The Intellectual Genealogy of the Brutus

And so, I'll plant a crop as if in uncultivated and forsaken land and tend it so attentively as to be able to repay even with interest the generosity of your gift, provided that my intellect can produce as a field does, which customarily yields a greater crop when it's been fallow for many years.

seremus igitur aliquid tamquam in inculto et derelicto solo; quod ita diligenter colemus, ut impendiis etiam augere possimus largitatem tui muneris: modo idem noster animus efficere possit quod ager, qui quom multos annos quievit, uberiores efferre fruges solet. (16)

At once both bold and vague, Cicero's announcement of a new project promises repayment and hints at new opportunities. But what is the new and abundant creation that years of impatient inaction will bring to fruition? Cicero had not spoken publicly since before leaving for his proconsulship in Cilicia in 51. He had also produced no major work since around that same time, when in the 50s his dialogues *de Oratore* and *de Republica*, modeled on Plato, offered a response to his own political sidelining after the rise of the triumvirate. The *Brutus* announces Cicero's reentry into the intellectual fray (much as *pro Marcello* will announce his reentry into public speaking).[1]

Cicero's aims, however, were not solely intellectual. The preface indicates several different purposes: to repay Atticus (and Brutus), to commemorate Hortensius, and to document oratory's past. Atticus describes the dialogue's examination of orators as its central topic: "when they came into existence, as well as who and what kind they were" (*quando esse coepissent, qui etiam et quales fuissent*, 20). Seemingly neutral criteria (*quando* and *qui*) are combined with a highly subjective one (*quales*). These categories occupy the bulk of the narrative but insufficiently describe its production and examination of oratorical and literary history.

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[1] Chapter 3 discusses the connection of the *Brutus* to the *pro Marcello* of September 46.

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A crucial refinement rounds out the discussion of older orators and directly precedes the putatively modern age of Antonius and Crassus:

> To catalogue those who have performed this service in the city so as to rank among the orators. And in fact from what I'll recount one can judge their development and how difficult it is in any pursuit to reach the final perfection of what is best.

> conligere eos, qui hoc munere in civitate functi sint, ut tenerent oratorum locum; quorum quidem quae fuerit ascensio et quam in omnibus rebus difficilis optimi perfectio atque absolutio ex eo quod dicam existimari potest (137).

This later passage briefly yet formally outlines the evolutionary principles of the work's teleology, acknowledging its inclusive tendencies while insisting on the final aim toward the best oratory in the present. This is not the only redefinition: Brutus had already commented on "what you've undertaken, to distinguish types of orators by generation" (*id quod instituisti, oratorum genera distinguere aetatibus*, 74).[2] And yet another occurs near the end of the preface: "eloquence itself, which we're about to discuss, has grown silent" (*ea ipsa, de qua disputare ordimur, eloquentia obmutuit*, 22). The history, evolution, and quality of orators is one subject, but so too is the broader examination of the art of public speech and its continued viability: will eloquence be heard again and in what capacity? The *Brutus'* scholarly inquiries and advances come in the midst of political crisis and unquestionably respond to it.

A Preface in Crisis and Salvation (1–25)

Much of the dialogue's structure is readily discernible, and its conversational technique fairly straightforward. Discussion shifts frequently between lively digressions and the detailed historical account. The lengthy expository sections of the *Brutus* have Cicero as the main speaker – one notable exception is the discussion of Caesar and Marcellus. Atticus and Brutus offer crucial if limited interventions, the former often responding skeptically to Cicero's claims or manner of presentation, and the latter often shedding light on the pedagogical importance of those same claims and procedures. Where Atticus offers an intellectual challenge to Cicero, Brutus underscores the scholarly fruits of Cicero's labors, roles that fit well with their respective ages: Atticus older by a few years (b. 110) and Brutus

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[2] Brutus directly responds to Cicero's enthusiasm for Atticus' *Liber Annalis*.

younger by slightly more than two decades (b. 85); Atticus the accomplished scholar of the past, Brutus envisioning his future career.[3]

The catalogue of Roman speakers begins with Lucius Brutus (53) and continues until the mention of Publius Crassus (281), the last speaker named.[4] Other than chronology there seems to be no guiding principle of organization. However, the history of orators is essentially bounded by two symmetrical yet significant sections of roughly equal length: the long preface, with the introduction (1–25) and the Greek history (26–51), on one end, and on the other end the concluding sections on Atticism (282–300) and the analysis of Hortensius and the Ciceropaideia (301–29). Chiastic arrangement reinforces the symmetry, interlacing material about Cicero/Hortensius and contemporary politics with Greek, and especially Athenian, material: Introduction : Greeks : Atticism : Conclusion.

