. Cicero was soon brought to heel: Cicero's brother Quintus, in a meeting with Pompey, was reminded of the pledges he had given Pompey (about Marcus' future conduct) previously when he had sued for his brother's recall; Pompey made it clear that Marcus' silence, if not his cooperation, was expected. As a result, Cicero, crestfallen and humiliated, withdrew his motion; in fact, he was forced (in June or July of 56 B.C.) to present what he called his 'palinode' or 'recantation' (see *Ad Alt.* 4. 5) and, for the next several years, presented no public opposition to the three; in fact, he

¹⁸ See Andrew Rigby, "The *Post Reditum* Speeches," below, 159-193.

¹⁹ See May (1980): 86-127.

was at times enlisted in their service. He was all too aware of the inconsistency of his actions, and he found it embarrassingly exasperating, as he candidly revealed in private correspondence with Atticus.

Withdrawal from the public arena, however, did not mean any lack of activity for Cicero. During the half-decade following Luca, he composed three important treatises, *De oratore* (On the Ideal Orator), *De republica* (On the Republic), and *De legibus* (On the Laws). Obviously, returning to the his youthful studies of rhetoric and philosophy provided Cicero both refuge and solace, but more importantly, it supplied him with a vehicle by which he could defend and celebrate the ideals of constitutional government in a free republic... It was these brilliantly innovative dialogues that established Cicero as the voice and conscience of the Republic, politically in the wilderness though he was.²⁰ During this time, however, he did receive another significant honor: nominated by Hortensius, he was elected to the College of Aediles in 53 B.C.

While Cicero was writing about the ideal state and its laws, the Roman state, during the same time, was in chaos, embroiled in bribery, political maneuverings, disorder, and violence. Elections had been repeatedly postponed because of the unrest, and riots between rival gangs, headed by Clodius and Milo, a candidate for office and friend of Cicero (who had, as tribune, worked for his recall from exile), were frequent. In January 52 B.C., the companies of Clodius and Milo met, probably by accident, on the Appian Way; fighting broke out, and in the scuffle, Clodius was killed. To control the further unrest that ensued, Pompey was appointed sole consul and enforced strict measures to govern the subsequent proceedings. Cicero delivered his speech on Milo's behalf (*Pro Milone*) in a packed forum under the eye of Pompey and his armed guard. Visibly shaken by the circumstances, he completed his speech, but not with his accustomed effectiveness. Milo was convicted and went into exile. The speech as transmitted to us is an extraordinary rhetorical composition, employing the three modes of persuasion—logical argumentation, portrayal of character (ethos), and appeal to the emotions (pathos)—to near perfection.

²⁰ T. F. Wiseman, "The Necessary Lesson," *Times Literary Supplement* (June 15-21, 1990): 647.

Unlike many Roman magistrates, Cicero never had a desire to leave Rome as a governor of a province. He had refused such duty after his praetorship and consulship. But in March of 51 B.C., much to his dismay, he was sent as proconsul to the large province of Cilicia in Asia Minor. Upon his arrival, he found matters, both civil and military, in much disarray. He set about restoring order, fixing reasonable interest rates, and fighting extortion. Faced with the threat of a possible invasion by the Parthians, he shored up his military forces and undertook a small campaign against the hill-tribes of Mt. Amanus. After a siege of 46 days, he captured the stronghold, and was granted a *supplicatio* (a public thanksgiving) by the Senate. Although he long cherished hopes for a triumph, these were never realized.

