RHETORIC AS A SKILLED LABOUR AND THE DEFINITION OF PROFESSIONALISM IN QUINTILIAN'S *INSTITUTIO ORATORIA*[*]

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1. INTRODUCTION

The *Institutio oratoria* of Quintilian is a crucial witness to understanding the problem of rhetoric as a profession in ancient Greece and Rome. We can gather information on the activity of ancient rhetoricians from works on rhetoric (such as those of Cicero), handbooks by the same rhetoricians, biographical surveys (including Suetonius' work on grammars and rhetoricians) and biographical and autobiographical accounts of the early experiences of many ancient writers. Quintilian's work, however, is the most extensive and organic treatment of classical rhetoric that survives.

The topic can be addressed from two perspectives. On the one hand, we can study rhetoric as technical knowledge from a theoretical point of view. Quintilian himself is aware of the importance of this aspect and precisely defines the status of rhetoric as a profession and its relationship with other professions at the end of the second book of the *Institutio oratoria*. On the other hand, we can analyse the various aspects of Quintilian as a professional of rhetoric through extensive reading of his work. More specifically, we can investigate the relationship with his clients, the various aspects and functions of his being a rhetorician, his cultural and professional projects and the relationship between the public and the private dimension.

2. RHETORIC AND THE DEFINITION OF PROFESSIONALISM

When Quintilian attempts to define the technical nature of rhetoric at the end of the second book of the *Institutio oratoria* in Chapters 17–21, he deals with four aspects[1]: first, the

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[1] On these chapters, see the commentary of T. Reinhardt – M. Winterbottom (eds.), Quintilian, *Institutio oratoria. Book 2*, Oxford 2006, 301-394. Moreover, on the parallel passages in Sext. Emp. (*Adversus rhetores = math.* II), Quint. *inst.* II 14-21, and Phld. *rhet.* II see *ibidem*, 395-402.

problem of the professionalisation of rhetoric, its teaching, and the connection with natural skills; second, the question of the art as a process that is independent of the results; third, the issue of the ethics of rhetoric and of its morality; and finally, a comparison between rhetoric and the other *artes*[2].

2.1 The professionalization of rhetoric

First, Quintilian deals with the connection between rhetoric and natural skills in Chapter 17[3]. In regard to the previous rhetorical tradition, he mentions the opinion of some writers that rhetoric is a natural gift that can be improved through exercises. He highlights the case of Antonius, as shown in Cicero's *De oratore* (17, 5)[4]; rhetoric is not an art but is a knowledge that derives from the observation (*observationem quandam*). Quintilian notes that Antonius and other orators like Lysias dissimulate their art (17, 6). Moreover, even uneducated people, barbarians and slaves use natural rhetoric when they structure their speeches with an introduction, narration, argumentation and an epilogue even if they do not have a technical background.

Those who are against the idea of rhetoric as an art also use some verbal sophistry (17, 7). These proponents they argue the following: 1) nothing, which originates from art, can exist before of the art itself; 2) men have always spoken, and the teachers of this art came later; 3) there were orators before there was the teaching of rhetoric. Quintilian claims not to be interested in the problem of the birth of rhetoric as art (17, 8). However, he notes that we can find rhetoric already in Homer, and he offers these examples: 1) Phoenix gives teachings both on behaviour and rhetoric[5]; 2) there are characters who pronounce speeches; 3) the three heroes, Menelaus, Nestor and Ulysses, correspond to the three kinds of orations (*tenue medium elatum*)[6]; 4) the Homeric poems describe some eloquence contests among young people[7]; 5) the shield of Achilles contains depictions of judicial

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[2] On the question of whether the rhetoric is an *ars* see D. Roochnick, *Is Rhetoric an Art?*, «Rhetorica» 12, 1994, 127-154.
[3] On this chapter see Reinhardt – Winterbottom, *Institutio oratoria*, cit., 301-306.
[4] Cic. *de orat.* II 232.
[5] Hom. *Il.* IX 443.
[6] Cf. Quint. *inst.* XII 10, 64; Gell. VI 14, 4.
[7] Hom. *Il.* XV 283-284.

debates and people speaking in public[8]. Therefore, Quintilian can conclude (17, 9) that art brings to fulfilment what began by nature.

In addition, we must make the following distinction (17, 10): if we classify rhetoric as a generic speech (*sermo quicumque*), then we can believe it existed before the *ars*. Instead, according to Quintilian, the proper reasoning can be formulated in this way (17, 11); if anyone who speaks is not automatically an orator, then we should expect that people become orators through practising the art. Furthermore, if the ancients did not refer to themselves as orators, then we must suppose that the concept of orators did not exist before the art of oration. Therefore, we can also refute another objection; while even uneducated men can talk, what is done by those who did not study oration does not concern the art.

Quintilian offers two examples of Greek people who became orators after leaving other professions (17, 12). The first example is Demas, who had been an oarsman[9]; the second example is Aeschines, who was an actor. These two examples support the supposition that those who did not study may not be orators. Demas and Aeschines studied later than most but nevertheless studied. Aeschines was well versed in literature early in life due to his father's teachings. In contrast, Demas became an orator through practise, the best way to learn. However, according to Quintilian, study is always the best way to learn (17, 13); Demas would certainly have been better if he had studied. The fact that he did not write speeches but only spoke demonstrates this statement.

The theme of professionalisation also recurs at the end of Chapter 17; like the other arts, rhetoric consists of theory and practice (17, 42). There is a difference between those who behave with art and those who are without art; for Quintilian, those who studied do better than those who did not receive an education. We can also recognise a gradation in knowledge (17, 43); the educated man exceeds the ignorant, but he who is more educated surpasses the educated. This fact implies that many teachings compose the rhetoric, and it has many teachers. According to Quintilian, this statement is of particular importance for those who do not distinguish the art of saying from being honest since, in this way, we can connect the professionalisation of rhetoric with its ethical aspect.

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[8] Hom. *Il.* XVIII 497-508.
[9] See V. De Falco (ed.), Demade oratore, *Testimonianze e frammenti*, II ed., Napoli 1954.

In Chapter 19, Quintilian discusses the problem that asks if nature or nurture is more relevant to rhetoric (19, 1)[10]. In particular, he declares that a man cannot become a great orator if he does not possess both natural skills and education. However, Quintialian's argumentation is more articulate (19, 2); nature without learning is more effective, whereas learning without nature is worthless. When nature and learning are together, nature has more strength in average people, whereas learning is more potent in excellent orators. Nature is, in some way, the raw material of doctrine (19, 3); art does not exist without a raw material. The raw material has value even without art; however, art at its finest is better than nature.

