

### A Pedagogue's Rhetoric

Given their differing experiences and occupations, it is not surprising that Cicero and Quintilian differ in their views of the relationship between pedagogy and rhetoric. Cicero, as a man of action to whom the late Roman Republic gave many opportunities and responsibilities to speak, understandably presents the rhetor as a man of great natural talent who is the Forum speaking. Quintilian, however, was denied the opportunity to speak publicly in the absolutism of the Empire, yet had many opportunities to teach under the patronage of the emperor. He was a rhetor who taught rhetoric rather than practiced it. Therefore, though he usually follows Cicero, Quintilian breaks from him in arguing for the primacy of training over talent in the development of a speaker.

Quintilian refers to the process of educating a speaker as a process of refinement. As a stone is polished or a tool sharpened, so the teacher, who must himself be a good man as well as a skilled man,<sup>1</sup> removes the faults of his students.<sup>2</sup> Quintilian is not opposed to recognizing the necessity of talent, but he insists upon a significant role for education. Using two more metaphors, Quintilian calls the educator an artist who hews his pupil out of stone, be it a millstone or marble; he calls him a farmer who tills land, be it fertile or infertile. With all his metaphors, Quintilian shows that a student is a product of his own talent certainly but especially of the labor of his teacher. Though he may not have been a great original thinker, Quintilian nevertheless displayed a genius of synthesis in his *Institutes* and advanced the position of education in the development of rhetoricians.

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<sup>1</sup> Bizzell and Herzberg, 299.

<sup>2</sup> Patricia Bizzell and Bruce Herzberg, eds, *The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present* (Boston: Bedford, 1990), 315.