The preface itself is conceptually rich, citing or alluding to several Roman institutions and topics that will be revisited throughout the dialogue. It is mirrored in length and complexity by the subsequent twofold excursus on the development of oratory at Greece (26–51), which is itself a template for Roman oratory.[5] The beginning of the work lavishly sets out the theoretical and practical stakes of Cicero's literary-historical enterprise.

At a first reading, however, the preface imparts a vague, almost misleading sense of the dialogue's purpose. Cicero meanders through a lengthy account of what spurred him to write it, beginning with the death of Hortensius, his chief forensic rival, nearly five years earlier – a noteworthy delay for extended homage of a figure so politically and personally significant. Next Cicero describes his own depression over the state of Rome's affairs, alluding vaguely to the violence threatening the state; then the recent writings of Atticus and Brutus, who arrive at Cicero's home, and, at long last, the main topic, an account of Rome's orators. His tale is long, rambling, and not entirely coherent on the face of it, and, for all that it contains, what it omits is likewise perplexing: Cicero dispenses with at least one traditional motif – the opening response to an imagined literary request. We might expect something at the outset such as "Often, in these troubling times of ours, you have asked me, Titus Pomponius and Marcus

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[3] On Brutus' disputed date of birth (85 versus 78/77), see Chapter 1.
[4] Sumner's (1973) list follows the first mention of an orator. Calvus is the last orator (281–84), preceding the debate on Atticism and the final syncrisis of Hortensius and Cicero. If we count living orators, one could also argue that Brutus is the last, creating yet another connection back to Rome's first speaker, Lucius Brutus.
[5] This Greek history *en miniature* is examined fully in Chapter 5.

Junius, for an account of our Roman orators and the greatness they have brought to our republic ..."[6] Only months later Cicero will follow this pattern in the imagined request by Brutus that results in the writing of the *Orator*. In lieu of this prefatory topos the *Brutus* offers an artful, if confusing, account(ing) of Cicero's literary exchanges and debts: Atticus and Brutus sent literary creations expecting reciprocation (13–20). The unorthodox introduction is one of the many signals – others, discussed below, are more explicit – that the preface, like the *Brutus* itself, is not just unusual but entirely *sui generis*.[7]

The dialogue begins by paying homage to Quintus Hortensius Hortalus (114–50 BCE; cos. 69). In the years since Cicero's consulship, his contemporary (older by eight years) and chief forensic rival had often joined him as co-counsel.[8] Cicero in 45 would complete the dialogue *Hortensius*, a protreptic to the study of philosophy that would greatly influence Augustine's intellectual development.[9] Its portrayal of Hortensius as interlocutor, along with Quintus Lutatius Catulus (cos. 78 with the revolutionary Marcus Aemilius Lepidus), and Lucius Licinius Lucullus (cos. 74, who lost the Mithridatic command to Pompey), gathers the bulwarks of the pro-senatorial establishment in the period between the Sullan reforms and the civil war. As the last of the three to die, Hortensius symbolizes the loss of the traditional republic:

> After arriving at Rhodes while returning from my command in Cilicia and learning there of the death of Q. Hortensius, sadness – more than most expected – overcame me. This was because, with my friend's death, I saw myself robbed of his pleasant company and of our connection through reciprocal favors, and also because I was pained at the lessened status of our college upon the demise of so great an augur. And while thinking on this I recalled that he had both nominated me to the college, professing under oath his esteem for my merit, and also inducted me into it. Because of this it was my obligation, according to the augurs' customs, to honor him as a father.

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[6] Janson (1964) 64 outlines the shared features: "dedication, request from the dedicatee, the unwillingness of the author due to a lack of time or self-confidence, and his final submission to the dedicatee's requests." Stroup (2010) 191–202 discusses dialogue dedications, focusing on the *Brutus* and *de Oratore*. Baraz (2012) 150–86 on Ciceronian prefaces.

[7] Notably absent too is argument on each side of an issue (*in utramque partem*), prevalent in so many of Cicero's other dialogues (and the structural foundation for Tacitus' *Dialogus* and Minucius Felix's *Octavius*). Cf. Granatelli (1990).