The fact that rhetoric can be taught is also connected to the problem of its particular subject, and this topic is debated in Chapter 21[11]. Quintilian reports that, according to some people, the subject of rhetoric is the discourse itself (21, 1). For example, this is Gorgias' opinion in the homonymous Plato's dialogue[12]. However, if we interpret the word 'discourse' as the set of words on any subject, then the discourse is not the subject of rhetoric but instead is the work that comes from rhetoric. In contrast, if we interpret the word 'discourse' as the words themselves, then they are useless if there is nothing to say. For other people, the persuasive arguments are the subject of rhetoric[13]. However, these are only a part of the speech, the part dedicated to the argumentation. They are obtained through art but do not have a specific subject. Moreover, according to others, while civil matters are often the subject of rhetoric (21, 2), they are not its only subject. The subject of rhetoric is the virtue and, therefore, the whole of life (21, 3); for some others, the rhetoric is one part of life, such as justice, courage or self-control. Therefore, we can say that, in ethics, the rhetoric is the pragmatic part.

After this long list, Quintilian can finally express his opinion (21, 4), which tries to be as comprehensive as possible: the subject of rhetoric is anything that is shown to be exposed. By this definition, he refers to Socrates' teachings as received and accepted by

[10] On this chapter see Reinhardt – Winterbottom, *Institutio oratoria*, cit., 357-358.
[11] On this chapter see Reinhardt – Winterbottom, *Institutio oratoria*, cit., 377-379.
[12] Pl. *Grg.* 449d.
[13] Cf. Quint. *inst.* II 15, 13. See A.A. Raschieri, *Quintiliano vs. Cicerone: per una definizione della retorica in Quint. Inst. II 15*, «Sileno» 43, 2017, 301-321.

Plato. In the *Gorgias*, Socrates asserts that the subject of rhetoric is not words but things[14]; in the *Phaedrus*, he remarks that rhetoric is realised in the *agora*, in the assemblies, and also in private and domestic matters[15]. Moreover, Quintilian compares his opinion with that of Cicero (21, 5): according to Cicero, the subjects of rhetoric are the things that are presented to rhetoric, and he defines these specific topics[16]. To sum up, the orator should talk about everything that he has to speak about with elegance and abundance and also about any proposed issue[17]. Even more specifically, the orator must know how to ask, hear, select, treat and discuss any matter relating to human life (21, 6)[18].

If we follow the track of this argument, we could say that the subject of rhetoric is endless and not typical of rhetoric (21, 7). Therefore, in some way, rhetoric would be an all-encompassing art, without its subject. However, Quintilian makes a slight correction to this last statement (21, 8); he states that the subject of rhetoric is not infinite but is manifold. This subject also concerns the problem of learning rhetoric. If the orator must discuss everything, then he must be an expert in every art (21, 14). For example, Cicero said that the orator must know everything essential and every art[19]. Quintilian is more cautious; for him, an orator did not need an encyclopaedic knowledge and should not be omniscient. It is enough that he is familiar with the issues of his discourse. Therefore, the orator does not know everything but talks about every subject (21, 15). How can we solve this apparent contradiction? According to Quintilian, the solution lies in the learning process; the orator talks about what he learnt and continues to acquire knowledge.

2.2 Art as a process

Now, I will discuss the second feature that I listed at the beginning: the fact that art is not a result but instead consists of what we do. From this perspective, art is considered a process and is independent of any of its effects. For example, in Chapter 17, Quintilian answers the objections of those who think that rhetoric has no defined purpose or does not always achieve its goal (17, 22). Thus, rhetoric might not be considered an art, since

[14] Pl. *Grg.* 451b-d.
[15] Pl. *Phdr.* 261a.
[16] Cic. *inv.* I 7.
[17] Cic. *de orat.* I 21.
[18] Cic. *de orat.* III 54.
[19] Cic. *de orat.* I 20.

all the arts have intended purposes. However, according to Quintilian, the purpose of rhetoric is to speak well, and this goal is always achieved by the orator. In particular, the author rants against those who think that the goal of rhetoric is persuasion (17, 23). Instead, he argues that the orator and his art are not subordinate to a result. Of course, the orator tends to achieve victory, but his sole purpose is to speak well; thus, even if the orator does not win, he achieves his goal in any case. This problem occurs at the end of the chapter, too (17, 41), when Quintilian quotes Cleanthes' opinion that art is a possibility that is realised by a rule and a method (*ars est potestas via, id est ordine, efficiens*)[20]. So, according to Quintilian, the rule and the method of rhetoric are speaking well. He also cites another definition of art; it consists of coherent knowledge for a purpose that is useful to life. Again, the focus is on the process and not on the outcome.

Quintilian completes his discussion about this aspect of rhetorical art at the beginning of Chapter 18. He distinguishes various kinds of arts (18, 1) as follows: 1) the art θεωρητική is about knowledge and the assessment of things; 2) the πρακτική concerns an action and not its product; 3) the ποιητική focuses on the result, and its purpose is the fulfilment of work (18, 2)[21]. The prevailing idea is that rhetoric is based on action. However, according to Quintilian, rhetoric also takes part in the other two kinds of arts. It can be satisfied with mere speculation; furthermore, its usefulness lies also in private study (18, 4), since pure literary enjoyment is the speculative aspect of every person. Indeed, the tangible result of rhetoric is achieved even when we write speeches or historical works (18, 5); according to Quintilian, history is part of the art of rhetoric. In any case, the most useful and the most frequent fulfilment of rhetoric is in action and, for this reason, Quintilian accepts the definition of rhetoric as a practical art.

2.3 The morality of rhetoric

A central point in Quintilian thought on rhetoric as *ars* concerns professional ethics problems and the morality of rhetoric. To fully understand this issue, however, we must take a step back and consider the question's epistemological aspects. During the time of

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[20] *SVF* I, fr. 490. Cf. Olympiodorus, *In Plat. Gorg.*, p. 53: τέχνη ἐστὶν ἕξις ὁδῷ πάντα ἀνύουσα.
[21] On this chapter see Reinhardt – Winterbottom, *Institutio oratoria*, cit., 353-354: «the basic rationale of this threefold division of arts goes back to Aristotle at least» (p. 353).

Quintilian, a frequent objection to the possibility of considering rhetoric as art was the fact that it admits false perceptions (17, 18)[22]. The reasoning Quintilian tries to refute is that art cannot exist without perception; the perception is always true, so no art admits false perceptions. He argues that rhetoric sometimes lies, but it does not have false opinions (17, 19). When the orator employs a falsehood, he knows that he is using it (17, 20); therefore, he has no false opinion but is deceiving another person. Another common objection is that while the arts do not use any fault, rhetoric employs bad habits (17, 26) because it lies and arouses passions. However, Quintilian distinguishes between process and intention (17, 27); uttering falsehoods and arousing passions are not bad habits if they come from an honest understanding. Even a wise man can sometimes lie; moreover, an orator must arouse passions if there are no other ways to conduct the court to the right conclusion. Judges are often ignorant and, therefore, have to be deceived to prevent them from making mistakes.