Cicero returned to Rome in early January of 49 B.C. to find the political situation in turmoil and the state on the brink of civil war. Crassus had been killed in Parthia in 53, and the relationship between Pompey and Caesar, so often strained in the past, had now reached the breaking point. Even after Caesar had crossed the Rubicon, Cicero hoped to be able to negotiate some sort of reconciliation which might secure peace. Appointed by the government as district commissioner at Capua, he spent the next several weeks away from the city, in Campania and at his estate in Formiae, debating with himself, in true Academic fashion, his best course of action. He realized that war, no matter who the victor, would precipitate confiscation, bloodshed, and proscription; he could not stomach the unconstitutionality of Caesar's actions, but was equally repulsed by many deeds of Pompey's supporters. On 28 March, Caesar himself visited Cicero at Formiae and requested that he come to Rome to work for peace. The orator frankly set forth conditions which Caesar could not accept, and in the end, Cicero did not go to Rome—a decision of which he was justly proud; eventually he joined the republican forces in Greece. After Caesar's victory at Pharsalus on 9 August 48 B.C. (from which Cicero was absent because of illness), Cato proposed that command of the army be handed over to Cicero. Cicero refused and returned to Italy, passing a year fraught with anxiety in Brundisium. In September of 47, Caesar returned and graciously gave Cicero permission to remain in the country.

Cicero generally abstained from politics under the dictatorship of Caesar, though in 45 B.C., he broke a six-year period of silence by delivering in the Senate a speech on behalf of Marcellus, soon to be followed by the other so-called 'Caesarian Speeches,' the *Pro*

Ligario and the *Pro P. Rege Deiotaro*.²¹ The political hardships that Cicero faced during this period were compounded seriously by the troubles he experienced in his own private life. After 30 years of marriage, he divorced his wife Terentia in 46 B.C., the culmination of an estrangement that had begun several years before. He almost immediately re-married, but then came the greatest blow: Tullia, his beloved daughter, died from complications of childbirth. Cicero's grief at the death of his daughter was nearly insupportable, and his new wife Publilia's lack of sympathetic support led quickly to divorce. Once again, as he had done a decade earlier, he took refuge in philosophy and literature. Working day and night because he could not sleep, Cicero's literary output during the next two years was absolutely astounding. Writing at a feverish pace, Cicero, as he had done ten years previously, found not only consolation in his composition, but a way to serve his countrymen and, according to some, present a tacit, but powerful critique of autocratic rule.²² *The Brutus*, the *Orator*, *Paradoxa Stoicorum*, *De finibus bonorum et malorum* (On the Supreme Good), the *Tusculan Disputations*, *Academica*, and *De natura deorum* (On the Nature of the Gods), as well as the lost works, the *Hortensius* and the *Consolatio*, are all products of this period.

At the assassination of Caesar on the Ides of March, 44 B.C., Brutus, raising high his bloody dagger, called on Cicero by name and congratulated him on the recovery of freedom,²³ rejoicing in victory for what he and his fellow-conspirators believed would be a new lease on life for the Republic. Once again Cicero answered the call. On March 17, he delivered a speech in the Senate urging a general amnesty for the conspirators, like that declared in Athens after the expulsion of the Thirty Tyrants. The arrival in Rome of the young C. Octavius, Caesar's adopted son and heir, further buoyed the hopes of the republicans. But Marcus Antonius (Mark Antony), who had been Caesar's colleague in the consulship and had, after the assassination, gained possession of Caesar's political papers and private fortune, continued to strengthen his own position. Cicero soon found himself losing hope, in fear that Rome had merely substituted one tyrant for another. Again he turned to philosophy, composing

²¹ For background and detailed analysis of these speeches, see Harold Gotoff, "Cicero's Caesarian Orations," below, 219-271.

²² Habicht (1990): 74-76.

²³ *Philippic* 2.28.

the *De divinatione* (On Divination), the *De senectute* (On Old Age) and the *De amicitia* (On Friendship). It was also during this time (44 B.C.) that Cicero began his last, and perhaps most influential philosophical treatise, the *De officiis* (On Moral Duties), written not in dialogue form, but as an expository epistle to his son, discussing the cardinal virtues of wisdom, justice, fortitude, and temperance, and the notion of *utile*, the expedient, which cannot ever be rightly divorced from the honorable (*honesta*).