[8] E.g. they defended Flaccus, Murena, Sestius, Scaurus, Milo. Cf. Cic. *Att.* 2.25.1 (SB 45) for their mutual praise.

[9] August. *Conf.* 8.7.17.

> Cum e Cilicia decedens Rhodum venissem et eo mihi de Q. Hortensi morte esset adlatum, opinione omnium maiorem animo cepi dolorem. nam et amico amisso cum consuetudine iucunda tum multorum officiorum coniunctione me privatum videbam et interitu talis auguris dignitatem nostri collegi deminutam dolebam; qua in cogitatione et cooptatum me ab eo in collegium recordabar, in quo iuratus iudicium dignitatis meae fecerat, et inauguratum ab eodem; ex quo augurum institutis in parentis eum loco colere debebam. (1)

The increasingly somber mood of the first sentence is not fully realized until the word that Cicero delays until its completion: *dolorem* ("pain," "distress"). The next sentence reiterates both mood and structure by concluding with the verb *dolebam*.[10] Cicero focuses on their shared public offices and cites his induction in 53 into the college of augurs, Rome's second highest priestly office after the *pontifices*.[11] It is Cicero's priesthood as much as his grief that dominates the paragraph: *augur* is mentioned twice, as is *collegium*, and the verb *inauguratum* is connected lexically to this priestly office. Cicero hints at the grandness associated with the priesthood's name, which is related to the verb *augere* ("to grow, increase, augment"), by emphasizing his own greatness (*dignitas*) and concern about the college's diminishment (*dignitas deminuta*) upon Hortensius' death. The next section picks up the semantic connection with a verb in first position for special emphasis: *augebat* ("it increased"), a choice calculated to heighten the rhetorical effect and smooth the transition into discussion of the civic crisis and "conditions highly unfavorable to the republic" (*alienissimo rei publicae tempore*, 2).

   This verbal dexterity lends gravity to Cicero's tribute even as it establishes a meaningful pattern of wordplay through which he draws attention to the language of the preface and the special resonance of key terms and ideas. Most notably he indulges in this wordplay in connection with the theme of salvation (*salus*) in order to align his personal return to public affairs with the longed-for restoration of traditional order.[12] He bemoans the inability of his contemporaries to resolve their violent disagreements while benefiting the state (*salutariter*, 8) and then connects state well-being

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[10] *Dolor* and *dolere* are used eight times across 1–8. They are then used again three times in 21–23, though now in reference to the state of the republic rather than Cicero's grief over Hortensius.

[11] The *pontifices* perhaps had greater prestige, but the augurs, with their control of the auspices, could be said to wield greater influence over political activities. Linderski (1986) and Driediger-Murphy (2019) on augury and the pursuit of priestly offices.

[12] In the preface the root *salu-* is used in 8, 10, 13 (×3), 14, and 15. Cicero similarly, though to different ends, makes a pun on a key term of the Atticist debate, *sanitas* (*sit sane ita*, 279), on which see Chapter 7.

to his own, first by citing the battles of Cannae and Nola during the Second Punic War (218–201 BCE),[13] and then by insisting that Brutus and Atticus have rescued him:

> Then Atticus said, "We've come to you with the intention of remaining silent about the republic and to hear something from you rather than to bother you at all."
>
> I said, "The two of you, Atticus, both lighten my cares now that I'm here and also gave me great solace when I was away. Your letters first restored and called me back to my former pursuits."
>
> Then Atticus said, "I quite gladly read the letter that Brutus sent you from Asia, in which he seemed to me to advise you wisely and to console you most affectionately."
>
> I said, "That's quite right: now you should know that through Brutus' letter it's as if I'd been called back to the light of life from the protracted disturbance of my whole well-being. And, much as after the disaster at Cannae the Roman people first took heart again after Marcellus' battle at Nola, and thereafter many prosperous events took place in succession, in the same way, after my own and the state's common disasters, nothing desirable or able somehow to lessen my worries befell me before Brutus' letter."
>
> Then Brutus said, "That's indeed what I really hoped to do and I'm getting a great reward, if in fact I've achieved what I wanted in so crucial a matter. But I'd like to know, what's this letter of Atticus' that you so enjoyed?"
>
> "Well, Brutus," I said, "his letter brought me not only enjoyment but even, I hope, salvation (*salutem*)."
>
> "Salvation?" he asked. "Well, what sort of letter could be so remarkable?"
>
> "Could," I said, "any salutation (*salutatio*) be either more pleasing or more suited to the current conditions (*tempus*) than the one in that book in which he addressed me and essentially lifted me up from the ground?"