If judges, assemblies and councils were always composed of wise people, the negative things, such as envy, favours, alleged opinions and false witnesses, would have no power (17, 28). If this fact were true, there would be no need for eloquence; indeed, it would only serve as a pleasant hobby. Instead, because hearts may change, and the truth is subject to evil, it is necessary to fight and to use rhetorical art as well as anything that can benefit (17, 29). Quintilian explains that, in these cases, a deviation is corrected by a new deviation. He also points out that someone uses a more complex sophism against rhetoric (17, 30). Since there are speeches in favour of and against the same subject, the rhetoric goes against itself, destroys what it built and also teaches either what you should or should not say.

Thus, we arrive at the centre of Quintilian's discourse on the morality of rhetoric. He admits that these objections are valid when rhetoric is separated from an honest man and virtue (17, 31). Therefore, based on this statement, rhetoric is absent when there is an unfair cause. Moreover, the orator, who is necessarily an honest man, speaks in favour and against the same case either with difficulty or to a paradoxical situation. Quintilian is particularly careful to examine this issue and continues with a discussion on the speeches

[22] On this passage see Reinhardt – Winterbottom, *Institutio oratoria*, cit., 327-330.

in favour of and against the same cause. He argues that some cases may push two wise men in opposite directions (17, 32). Thus, they consider fair fighting between them, since they are led by their rational capacity. In these cases, rhetoric does not turn against itself, but a case goes against another case instead (17, 33). Thus, even though two orators, who received the same teachings, fight against each other, rhetoric is still an art.

Furthermore, rhetoric does not destroy the work that it creates (17, 34) because the orator does not dissolve the argument that he introduced; he does not search for counterarguments but instead seeks the most credible evidence. To explain this point, Quintilian shows that the white and the whiter or the sweet and the sweeter are not opposed to each other; in the same way, the likely and the more likely are not opposed (17, 35). Therefore, the orator learns what must be said in each case, not what is necessary or is not required to say absolutely. Beyond the argument for the likely/less likely, Quintilian uses another element to explain the morality of rhetoric. He asserts that rhetoric often has to protect the truth, and the common good sometimes requires the defence of the false (17, 36). In particular, Quintilian refers to the contradictions highlighted by Cicero in the second book of the *De oratore*[23]. Quintilian reports the opinion that rhetoric is the art of the things we know, but an orator speaks based on belief and not on knowledge because an orator occasionally speaks to those who do not know and sometimes talks about what he does not know.

Next, Quintilian declares he is not interested in the issue if the judge should know what the case is about because this problem does not concern the *ars* of the orator (17, 37). According to the definition that rhetoric is the art of speaking well, it is enough to know that the orator can speak well. In the following sections, Quintilian responds to three other objections. The first objection concerns the fact that the orator does not know if what he says is true (17, 38). In this case, however, it is sufficient to argue that the orator's knowledge is based on the strength of the evidence that comes from intellectual capacity. The second objection concerns the fact that the orator does not know if the case being handled is true (17, 39). Against this objection, Quintilian asserts that the purpose of rhetoric is not always to tell the truth but always to say what is probable. The third

[23] Cic. *de orat.* II 30.

objection is that in a dispute, the orator often defends the same reasons that he refuted in another disagreement (17, 40). In this case, as we saw previously, Quintilian accepts the content of the objection since he connects rhetoric and morality very closely. However, he rejects the fact that this is an objection to the rhetoric as an *ars*: the vices are in men, not in rhetoric.

Moreover, the moral theme of rhetoric occupies all of Chapter 20, which begins with an alternative view of rhetoric as a neutral art or as a virtue (20, 1)[24]. In the first case, rhetoric could be helpful depending on the behaviour of its user; in contrast, many philosophers assert the other hypothesis, that rhetoric is a virtue. Quintilian analyses the issue objectively and pragmatically (20, 2). He asserts that rhetoric is mostly an ἀτεχνία (a non-art) or a κακοτεχνία (a negative art). The rhetoric is often a non-art, as it does not derive from reasoning and education but instead from shamelessness and greed. Indeed, sometimes it is bad art because it is perceived as a real calamity.

At other times, instead, the rhetoric is a ματαιοτεχνία (a useless art), that it is an unnecessary imitation of art, neither good nor bad (20, 3). To explain this case, Quintilian introduces an example from stories about Alexander the Great. Rhetoric as a useless art is like the man who caught and skewered chickpeas on a needle when someone threw them at him[25]. This exercise was so meaningless that Alexander rewarded him with a bushel of chickpeas. To return to the rhetoric, Quintilian mainly criticises who wastes his time in declamations that are far from reality (20, 4); instead, he wants to teach that rhetoric is the same as virtue.

Therefore, he introduces the argument of philosophers (20, 5); virtue is consistent in deciding whether to do something and therefore is the same as prudence. As a result, virtue will be consistent in saying or not saying something. Moreover, virtue is innate (20, 6); nature gives men the principles and the seeds of virtues before they are taught. For example, this is the case for honesty, which is even known to rude and barbarous people. In the same way, men have an innate ability to support causes in their favour, even if in an imperfect manner. Nature reacts differently to the arts that are distant from virtue (20,

[24] On this chapter see Reinhardt – Winterbottom, *Institutio oratoria*, cit., 361-364.
[25] Reinhardt – Winterbottom, *Institutio oratoria*, cit., 368: «the closest parallel to this game is to be found in Max. Tyr. *Diss.* 29.4 Trapp».

7). Moreover, philosophers admit that there are two types of discourse: rhetoric and dialectic, which are represented by Stoic Zenon as an open hand and a closed fist[26].

Therefore, if the dialectic is a virtue, the rhetoric is a virtue even more so, since it is more precise and understandable than the dialectic. A comparison between philosophy and rhetoric is also present in the following chapter (21, 12-13). In this case, Quintilian declares that the function of philosophy is to discuss the concepts of good, useful and right (21, 12). However, as both philosophers and orators are honest men, it follows that the subject of their two arts is the same. Quintilian refers to the arguments already developed in the first book, particularly the fact that philosophers took possession of a subject that the orators owned[27]. He insists that if the subject of the dialectic is to discuss the issues presented by a short speech, then the same matter belongs to the continuous discourse that characterises rhetoric.

To return to Chapter 20, Quintilian goes further and presents an explanation based on rhetoric's functions (20, 8); since the orator's duties are to praise, to persuade and to speak in court, he should know what it is morally noble or unworthy and also should be familiar with benefits and justice. Moreover, rhetoric presupposes another virtue: courage. Orators must be brave enough to speak to people, to offend mighty people and to talk even though they are surrounded by armed men, as happened in the case against Milo, who was defended by Cicero.