Many thoughts about duties, the honorable and the expedient must have been swirling about in Cicero's mind, when in July of 44 B.C., on his way to Greece and hearing news that a reconciliation between Antony and the conspirators was probable, he decided to turn back in order to attend the Senate meeting scheduled for 1 September. In Rome, he found the situation less promising than he had hoped, and decided not to attend the meeting, claiming that he was ill. Antony, angry at his absence, delivered a speech against him, and made offerings to the deified Caesar. On the next day, 2 September 44 B.C., Cicero took the first step on a journey from which there would be no turning back when he answered Antony (who was absent) with the *First Philippic*, a speech critical of Antony (who was absent) with the *First Philippic*, a speech critical of Antony, though free of harsh personal attack. Cicero's final sentence proved an appropriate valediction for the final year of his life: "For myself, I have lived pretty well long enough, whether in years or in glory. If more is to come, it will come not so much for me as for you and for the Commonwealth" (translated by Shackleton-Bailey).

Antony retired to prepare his reply, which he delivered in the Senate on 19 September 44. Cicero countered with his celebrated *Second Philippic*, a scathing invective showing no restraint, which he sent to Atticus for approval in late October. The speech was never delivered, but published as pamphlet in late November. It is worth noting that Cicero himself referred to his speeches against Antony as 'Philippics' (*Ad Brut.* 2.4), purposely drawing a comparison between these attacks on Antony and those that the great Greek orator Demosthenes had made on Philip II of Macedonia, three hundred years earlier. From this point on, all of Cicero's energies were directed toward routing the senatorial order in hopes of recapturing the spirit and the glory of the languishing Republic. During the next half year, Cicero delivered twelve more *Philippics*, two to the people and ten to the Senate, all aimed in one way or another at warding off any

sort of reconciliation between the Senate and Antony.²⁴ In these orations, Cicero paints Antony as he had his previous adversaries (Verres, Catiline, Clodius, et al.), representing all things un-Roman, even inhuman, personifying the forces of despotism, madness, evil, and darkness.²⁵ In stark contrast stands the character of Cicero the patriot, true and unflinching, ready and willing to put his life on the line for the survival of the state—in fact, he is in a way the symbol, even the literal embodiment of the Republic. Nearly twenty years after his consulship, Cicero finds himself once again leading the Senate and the state in the midst of an internal crisis. Two decades earlier, he had fashioned himself as the *imperator togatus* (the civilian commander), the *pacis alumnus* (the nursing of peace), who would go to any length—including voluntary exile—to save the state without recourse to arms. Now, on the contrary, he presents himself as the *principis sumendorum sagorum*, 'the leader in the putting on of military cloaks',²⁶ rousing the Senate and people to confront Antony in arms, but still relying on the only real weapon he ever knew how to wield—his eloquence.

In the end, of course, Cicero had, among other things, seriously miscalculated Octavian and his actions. His hopes were ultimately dashed, yet the effect of his oratory lingered, enough so that its target felt the need to exact vengeance. After the trio of Antony, Lepidus, and Octavian had sealed their compact and were appointed commissioners for the reorganization of the state in November (a compact known to history as the 'second triumvirate'), they immediately set about removing their enemies from the scene. Cicero's name appeared prominently on the list of proscribed (despite, according to Plutarch, the objections of Octavian). At first, Cicero thought of fleeing to the East, but after a half-hearted attempt to escape, he ordered his slaves to stand aside, and with these words, "Let me die in the country that I have so often saved" (*Livy* 120. 50), he offered his neck to Antony's minions (7 December 43 B.C.). His head and hands were carried back to Rome, and, to the horror of the people, nailed to the Rostra, the place from which he had so often spoken.

²⁴ For details, see Jon Hall, "The Philippics," below, 273–304.

²⁵ Cf. J. M. May, "Cicero and the Brains," *Syllabus Classica* 7 (1996): 143–153.