> Tum Atticus: eo, inquit, ad te animo venimus, ut de re publica esset silentium et aliquid audiremus potius ex te, quam te adficeremus ulla molestia.
>
> Vos vero, inquam, Attice, et praesentem me cura levatis et absenti magna solacia dedistis. nam vestris primum litteris recreatus me ad pristina studia revocavi.
>
> Tum ille: legi, inquit, perlubenter epistulam, quam ad te Brutus misit ex Asia, qua mihi visus est et monere te prudenter et consolari amicissume.

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[13] In a letter to Atticus on 19 January 49, Cicero wonders about Caesar "are we talking about an *imperator* of the Roman people or Hannibal?" (*utrum de imperatore populi Romani an de Hannibale loquimur?*, *Att.* 7.11.1 [SB 134]).

> Recte, inquam, est visus: nam me istis scito litteris ex diuturna perturba-
> tione totius valetudinis tamquam ad aspiciendam lucem esse revocatum.
> atque ut post Cannensem illam calamitatem primum Marcelli ad Nolam
> proelio populus se Romanus erexit posteaque prosperae res deinceps multae
> consecutae sunt, sic post rerum nostrarum et communium gravissimos
> casus nihil ante epistulam Bruti mihi accidit, quod vellem aut quod aliqua
> ex parte sollicitudines adlevaret meas.
>
> Tum Brutus: volui id quidem efficere certe et capio magnum fructum, si
> quidem quod volui tanta in re consecutus sum. sed scire cupio, quae te
> Attici litterae delectaverint.
>
> Istae vero, inquam, Brute, non modo delectationem mihi, sed etiam, ut
> spero, salutem adtulerunt.
>
> Salutem? inquit ille. quodnam tandem genus istuc tam praeclarum
> litterarum fuit?
>
> An mihi potuit, inquam, esse aut gratior ulla salutatio aut ad hoc tempus
> aptior quam illius libri, quo me hic adfatus quasi iacentem excitavit?
> (11–13)

The pointed comparison to the battle of Cannae could hardly paint a
grimmer picture of Rome's recent past and Cicero's political failures. The
annihilation of eight Roman legions by Hannibal at Cannae in 216 would
haunt Rome for centuries and become a virtual synonym for military
disaster. Marcellus would, in three successive years, defend the city of
Nola from Hannibal's attacks, and Cicero here reports the uplifting effects
of Marcellus' successes.[14] The simile not only establishes a close connec-
tion between state well-being and Cicero's personal well-being, but also
creates a permanent connection between the two concepts through the
term *salus*. All other uses of *salus* in the *Brutus* refer to Cicero's own well-
being, for example his recall from exile (268), or are used in contexts that
emphasize the role of oratory in the salvation of the state (256 and 330).
Salus becomes a watchword for Cicero's belief in his singular ability to save
the Roman state from its present woes.[15]

Further wordplay strengthens these connections and gives them addi-
tional resonance, as Cicero makes a traditional pun on the terms *salus* and

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[14] See Liv. 23.16 (the first battle in 216), where he suggests that it may have been the most significant
victory of the war (*res . . . nescio an maxima illo bello gesta sit*, 23.16.16) and 23.44–46 (the second
battle in 215) with Liv. 23.30.19 on the people's awarding of proconsular command to Marcellus
because of this first success in Italy after Cannae: *M. Marcello pro consule imperium esse populus iussit,
quod post Cannensem cladem unus Romanorum imperatorum in Italia prospere rem gessisset*. See
Chapter 3 on M. Claudius Marcellus (cos. 51).

[15] See Kaster (2006) 27 n.40 on *salus* in Cicero's post-exile speeches, with May (1988) 90–105,
Walters (2020) 38–44.

salutatio. It is hard to do justice in English to the play on salvation/health/ greeting (*salus*) and salutation (*salutatio*), as translators of Plautus' *Pseudolus* have long known.[16] The connection of *salus* to *salutatio* was commonplace.[17] Cicero had already noted that he greeted the interlocutors upon their arrival (*quos postquam salutavi*, 10). And the letters they had been exchanging – Atticus' and Brutus' treatises – might in themselves, or in a kind of cover letter, have included the standard well wishing, *salutem dicere*: *Cicero Attico salutem dicit* ("Cicero sends greetings [*lit.*, bids good health] to Atticus") formulaically introduces his letters to Atticus.[18] Cicero further confirms the wordplay when using *salutaris* (15) to describe the beneficial effects of Atticus' writings, thus offering in the preface a ring-composition with the initial use in 8, *salutariter*, and connecting the affairs of state to Cicero's personal status.