Another demonstration is possible thanks to a comparison with animals (20, 9); just as every animal has a chief virtue (for example, impulse for the lion or velocity for the horse), so the virtues of man are eloquence and reason as we overcame animals precisely for reasoning and speaking. Quintilian quotes Cicero's *De oratore*, where Crassus states that eloquence is a primary virtue[28]. Moreover, he refers to Cicero's letters to Brutus and other passages where eloquence is defined as a virtue[29].

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[26] *SVF* I, fr. 75. Cf. Cic. *fin.* II 17, *orat.* 113-115; Sext. Emp. *math.* II 6-7.
[27] On the relationship between philosophy and rhetoric in the Hellenistic school see M.T. Luzzatto, *Filosofia e retorica nel curriculum ellenistico: una convivenza (im)possibile*, «Prometheus» 34, 2008, 129-159.
[28] Cic. *de orat.* III 55.
[29] Cic. *epist. frg.* 7, 14, *ac.*. I 5, *part.* 78.

Finally, to complete the discussion about the morality of rhetoric, Quintilian must respond to another possible objection; even a dishonest man can adequately structure a speech and use introduction, narration and argumentation (20, 10). He responds with an analogy: even a bandit may fight furiously, but courage is a virtue. Similarly, even a dishonest slave can endure torture without groaning, but pain tolerance is still a virtue. Thus, Quintilian concludes that this is possible because many different things take place simultaneously.

2.4 A comparison with other arts

At this point, I would like to deal with one last problem: the way Quintilian uses the comparison between rhetoric and other arts in this development process[30]. At the beginning of this section (17, 3), he compares rhetoric and the professions of the architect, the turner and the potter. He states that no one doubts that these are arts, so there is also no doubt that rhetoric is an art. To show that everything that art brings to completion began by nature, he compares rhetoric with medicine, architecture and music. For medicine, he declares that even those who are not doctors can apply a simple bandage by instinct or use rest and a special diet to lower a fever (17, 9). Similarly, houses existed before the birth of architecture; homes are also present among primitive peoples (17, 10). The same is valid for music; singing and dancing are present in some form among all peoples.

A little further, when Quintilian shows that rhetoric sometimes lies but does not have false opinions, he employs a comparison with military art (17, 19); generals sometimes have to resort to deception to solve a difficult situation. Quintilian uses two historical examples, one drawn from Roman history and one from the Greeks. In the first case, he talks of Hannibal, who deceived Fabius Maximus by a cunning ruse[31]. While surrounded by the Roman army, he delivered the surrounding mountains a herd of oxen, dragging bundles on fire to persuade the enemy army that he was moving. Similarly, Theopompus, King of Sparta, managed to escape from Arcadian captivity by wearing his wife's clothes

[30] On the medicine and rhetoric in Quint. *inst.* see I. Mastrorosa, *Medicina e retorica nell'Institutio oratoria di Quintiliano*, «Sileno» 22, 1996, 229-290.
[31] Liv. XXII 16, 5-17, 3.

(17, 20)[32]. In the same manner, we can say that the painter uses deception when he draws different planes using perspective illusion (17, 21).

Later on, to demonstrate that rhetoric does not depend on its results, Quintilian introduces two comparisons with a pilot and a doctor. On the one hand, an orator is like a helmsman who always wants to arrive at the port with a safe ship, but it is not his fault if he is caught in a storm that shipwrecks the vessel (17, 24). Similarly, a doctor always tries to heal sick people, but he does not dismiss the purpose of medicine if he does not achieve a patient's recovery (17, 25). Many reasons can prevent healing beyond the control and art of the doctor, including the severity of the disease, the excesses of the patient or some inadvertent cases.

Moreover, when Quintilian shows that it is possible that two orators who have been educated in the same way may fight against each other without preventing rhetoric from being an art, he employs a comparison with the art of arms, the art of the pilot and military art (17, 33). It is possible that two gladiators taught by the same teacher will someday fight each other. In naval battles, pilots collide with other pilots. During a war, similarly trained generals may fight against each other. Quintilian uses a comparison between scientists and astronomers to refute the claim that an orator does not know if what he says is true (17, 38). Although scientists teach that everything originated from fire, water, the four elements or from atoms, they do not know if these things are true. The same happens to astronomers when they calculate the distances between the stars or the dimensions of the sun and the Earth. In addition, a comparison with medicine is used in an objection that the orator does not know whether the cause is true or not (17, 39). A doctor may not know if a person has a real headache, but he will still take care of him as if it were true.

At the beginning of Chapter 18, Quintilian cites astronomy, dance and painting as examples of the arts θεωρητική (theoretical), πρακτική (practical) and ποιητική (productive), respectively (18, 1-2). Furthermore, to explain that an orator is an orator even when he is not talking, he compares him to a doctor (18, 3). At the beginning of Chapter 19, Quintilian uses a comparison with agriculture and sculpture to show that while a combination of natural skills and education exists in rhetoric, natural skills are

[32] Polyaenus, *strat.* VIII 34.

more potent in average orators, whereas education is more effective in the most skilled ones. In the case of agriculture, a great farmer does not derive a profit from the land without fertility (19, 2). However, some fruit grows from fertile soil, even though it is not cultivated, while a farmer is more successful than fertility alone for yielding productive land. Similarly, it is more preferable to own a rough piece of Parian marble than a statue that Praxiteles carved in lava (19, 3, *ex molari lapide*)[33]. At the same time, a statue that Praxiteles carved in marble would be more valuable than a piece of rough stone.

A comparison with sculpture is also present at the beginning of Chapter 21. To prove that if discourse is defined as a set of words on any subject, then the discourse is not the subject of rhetoric but its work itself, Quintilian states that the same happens in the connection between a statue and sculpture (21, 1). A little further on, he uses a comparison with architecture, chiselling and carving to show that rhetoric has many subjects (21, 9-10). Architecture deals with everything that is useful to construction, chiselling produces works from different materials (gold, silver, bronze and iron) and carving, in addition to the materials already mentioned, also works on wood, ivory, marble, glass and gems. There are also subjects common to more than one *ars* (21, 10); for example, bronze is common to both the sculptor and the smelter, who produces tableware. Similarly, ointments and exercises are used in both medicine and gymnastics (21, 11), or foods are used in medicine and culinary arts.