²⁶ See *Philippic* 12.17; cf. *Phil.* 7.7–8; May (1988): 157–161.

In some sense it seems fitting that Cicero's life should come to its end as the curtain was about to fall on Rome's free Republic. Over the course of four decades of public service, Cicero's life and career had been, in many ways, inextricably intertwined with the major events and personalities of Rome. By the time of his murder in 43, Cicero had become, in more than merely his own (often egotistically inflated) opinion, a kind of symbol for the Republic; today he endures as its most prolific and eloquent spokesman, a politician whose career, despite its failings and compromises, stood for the rule of law against the rule of force.²⁷ What he accomplished he accomplished largely through words—the power of speech. The essays that follow attempt not only to chronicle the history and the development of Cicero's rhetoric and oratory, but also to examine in some detail their unique characteristics—characteristics that allowed, almost within his own lifetime, the very name of Cicero to become synonymous with eloquence itself.

Chronology (All dates are BC)

106	Birth of Marcus Tullius Cicero (January) and of Cn. Pompeius Magnus (Pompey the Great) (September)
104	Marius, consul for the 2nd time, reorganizes Roman army
100	Marius, consul for the 6th time; birth of C. Julius Caesar (July)
95	Lucius Licinius Crassus and Quintus Mucius Scaevola Pontifex consuls
91–87	Social War (War with Italian Allies); Cicero serves under Pompeius Strabo (89) and Sulla (88); assumes <i>togas virilis</i> ; writes <i>De inventione</i>
88	Cicero meets Philo of Larissa, head of Academy, who had fled to Rome; Sulla occupies Rome; Marius flees and joins L. Cornelius Cinna
88–85	First Mithradatic War
87	Marius and consul Cinna seize Rome while Sulla fights in Greece; proscriptions
86	Marius, consul for the 7th time, dies in office

²⁷ Wiseman (1990): 648.

85	Sulla concludes peace with Mithradates
84	Giunna, consul for the 4th time, killed in mutiny
83–81	Second Mithradatic War
82	Civil War; Sulla siezes Rome and is named dictator (82–81); proscriptions
81	Sulla as dictator reforms constitution, including establishment of 7 standing criminal courts with senatorial juries; Cicero's <i>Pro Quinctio</i>
80	Cicero's <i>Pro Roscio Amerino</i>
79	Sulla resigns dictatorship
79–77	Cicero travels to Athens, Rhodes, and Asia Minor; studies with Molon of Rhodes
78	Sulla dies
76	Cicero's <i>Pro Roscio comedo</i> (or 66)
75	Cicero serves as quaestor in Western Sicily; becomes a member of the Senate
74–63	Third Mithradatic War; Lucullus given command against Mithradates
73–71	Verres governor of Sicily; Spartacus leads slave rebellion and is defeated by Pompey and Crassus; Cicero's <i>Pro Tullio</i> (71 or 69)
70	1st consulship of Pompey and Crassus; Trial of Verres; Cicero's <i>Divinatio in Caeciliam</i> , <i>In Verrem</i> ; <i>Lex Aurelia</i> changes constitution of juries to two-thirds equestrian
69	Cicero serves as aedile; Cicero's <i>Pro Caecina</i> , <i>Pro Fontio</i>
67	Lucullus relieved of Mithradatic command; <i>Lex Gabinia</i> gives Pompey command against pirates
66	Cicero serves as praetor, presides over extortion court; Cicero's <i>Pro lege Manilia</i> ; <i>Lex Manilia</i> gives Pompey Mithradatic command; Cicero's <i>Pro Cluentio</i>
63	Cicero serves as consul; Cicero's <i>De lege agraria</i> , <i>Pro Rabirio perdulionis reo</i> ; conspiracy of Catiline; Cicero's <i>In Catilinam</i> , <i>Pro Marenia</i> ; execution of the conspirators (5 December); Metellus Nepos attacks Cicero (10 December); death of Mithradates; Pompey organizes campaign in the East
62	Defeat and death of Catiline; Cicero's <i>Pro Sulla</i> , <i>Pro Archia</i> ; Bona Dea scandal (Clodius) in Caesar's house; Pompey returns to Italy and disbands army
61	Senate opposes Pompey and Crassus; Clodius acquitted of sacrilege through bribery