Another prominent and related theme is the desire for silence about the state of current affairs. That overt claim will repeatedly be unmasked as a pious hope. The dialogue returns over and again to the present crisis. Already the discussion of Hortensius referred to the troubles of the state and Hortensius' fortune in not seeing the demise of the republic. Atticus later strives to maintain the fiction of silence, repeating the injunction that they not discuss the republic: *dixeram . . . de re publica ut sileremus* (157).[19] As Jon Hall remarks, "Political allusions could easily have been omitted . . . yet Cicero evidently feels a powerful need to voice such complaints."[20] Most prominently, Caesar and Marcellus are incorporated into a long digression in which Cicero touts his own political achievements and the role of public speech (248–62). Cicero's former protégés Curio *filius*, Caelius, and Publius Crassus are criticized for their mistaken political ambitions.[21] And the speakers do in fact discuss the republic in several different ways. Brutus is moved by the mention of Torquatus, who fell in

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[16] There are several complicated jokes at Pl. *Ps.* 41–47, 71, 707–10, 968, which involve the noun *salus* and the verb *salutare*. The puns and their relationship to the Platonic critique of writing are discussed in van den Berg (2021), with further bibliography.

[17] Cf. *salus* and *servare*; Otto (1890) 307 (s.v. *Salus*).

[18] An allusion to the formulaic opening, *si vales, bene est; ego valeo*, or to the conclusions of letters, "usually variants on the theme *cura, ut valeas, vale mi carissime*, etc." (Whitton 2013 83), may partly motivate the use of *valetudo* in this passage. Janson (1964) traces the close connection between epistolary address and literary preface.

[19] Cf. *sileamus* (256). Gowing (2000), Jacotot (2014), Kenty (2020) 120–28 on the silence's political dimensions.

[20] J. Hall (2009) 94.

[21] Chapter 3 examines in detail the political resonances in Cicero's discussion of more recent speakers.

the civil war fighting Caesar, and pained (*doleo*, 266) that Cicero's authority was insufficient to bring peace. Writings and their exchange are presented as if they were alternatives to politics but are in fact ways of examining and discussing the republic.

Atticus and Brutus as Authors and Inspirations

Though bemoaning his political sidelining and the republic's demise, Cicero also found inspiration for his new project in Atticus and Brutus, and this exchange of texts signals not only the intellectual filiations of the *Brutus* but also its political commitments.[22] There are several references to texts, discussions, and even a speech as sources of inspiration for the *Brutus*, and in order to get a full sense of the complexity of textual exchanges in the preface, it will be helpful to review the several mentions of them.

Cicero praises Brutus' (now lost) treatise "On Moral Excellence" (*de Virtute*), the encouraging letters from Asia (11–12, quoted above).[23] Cicero reiterates the treatise's restorative effects at the end of the dialogue:

> Though I do indeed feel pain that I've entered life a little too late, as if upon a road, and have fallen into the republic's nighttime before the journey was complete, still I am relieved by the consolation which you held out to me, Brutus, in your most charming letter, in which you thought that I ought to take heart, because I had accomplished things that would speak about me even were I to be silent, would live even if I were dead. And these things would bear witness to my counsels on behalf of the republic by the republic's salvation if it should survive, or even by its downfall if it should not.
>
> equidem etsi doleo me in vitam paulo serius tamquam in viam ingressum, priusquam confectum iter sit, in hanc rei publicae noctem incidisse, tamen

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[22] Hendrickson (1962) 28. n.b thinks that this new project is some other historical work, but I see no reason why this shouldn't be the *Brutus* itself. The preface includes the demand for repayment of debt (and the intertwining of the two debts owed to Atticus and Brutus) as well as Atticus' claim that he wants something now after the long period of inactivity (*longo intervallo*) because he sees that Cicero is in better spirits (*hilarior*, 18). Hendrickson sees the work's discussion as repayment of a debt without making the connection to the earlier description. Robinson (1951) 144 n.9 prefers the Ἀνέκδοτα; Bringmann (1971) 13–15 argues for *de Legibus*.