Later on, when Quintilian deals with what the orator must know, he cites the examples of the blacksmith and musician (21, 16). They know their profession better than the orator; indeed, it is best if the orator does not know the matter that is discussed. If the orator is instructed by the musician, the blacksmith or the litigant, he shall know the topics better than they. Moreover, when the blacksmith and the musician talk about their professions, they act as orators even if they are not orators (21, 17). The same thing happens when someone binds a wound even though he is not a doctor. Moreover, it can happen that, in deliberative discourse, an orator should talk about building the harbour of Ostia even if he is not an architect (21, 8). An orator may also speak about bruises and swellings as signs of indigestion or poisoning even though he is not a doctor (21, 19). In

[33] Reinhardt – Winterbottom, *Institutio oratoria*, cit., 360: «probably not a millstone as such [...], but a piece of the volcanic rock out of which millstones were commonly made».

addition, an orator can talk about units of measure and numbers despite the fact that he is not a mathematician.

3. Rhetoric as a Skilled Labour

3.1 The rhetorician as a writer

In the *Institutio oratoria*, Quintilian presents a precise picture of his rhetorical activity as a profession already in the initial letter to his publisher, Tryphon[34]. In this letter, he delves into an essential component of this activity that we would now call 'academic writing'. He informs Tryphon that he spent two years writing this work[35]. This time, however, has not served so much in the writing of the work (*stilo*) as in the preliminary research (*inquisitio*) and the reading of the sources (*legendis auctoribus*). From this passage, we have a bright and conscious picture of the profession of an academic *ante litteram* engaged in studying and recording the results of his research.

The introduction to the first book offers some other interesting information on this subject[36]. The writing of the *Institutio oratoria* derives from a twenty-year teaching activity (I *pr* 1) and collects the results of a long rhetorical and educational practice[37]. The work, however, does not have a theoretical purpose but instead has robust pedagogical value. The dedication of the work to Marcellus Victor and, above all, the destination of the work as a guide for the education of his son Geta (I *pr* 6) demonstrate this fact[38]. In particular, Quintilian conceives of the rhetorician as a 'comprehensive' teacher of the future orator from his childhood.

From this preface, we also learn more about the relationship between Quintilian and academic writing. He states that two books on rhetoric were already in circulation under

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[34] Tryphon was also the publisher of the poet Martial; see Mart. IV 72, XIII 3.
[35] Quintilian probably wrote the *Institutio oratoria* in the years 93-95 or, according to others, in the years 89-92. In any case, he finished the work before the death of the emperor Domitian (September 18, 96). See A. Pennacini (ed.), Quintiliano, *Institutio oratoria*, vol. 1, Torino 2001, xlvii and 805.
[36] On the preface of the first book see E. Melchiorre, *La retorica degli inizi: costanti tematiche e funzionali nei proemi al primo e all'ultimo libro dell'Institutio oratoria di Quintiliano*, Roma 2007.
[37] Quintilian's teaching activity had to take place between about 70 and 90 AD from what we read in Suetonius and Jerome. See Pennacini, *Quintiliano*, cit., 805. In general, on the teaching activity of Quintilian see M. Kraus, *La «chaire» de Quintilien et les chaires de rhétorique dans l'antiquité gréco-romaine*, in L. Calboli Montefusco (ed.), *Papers on rhetoric XII*, Perugia 2014, 125-143: the scholar highlights the elements of uncertainty that Quintilian held the first official chair of rhetoric in Latin.
[38] Marcellus Victor was an important official at the court of Domitian. He was also the dedicatee of the fourth book of Statius' *Silvae*; the poet also dedicated to him the fourth poem of the same work.

his name (I *pr* 7): a book derived from the compilations of his students after a conversation that took place in two days and a collection of student notes from lessons that lasted for several days. Quintilian shows much awareness of the copyright problem and disavows these pirated editions. With the publication of the *Institutio oratoria*, he intends to arrange and update his teachings that have already been circulated in written form but were not controlled by the author (I *pr* 8).

3.2 The rhetorician as a teacher

In the first book, Quintilian also elaborates on another topic related to rhetoric as a profession: whether home teaching or that taught in a school is preferable (I 2). In this case, the author is very attentive to the public of his readers and, in particular, to parents who are worried about choosing the best educational path for their children. Quintilian carefully refutes the objections to school education (I 2, 1-16) and extensively develops the positive elements of schooling (I 2, 17-31). First, he emphasises the socialisation function for students who can compare themselves with other students and create critical social bonds. Second, Quintilian values collaborative learning and the emulative mechanisms that can bring excellent results in the educational field. Finally, he is in favour of the gradual teaching that can take place more efficiently in a school environment. Therefore, according to Quintilian, it is essential that the profession of rhetorician as a teacher takes place at school among students of different ages and backgrounds.

Quintilian devotes an entire chapter of the first book (I 3) to another fundamental feature for the professionalism of the rhetorician; the teacher of rhetoric must be a good teacher. First, he must pay attention to the individual characteristics of the students. Second, the teacher must carefully organise the teaching activity in such a way as to alternate work and rest, which must consist of suitable games. Finally, the teacher of rhetoric must entirely avoid bodily pains. This practice is degrading, as, according to Quintilian, it is appropriate to reserve it for the punishment of slaves, and, moreover, it produces insensitivity in students who do not shine for intellectual gifts. In the modern

age, pedagogy experts read these indications of Quintilian with admiration and have promoted the study of the *Institutio oratoria* in courses for teachers[39].

If it is true that, according to Quintilian, the teacher of rhetoric is the director of the entire educational process that concerns an orator from childhood to adulthood, he is aware of the necessity that the rhetorician collaborates with other professional figures. The *Institutio oratoria*, therefore, proposes to acquire an encyclopaedic knowledge in which all the disciplines find their place. The preponderant part is, of course, occupied by grammar (I 4-9), which constitutes the first moment of students' education. However, the school program also includes the study of music (I 10, 9-33) and mathematics (I 10, 34-49). Quintilian strongly supports the need to have a general culture (I 10, 1-8) and provides for the intervention of other professional figures, such as the mime teacher, the *comoedus*, who is fundamental for the development of the performative skills of the students (I 11). In addition, the author shows particular attention to parents who are part of his audience. Quintilian addresses the parents of his students, even in a polemical tone, in the sections on the need for general education and on the possibility of following more than one teaching at the same time (I 12).

Quintilian has to deal with a central problem in his time: the need to clearly outline the boundaries between the skills of the grammarian and the rhetorician (II 1)[40]. Grammar is defined, in no uncertain terms, as a *schola minor*, a lower level school that is propaedeutic to rhetorical teaching (II 1, 3). The possibility of passing from the condition of the grammarian to that of the rhetorician, if the grammarian were to deepen and perfect his knowledge (II 1, 6), demonstrates the different professional status between these two activities. Quintilian's heated argument stems from the fact that the grammarians of his time arrogated specific functions of the rhetoricians, particularly in regards the teaching of some declamatory exercises.

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[39] See for example D.H. Parkenson – J.A. Parkenson, *The American Teacher. Foundations of Education*, New York 2008, 99.