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- 60 Formation of 'first triumvirate'
59 Caesar serves as consul; Pompey marries Caesar's daughter Julia; *Lex Vatinia* gives Caesar command of Cisalpine Gaul and Illyricum, the Senate adds Transalpine Gaul; Clodius adopted into a plebeian family; Cicero's *Pro Flacco*
58 L. Calpurnius Piso and Aulus Gabinius serve as consuls; Clodius as tribune; Cato sent to annex Cyprus; Cicero exiled; Caesar in Gaul defeats Helvetii and Ariovistus
57 Cicero returns to Rome (4 September); Cicero's *Post reditum in senatu, Post reditum ad quinque, De domo sua*; Pompey commissioner for grain supply
56 Cicero attempts to break up the 'triumvirate'; Cicero's *Pro Sestio, In Vatinius, Pro Caesio*; Conference at Luca (May) reaffirms 'triumvirate'; Cicero's 'palinode'; Cicero's *De provinciis consularibus, De haruspicum responsis, Pro Balbo*
55 Pompey and Crassus consuls for the 2nd time; Caesar's command in Gaul extended for another five years; Cicero's *In Plautium, De oratore*
54 Cicero defends Vatinius; Cicero's *Pro Plancio, Pro Scauro*; Cicero defends Gabinus; death of Pompey's wife Julia, daughter of Caesar; Cicero's *De republica* (54-51), *De legibus* (begun about this time), *Partitiones oratoriarum* (54-52 or 45-44)
53 Crassus defeated and killed by the Parthians at Carrhae; Cicero co-opted into the College of Augurs; rioting between gangs of Clodius and Milo; Cicero's *Pro Rabirio Postumo* (or 52)
52 Murder of Clodius (18 January) by Milo, followed by riots and burning of Senate House; Pompey appointed sole consul; trial of Milo and Cicero's *Pro Milone*
51-50 Cicero serves as governor of Cilicia
49 Caesar crosses Rubicon (January); civil war; Pompey leaves Italy (17 March); Caesar visits Cicero (28 March); Cicero follows Pompey to Greece (7 June); Caesar dictator, defeats Pompey's army in Spain
48 Pompey defeated at Pharsalus (9 August) and subsequently murdered in Egypt; Caesar in Egypt; Cicero returns to Brundisium
47 Caesar in Egypt, Syria, and Asia; returns to Italy (September) and pardons Cicero
46 Pompeian forces defeated at Thapsus; Cato commits suicide; Cicero's *Pro Marcello, Pro Ligario, Brutus, Octavius, Paradoxa Stoicorum*

- 45 Pompey's sons defeated at Munda (March); Cicero's *Cato*, Caesar's *Anticato*; Cicero's *Pro rege Deiotaro, Academica, De finibus bonorum et malorum, Tusculanae disputationes, De natura deorum, De senectute* (or 44)
44 Caesar dictator perpetuus (February); assassinated (15 March); Octavian named Caesar's heir; falling out between Cicero and Antony; Cicero assumes unofficial leadership of Senate and makes pact with Octavian; Cicero's *Philippics* 1-4, *De officiis, De divinatione, De amicitia, Topica, De fato*
43 Civil War; Cicero's *Philippics* 5-14; Antony declared public enemy (April), defeated at Mutina by Octavian and consul Hirrius and Pansa (consuls are killed); Octavian occupies Rome, elected consul, outlaws Caesar's assassins; forms 'second triumvirate' with Antony and Lepidus (November); proscriptions; murder of Cicero (7 December)

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