[23] Hendrickson (1962) 26–27 n.a, 288–89 n.a, and Douglas (1966a) xi; Dugan (2005) 236–48; cf. Sen. *Helv.* 8.1, 9.4–8 with *Brutus* 250. Cf. *Fin.* 1.8, *Tusc.* 5.12, and Sedley (1997). Most scholars accept the identification of these letters with *de Virtute*, but cf. Strasburger (1990) 24, Dettenhofer (1992) 199–201. Varro would also write about Marcellus in the *Logistorici*, but probably after Brutus and Cicero did. On the dialogue form and content of the *Logistorici*, see Cichorius (1922) 236–48, Dahlmann and Heisterhagen (1957).

ea consolatione sustentor quam tu mihi, Brute, adhibuisti tuis suavissimis litteris, quibus me forti animo esse oportere censebas, quod ea gessissem, quae de me etiam me tacente ipsa loquerentur, mortuo viverent;[24] quae, si recte esset, salute rei publicae, sin secus, interitu ipso testimonium meorum de re publica consiliorum darent. (330)

De Virtute was among the first Latin works of philosophy in prose other than Cicero and the Epicurean writings of Amafinius and Rabirius.[25] Brutus (like the polymath Varro) followed the "Old Academy" (*vestra, Brute, vetus Academia*, 149), which Antiochus of Ascalon founded in reaction to the New Academy and his one-time teacher there, the scholarch Philo of Larissa. Brutus' treatise addressed in part how to endure civil crisis. It noted the steadfastness and *virtus* of M. Claudius Marcellus, an opponent of Caesar living in exile at Mytilene. He occupies a special place in the *Brutus* as the only living orator discussed other than Caesar.[26] Brutus seems to have offered philosophical consolation by stressing that only *virtus* ensures well-being or happiness, a prominent topic of discussion in Cicero's immense philosophical output of 46–44.[27]

While Brutus inspired Cicero to return to writing, Atticus' *Liber Annalis* turned him toward Roman history:[28]

> It had much indeed that was new to me and also a usefulness I was searching for that allowed me, with all the orders of time laid out, to see everything in one sweeping view. After I began to study it closely, the studying of the writings itself proved healthful and put me in the mindframe to take something from you, Pomponius, to reinvigorate me and to offer you if not full repayment then at least some gratitude. Still that phrase of Hesiod is praised by wise men, which instructs you to return what you've taken in equal or – if possible – greater measure.

> Ille vero et nova . . . mihi quidem multa et eam utilitatem quam requirebam, ut explicatis ordinibus temporum uno in conspectu omnia viderem. quae cum studiose tractare coepissem, ipsa mihi tractatio litterarum salutaris fuit admonuitque, Pomponi, ut a te ipso sumerem aliquid ad me

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[24] Hendrickson (1962), seconded by Kaster (2020). *L* (consensus of codices based on the lost *Laudensis*) has *mortuo viverentque*, transposed by Malcovati (following Stangl and others).

[25] Cicero scorns these Epicureans at *Ac.* 1.5–6.

[26] His central importance in Cicero's catalogue is discussed in Chapter 3.

[27] Scourfield (2013) surveys the genre of *consolatio*. Cicero increasingly turned to Brutus, who becomes the "dedicatee of choice" for his philosophical works (Baraz 2012 205). Cicero dedicated to him *Parad.*, *Orat.*, *N.D.*, *Tusc.*, and *Fin*. See *Div.* 2.1–4 on the philosophical encyclopedia.

[28] On Atticus and the *Liber Annalis*, see Münzer (1905), Douglas (1966a) xii and lii, Perlwitz (1992), A. M. Marshall (1993), Welch (1996), Feeney (2007) 14–16, 20–28, *FRHist* I: 344–53, II: 718–25, III: 457–62.

> reficiendum teque remunerandum si non pari, at grato tamen munere: quamquam illud Hesiodium laudatur a doctis, quod eadem mensura reddere iubet qua acceperis aut etiam cumulatiore, si possis. (15)

Cicero highlights its intellectual clarity and utility alongside Atticus' ability to encompass and represent all Roman history in a single view. Praise for the visual impression made by Atticus' book reveals Cicero's similar conceptualization of the *Brutus* as an aesthetically coherent account of literary history in the unfolding succession of time, a learned object to behold and appreciate. Indeed, the perfectly ambiguous verb *explicare* (*explicatis ordinibus temporum*) captures the simultaneously visual and intellectual experiences of such an object: the unrolling of the pages (*explicare*) reveals an explanation (*explicare*) of the ages.[29] And calling the perusal of history *salutaris* (derived from *salus*, discussed above) aligns the work's intellectual and political commitments.