[40] On the profession of the grammarian, mainly but not only in Late antiquity, see M.G. Bajoni, *Les grammairiens lascifs. La grammaire à la fin de l'Empire romain*, Paris 2008. On Quintilian's relationship with grammar see W.M. Bloomer, *The School of Rome. Latin Studies and the Origins of Liberal Education*. Berkeley – Los Angeles – London 2011, 105-106 and 117.

Quintilian strongly insists on another critical aspect of the professionalism of the rhetorician: his moral qualities (*mores*) and his duties (*officia*). The rhetorician is distinguished by integrity and seriousness (II 2, 3, *sanctitas* and *gravitas*), which he must translate into personal self-restraint and severity towards the students (II 2, 4, *abstinentia* and *severitas*). The teacher thus appears as a substitute for the father, who must find a balance between rigour and affability towards the students and thus become a model for them from both a human and an intellectual point of view (II 2, 8). According to Quintilian, the teacher as a teaching professional not only possesses these exceptional moral qualities but also attempts to organise the school environment in the best possible way. He must worry about eliminating extreme manifestations of joy among the students and, above all, must carefully separate the students by age.

This indication can be traced back to a problem that is not explicitly addressed by Quintilian but which emerges with a careful reading of the last section of this chapter: the theme of the control of sexuality (II 2, 14-15). On the one hand, it is necessary to avoid not only any indecency but also the suspicion that it may have occurred (*carendum non solum crimine turpitudinis verum etiam suspicione*) among the students. On the other hand, it is necessary for parents not to choose notoriously vicious teachers (*flagitia manifesta*) since any teaching would be ineffective. In this passage, therefore, we once again note the attention of Quintilian for the parents who will read his work and, moreover, the author's reticent attitude in dealing with the issue of sexuality in school (*ut absit ab ultimis vitiis ipse ac schola ne praecipiendum quidem credo*)[41].

3.3 In search of excellence

Quintilian is aware that teachers are the subject of rankings, in a similar manner as the current ratings of teachers and professors. According to Quintilian, however, these rankings are used in a distorted way, since often the worst teachers are preferred to the better ones (II 3). The author, instead, advises attending from the beginning the best

[41] On this passage see C.A. Williams, *Roman homosexuality. Ideologies of masculinity in classical antiquity*, New York – Oxford 1999, 82. On gender construction in the rhetorical schools see A. Richlin, *Gender and rhetoric: producing manhood in the schools*, in W.J. Dominik (ed.), *Roman Eloquence. Rhetoric in Society and Literature*, London – New York 1997, 74-90. The unexceptionable morality of the rhetorician enables Quintilian to indicate which are the *mores* and the *officia* of the orator, the theme of the last book of the *Institutio oratoria*.

teacher who is endowed with practical rhetoric, knowledge of the teachings and the ability to adapt to the student. In Quintilian's opinion, inferior teachers do not teach less but instead are worse. Of course, whoever is gifted with eloquence cannot help but be a good teacher. In particular, clarity (II 3, 7, *perspicuitas*) is the chief merit of both rhetoric and excellent teaching. Furthermore, Quintilian stresses the importance of the social dimension in the school context (II 3, 11). The best students attend classes of the best teachers; therefore, in these schools, it is possible to imitate the best examples and immediate correct the defects.

In this section of the *Institutio oratoria*, the psychological dimension of the question is explicit. On the one hand, the inferior teachers are considered to be quieter and in a good mood (II 3, 3, *bono stomacho*)[42]. On the other hand, Quintilian reports the prejudice that the best rhetoricians will not stoop to teach the more elementary details (II 3, 4, *ad minora descendere*). Interestingly, the economic theme remains under cover; the author does not explicitly state that the best teachers are more expensive than the worst teachers. A reference to the remuneration of the best teachers is, however, present in the example of the flautist Timotheus (II 3, 3). He asked for a double reward from those who had already had other teachers because he first had to correct the wrong method and then teach the correct manner. Quintilian remains equally vague on the identification of these minor teachers since he speaks generically of *praeceptores*. Perhaps, even in this case, we must recognise the controversy with the grammarians. If this hypothesis is correct, the only excellent teacher (*eminentissimus praeceptor*) is the rhetorician, whereas the *minores praeceptores* are the grammarians.

Quintilian proposes a detailed program for the first rhetorical education based on his experience as a teacher. He explains what the exercises (II 4), the readings (II 5) and the educational methodologies (II 6-8) should be. The teacher of rhetoric, however, is salaried by the families of the students. Thus, the relationship with parents assumes considerable importance as an element of obstacle or facilitation for the rhetorical education. This dynamic relationship between teacher and clients emerges above all in two cases.

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[42] The phrase *bono stomacho* refers to proper digestion and, therefore, to the consequent tranquillity and good mood; see also Quint. *inst.* VI 3, 93, Mart. XII *praef.*

According to Quintilian, the first exercises to be addressed at the school of rhetoric are those that constitute the advanced series of *progymnasmata* (II 4): narrations, refutation and confirmation, praise and blame, common places, thesis and support or criticism of a draft law[43]. The rhetorician emphasises that, in this first phase, rigorous teaching with a consistent and correct presentation is necessary (II 4, 15, *rectae atque emendatae orationis*). Therefore, the student must avoid extemporaneous loquacity, unexpected reflection and slowness in getting up to answer. These attitudes are quackish expedients (*circulatoriae iactationis*) that amplify not only the harmful habits of students but also the useless joy of inexperienced parents (II 4, 16, *parentium imperitorum inane gaudium*).

As we have seen, parents can encourage counterproductive behaviour, but sometimes they help the work of the teacher of rhetoric (II 5). Whereas the grammarian proposes an explanation for the poets (*enarratio poetarum*), Quintilian introduces to the school of rhetoric the reading of orators and historians (*historiae atque ... orationum lectione*). This exercise is more advanced than the usual series of *progymnasmata* and is present only in the works of Quintilian and Theon[44]. Quintilian claims to have independently introduced this exercise in his school. However, while writing the *Institutio oratoria*, he knew that the same activity was commonly used by Greek rhetoricians who did not propose it personally but instead entrusted it to special assistants (*auditores*). This exercise, explained in detail in the next part of the chapter (II 5, 6-26), illustrates the merits and flaws of the writers. From our point of view, it is interesting to note two statements (II 5, 1). First, in his school, Quintilian proposed these exercises to a few students because many already had a solid rhetorical education and did not tolerate any extra effort. Second, Quintilian was successful in proposing these exercises only if the parents of the students considered them useful (*parentes utile esse crediderant*). Therefore, as a professional, Quintilian himself had to account for the limits imposed by his clients: parents who were mostly inexperienced with rhetoric and ill-disposed to waste resources on apparently useless activities.

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[43] On *progymnasmata* see G.A. Kennedy, *Progymnasmata: Greek Texbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric*, Leiden 2003; F. Berardi, *La retorica degli esercizi preparatori. Glossario ragionato dei Progymnasmata*, Zürich – New York 2017.

[44] Theon, *prog.* 13 (pp. 102-105 Patillon); see M. Patillon – G. Bolognesi (eds.), Aelius Theon, *Progymnasmata*, Paris 2002, xcviii-c.

3.4 Public and private dimensions of the profession

In the preface of the fourth book of the *Institutio oratoria*, Quintilian highlights the public and political dimensions of the rhetorician as a professional. The author turns to the dedicatee of the work, Marcellus Victor, and makes an essential distinction between the aims of the *Institutio oratoria*. If, in a previous period, Quintilian thought of rhetorical education as a preoccupation to circumscribe in the private and family sphere (*contenti fore domestico usu videbamur*), now his role as a teacher and writer of rhetoric had taken on a public dimension. This change coincides with the task that the emperor Domitian entrusted to Quintilian: the education of the nephews, Domitian and Vespasian, of his sister, Domitilla. The rhetorician asserts that this task increases for him the need to be more accurate (*nova insuper mihi diligentiae causa*) and the concern for the judgement of others (*altior sollicitudo quale iudicium hominum emererer*).

Indeed, in this passage, Quintilian shows an evident flattering attitude towards Domitian, similar to what we read in the praise of the emperor as a poet in the tenth book (X 1, 91-92). However, this new public dimension elevates the tone of the work to such a degree that the rhetorician invokes the gods as a poet. Up until this point, Quintilian had retained a private and secular hue. Here, however, he feels the need to carry out this act of devotion (IV *pr* 6, *religio*) to the gods and Domitian because of the office at the imperial court and the importance of the contents of the book[45].

The personal dimension of the profession comes back strongly in the preface of the sixth book of the *Institutio oratoria* due to the tragic family events that afflicted Quintilian. As we already read in the introduction of the fourth book, the ideal model of Roman education is that of family education with a passage of knowledge between father and son (IV *pr* 1, *tui meique filii formare disciplinam satis putaremus*) according to the model of Cato's *Libri ad Marcum filium*[46]. At the beginning of the sixth book, Quintilian

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[45] The insistence on the importance of the book's contents (*maiora praeteritis ac magis ardua*) is not at all negligible because it is part of a refined literary game. From that point forward, Quintilian introduces the parts of the judicial orations (*iudicialium causarum ... ordo*), from the introduction to the final peroration. If it is true that poets invoke the gods at the beginning of the work and, subsequently, in the points of highest importance, the rhetorician can here propose a new debut of the work, with the invocation to the gods, immediately before the prefaces from the point of view of rhetoric.

[46] Quintilian states that, to his knowledge, Cato was the first Roman author to deal with rhetoric (III 1, 19, *Romanorum primus, quantum ego quidem sciam, condidit aliqua in hanc materiam M. Cato*).

summarizes the reasons that led him to write the *Institutio oratoria*: the expectations of the dedicatee, Marcellus Victor, the usefulness for young valuable people (*iuvenes bonos*), the task of teaching Domitian's nephews and, above all, the possibility of leaving his work as an inheritance for his son.

A sorrowful atmosphere, however, invests this cultural project. First, we see Quintilian engaged in feverish writing because he feared an early death. Second, his son, also named Quintilian, dies prematurely at the age of ten before the completion of the *Institutio oratoria*. Third, the loss of this child reminds his father of another unfortunate precedent; his youngest son died at the age of five when Quintilian was beginning to write his book *De causis corruptae eloquentiae*[47]. Finally, the rhetorician had already lost his wife, who was much younger than he and died only nineteen years old.

These events open up a long and private digression on the life of Quintilian. We see the rhetorician afflicted by deep pain while exalting the talents of his wife and first dead son. Above all, we perceive the father's pride for the great intellectual and moral abilities of his son, Quintilian. A consul (or consular) had adopted him, and the maternal uncle *praetor* had promised him his daughter in marriage; therefore, a brilliant political career was possible for the young man. After the loss of the son, the study and the profession of rhetoric were the father's only solaces. Quintilian does not fear other misfortunes; at this point, he has an unshakable assurance of being able to complete his project. His work no longer has a personal interest but instead a general utility. The *Institutio oratoria* becomes a legacy for different people than those for which Quintilian had prepared it.

3.5 The functions of the rhetorician

In the *Institutio oratoria*, a rhetorician holds some essential functions that define his professionalism in a more precise way. First, he is a facilitator of learning. Second, he becomes a literary critic in the wake of a long philological and grammatical tradition. Third, he is an expert in the art of memory and oratory performance. Finally, a rhetorician has the necessary skills to define an ethical portrait of an orator.

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[47] On this work see G. Brugnoli, *Quintiliano, Seneca e il De causis corruptae eloquentiae*, «Orpheus» 6, 1959, 29-41; Ch.O. Brink, *Quintilian's De causis corruptae eloquentiae and Tacitus' Dialogus de oratoribus*, «CQ» 39, 1989, 472-503.

In the preface of the eighth book, Quintilian presents a rhetorician as a facilitator[48]. He states that brevity and simplicity must be the basis of teaching (VIII *pr* 1, *incipientibus brevius ac simplicius tradi magis convenit*). In this perspective, it is essential that the rhetorician, as a professional teacher, establishes a smooth and easy path (VIII *pr* 2, *via ... plana et ... expedita*) for beginners with the selection of topics and the gradualness of the track. Furthermore, the rhetorician must enhance the natural qualities of the students to the detriment of the theory (VIII *pr* 12). Thus, it will seem that the rhetorical teachings come not so much from the discoveries of the masters but instead from the observation of reality. Therefore, Quintilian conceives the profession of rhetoricians as a mediation between theory and practice, a guide that leads students towards ever greater independence and an even closer proximity to reality.

The second function of the rhetorician as a professional that emerges clearly in the *Institutio oratoria* is that of a literary critic. In the first chapter of the tenth book, Quintilian proposes to select authors that the orator must know and read to reach the *hexis*, the *firma facilitas*, the ease in public speaking[49]. At the same time, in the wake of an already well-established tradition, the rhetorician expresses literary judgments of Greek and Roman authors. He divides these writers on a linguistic basis (first the Greeks and then the Romans) and presents them according to the literary genres starting from Homer to the contemporaries. Quintilian recommends extensive readings not only from discourses but also from poetic, theatrical, historical and philosophical works. Thus, an orator in training can acquire the skills to develop the ability to write, reflect and improvise. Regarding the profession, the rhetorician extends and completes one of the functions of the grammarian who, however, focused mainly on poetic works.