This same alignment is found in the vocabulary of time (*tempus/tempora*), which contains an inherent tension in Latin. Like the English terms "time" and "times," the word can indicate both chronological progression and state of affairs.[30] Cicero capitalizes on the senses of "(current) conditions" and "(successive) times." When he earlier said that Atticus' writings are "suited to the current conditions" (*ad hoc tempus aptior*, 11), he offered both an anticipatory joke about the content of Atticus' writing and also a serious direction about the relevance of research into the past for civic circumstances in the present.

The reference to Hesiod and to the repayment of a debt with interest is likewise a brilliant means of indirect self-advertisement that allows Cicero to attribute greater significance to his own project in comparison to those of his interlocutors. He begins with deference and modesty toward Brutus and Atticus before announcing his grand project, and along the way he softens his claims and the magnitude of his ambition by placing the project squarely within the reciprocal obligations of friendship and exchange.[31]

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[29] "Pages" is admittedly inapposite for a bookroll. See Johnson (2009), (2012) 17–31 (focusing on the early empire); Winsbury (2009), Frampton (2019) 13–32. The figurative meaning of *explicare* (as for so many Latin words) develops out of the earlier physical sense: *TLL* 5.2.1733.15–1737.78 [Hiltbrunner, 1943]; 1733.41–42 for *Brut.* 15. Cf. Catul. 1.8: *omne aevum tribus explicare cartis.*

[30] In English the singular/plural difference corresponds well to the conceptual difference, as the singular denotes temporality and the plural condition(s). In Latin the situation is reversed and less rigid: the singular typically denotes condition, though can mean (point in) time, while the plural commonly denotes temporal ages, but can mean conditions.

[31] Baraz (2012) 150–86 illuminates the workings of prefaces in other dialogues: crafting an ideal reader who is obliged to accept the terms of the work (152) and using the language of debt to draw on and reinforce the social structures of *amicitia* (165).

Atticus' interest in chronology and synchronism was anticipated by Cornelius Nepos, whose labors in the three-book *Chronica* were immortalized by Catullus. His great contribution to Latin historiography lay in expanding its scope beyond the Roman world to include the Greek world and in considering the possible synchronisms of both. As we might expect, he built on the work of a Greek scholar, the Athenian Apollodorus, who (updating the pioneering work of Eratosthenes of Cyrene) had crafted verse chronicles in the second century. In Greek prose Nepos will also have had the accounts of Polybius and Posidonius as nearer models at Rome.[32] Nepos later acknowledged the virtues of Atticus' *Liber*:

> so that he laid out all antiquity in that bookroll, in which he set out magistracies in order. In fact, there is no law or peace or war or signal event of the Roman people that is not recorded in its proper time, and – another feat of incredible difficulty – he so interwove the origins of families, that we can understand the genealogies of illustrious men from it.

> ut eam totam [*sc.* antiquitatem] in eo volumine exposuerit, quo magistratus ordinavit. nulla enim lex neque pax neque bellum neque res illustris est populi Romani, quae non in eo suo tempore sit notata, et, quod difficillimum fuit, sic familiarum originem subtexuit, ut ex eo clarorum virorum propagines possimus cognoscere. (Nepos, *Att.* 18.1–2)

Overlap with the *Brutus* is considerable: magistracies, laws, peace and war, notable events, time, and genealogies. War and peace form overarching themes: oratory thrives only in peacetime (45), the end of the First Punic War in 241 anticipates Roman literature's invention in 240 (72–73), and the contemporary civil war looms large. Laws are connected to oratory's development in Crassus' exemplary speech of 106 on the *lex Servilia* (161) and in Pompey's laws modifying the courts in 52 (324). Cicero at one point reconceptualizes familial genealogy to suggest that the republic is formed from its oratorical past and that only with this civic structure in place can noble lineages have any meaning.[33] Yet Atticus' *Liber* offered not a restrictive framework but a set of thematic emphases from which Cicero selectively drew to present the details of the past. Cicero stresses chronology but with a different structure in mind, fashioning the data of Roman

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[32] Pfeiffer (1968) 152–70 (Eratosthenes), 255–57 (Apollodorus), Montana (2015) 111–18 (Eratosthenes), 157–59 (Apollodorus). On Nepos' *Chronica* and its contexts, see *FRHist* I: 395–401, II: 798–815, III: 497–504, *CAH*² IX.2: 711–15, Feeney (2007) 21–23, 63.