In the eleventh book of the *Institutio oratoria*, Quintilian presents the rhetorician as a teacher who teaches people to speak in a convenient way (*dicere apte*), is an expert in mnemonics and knows how to perfect the oratory performance (*pronuntiatio*). This last aspect concerns not only the pronunciation but also the gestures and the clothes of the

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[48] On the preface of this book see F. Ahlheio, *Quintilian. The Preface to Book VIII and Comparable Passages in the Institutio Oratoria*, Amsterdam 1983.
[49] On the *hexis* see A.A. Raschieri, *Facilitas and héxis in Latin rhetoric*, in L. Calboli Montefusco – M.S. Celentano (eds.), *Papers on rhetoric XIV*, Perugia 2018, 109-133.

orator. In short, the rhetorician as a professional is a complete trainer of public communication.

However, the twelfth and last book of the *Institutio oratoria* shows that the function of a rhetorician is not only that of teaching a technique but also that of reflecting on the behaviour and duties of an orator (XII *pr* 4, *nostra temeritas etiam mores ei conabitur dare et adsignabit officia*). Thus, a rhetorician offers an ideal model for an orator who, in the wake of the Catonian definition of 'honest man expert in eloquence' (XII 1, 1, *vir bonus dicendi peritus*), is above all a man with a robust morality (*vir bonus*). Quintilian does not renounce this moral urgency that he feels is a part of his profession, even if he is aware from the beginning that this model is only an ideal[50].

3.6 The denial of rhetoric as a profession

In the last book of the *Institutio oratoria*, Quintilian reaches an unexpected and paradoxical conclusion: the denial of the possibility that not only the ideal orator but also the rhetorician as a professional teacher can exist. In Chapter 11, the author asserts that the perfect rhetorician is an expert orator after his retirement from active life. In this case, the orator's house becomes the school for the best young people (XII 11, 5). Thus, Quintilian excludes the possibility of the profession of rhetorician outside the traditional way of apprenticeship with a famous orator according to the model that Cicero proposed in the *De oratore*.

A dangerous dynamic affects the relationship between teacher and students of rhetoric. On the one hand, Quintilian states that students should not prolong the learning too much (XII 11, 3). On the other hand, he notes that rhetoricians are interested in extending the teaching period to earn more money (XII 11, 14). Those who deal with rhetoric must instead concentrate on studying and not waste time on useless activities. Quintilian emphasises the differences between rhetoricians and other teachers (*professores*) of

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[50] Cfr. Quint. *inst.* I *pr* 18-19: *Sit igitur orator vir talis qualis vere sapiens appellari possit, nec moribus modo perfectus* [...]*, sed etiam scientia et omni facultate dicendi; qualis fortasse nemo adhuc fuerit, sed non ideo minus nobis ad summa tendendum est*. «So let our orator be the 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. Such a person has perhaps never yet existed; but that is no reason for relaxing our efforts to attain the ideal». Transl. by D.A. Russell.

mathematics, music, grammar, etc. (XII 11, 20). Unlike the rhetoricians, these professional teachers do not keep learning until old age, but they leave more time to teaching than to learning.

Those who deal with eloquence, whether they are orators or rhetoricians, must always learn new things and not spend their lives teaching. The model is the encyclopaedic knowledge that figures like Homer, Hippias of Elis, Gorgias, Plato and Aristotle among the Greeks, or Cato, Varro, Cicero and Celsus, among the Romans (XII 11, 21-24), represent. Quintilian, however, explicitly states that this model is unattainable (XII 11, 25, *perficere tantum opus arduum, et nemo perfecit*). Ultimately, it is impossible that the ideal rhetoric exists, and Quintilian is forced to create a profound redefinition of the image of the rhetorician as a professional.

The *Institutio oratoria* closes with the last mention of the dedicatee, Marcellus Victor (XII 11, 31), and also with Quintilian summing up his experience as a rhetorician and a writer of a rhetorical work. If his rhetorical teachings (*praecepta dicendi*) will not bring significant benefits to the young (*magnam utilitatem*), at least they will be able to instil in them the will to act well (*bonam voluntatem*). Therefore, the focus of Quintilian is no longer on rhetoric as a technique and the rhetorician as a professional but instead on young people and their overall education.

4. Conclusion

Along with the *Institutio oratoria*, we can find the most refined results of an extended reflection on the profession of the rhetorician. In the final chapters of the second book, the influences of the Greek tradition (Academic, Peripatetic and Stoic) and Roman thought (mainly, Cicero) join Quintilian's point of view. Rhetoric as an art is a process and a reality independent of its results. However, it is not limited to technical aspects; the problem of professionalisation and teaching is closely related to the issue of the morality of rhetoric and also to the fact that the orator must be an honest and virtuous man. Moreover, Quintilian always makes references to the other *artes* in this process of abstract and practical definitions. The different *artes*, including rhetoric at the same level, have the same conceptual, pragmatic and ethical characteristics in common. Thus, the orator becomes a real craftsman of speaking and knowledge.

The concrete experience of Quintilian as a professional of rhetoric demonstrates that he knew how to outline and implement a broad cultural and educational project in which writing occupies a prominent place. The author shows the intricate network of relationships that bind the teacher of rhetoric with students, parents and other teachers. Furthermore, he maintains that the driving force behind this activity is the search for excellence in the choice of the best teacher and educational activities. The rhetorician as a professional has a robust public dimension which, in the case of Quintilian, draws greater strength from the tasks at the imperial court.

The Roman educational model was based on a familiar dimension of teaching and on the relationship between generations. However, Quintilian could not realise this model of hereditary education because of the death of his children. Thus, he was forced to consider rhetoric as a profession to be his only reason for living. The idealisation of the figure of the rhetorician led Quintilian to deny the possibility that rhetoric may exist as a profession. The only possible solution was to think about the overall education of young people and to care not only about their knowledge and skills but also, and above all, their morality.

ABSTRACT - *The Institutio oratoria of Quintilian is a crucial witness to understanding the problem of rhetoric as a profession in ancient Greece and Rome. First, we can study rhetoric as technical knowledge from a theoretical point of view. Quintilian himself is aware of the importance of this aspect and precisely defines the status of rhetoric as a profession and its relationship with other professions at the end of the second book of the Institutio oratoria. Second, we can analyse the various aspects of Quintilian as a professional of rhetoric through extensive reading of his work. More specifically, we can investigate the relationship with his clients, the various aspects and functions of his being a rhetorician, his cultural and professional projects and the relationship between the public and the private dimension.*

SVMMARIUM - *In Institutionis oratoriae libris Quintiliani iudicia de rhetoris arte et muneribus legimus et quemadmodum is rhetoricam artem professus sit invenimus.*