[33] Chapter 3 discusses the criticism of Publius Crassus via citation of L. Licinius Crassus (282). See A. M. Marshall (1993) on Atticus' genealogies, including Brutus' dual descent from the Junii and the Servilii. Cf. Wiseman (1974); van der Blom (2010) 97–98 on Brutus and 151–74 on Cicero's alternative genealogies. Cicero notes Brutus' dual genealogy at 331.

history into the generational groupings of orators and their public achievements.[34]

We can see Cicero's independence from Atticus in his selective use of magistracies. Magistracies connect poetry and oratory to civic power, and the consulships are used sparingly to provide a temporal framework. The *cursus honorum* of most orators remains in the background. When offices are cited it is typically because they bear some special importance, such as structuring the lifetimes of artists or because of their coincidence with another significant event.[35] Thus Cicero emphasizes Cato's quaestorship (204) and censorship (184), because they coincided with the deaths of Naevius and Plautus (60).[36] Cato's quaestorship fell in the same year as Cethegus' consulship, important not only for his role as the beginning of oratory, but because it occurred 140 years (rounded down) before Cicero's. Cicero thereby suggests a unique connection between the birth of the art and Cicero's giving of new life to Rome in his consulship by quashing the Catilinarian conspiracy (*o fortunatam natam me consule Romam*, fr. 8 Courtney).[37] Crucial figures and events are often aligned with the dates of birth and death of renowned orators or authors, information mostly available in the research of Atticus (and Varro). But as Elizabeth Rawson has observed, "Cicero's achievement was more independent than is usually thought."[38]

After the long exchange over the various textual debts that have accrued, Atticus finally presses Cicero for discussion:

> Atticus said, "And so, since he [Brutus] has declared that he'd demand as repayment what I'm owed, I'll demand from you what you owe him."
>
> "What could that be?" I asked.
>
> "That you write something," he replied. "Your writings have indeed long been silent. You know, since you produced those books *On the Republic* we haven't gotten anything from you. And I was myself spurred and

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[34] Lintott (2008) 306: "The catalog of more or less distinguished orators that follows was perhaps to some extent a compliment to Atticus by imitation. The annotation, however, renders it more than a collection of data." Douglas (1966b), Sumner (1973) 151–54 on oratorical groupings.

[35] See Chapter 1's analysis of the Ciceropaideia for such alignments.

[36] This example of Cicero's efforts to align lives and careers is discussed in Chapter 4.

[37] *Flac.* 102 calls the famed Nones of December the salvation (*salutaris*) and birth day (*natalis*) of Rome.

[38] Rawson (1972) 42, noting that "Atticus only gave, regularly, consuls and censors, and he dated A.U.C., which Cicero did not show any sign of doing." Cf. Sumner (1973) 176, Horsfall (1989) 99–100. Douglas (1966b) argues for the use of birth dates rather than magistracies as the organizing principle for post-Gracchan orators.

impassioned by them to compose a record of our history. But I'm asking for them only whenever and however you're able to produce them. As for now, if your mind's freed up for it, explain to us what we're seeking."

"What's that?" I asked.

"That," he replied, "which you recently in your Tusculan villa began to tell me about orators: when they came into existence, as well as who and what kind they were. After I relayed our discussion to your – or our – friend Brutus, he said he really wanted to hear it. And so, we chose this day, since we knew you'd be available. For this reason, if it suits you, produce that account for me and Brutus, which you had already begun."

itaque quoniam hic quod mihi deberetur se exacturum professus est, quod huic debes, ego a te peto.

    Quidnam id? inquam.

    Ut scribas, inquit, aliquid; iam pridem enim conticuerunt tuae litterae. nam ut illos de re publica libros edidisti, nihil a te sane postea accepimus: eisque nosmet ipsi ad rerum nostrarum memoriam comprehendendam impulsi atque incensi sumus. sed illa, cum poteris; atque ut possis, rogo. nunc vero, inquit, si es animo vacuo, expone nobis quod quaerimus.

    Quidnam est id? inquam.

    Quod mihi nuper in Tusculano inchoavisti de oratoribus: quando esse coepissent, qui etiam et quales fuissent. quem ego sermonem cum ad Brutum tuum vel nostrum potius detulissem, magnopere hic audire se velle dixit. itaque hunc elegimus diem, cum te sciremus esse vacuum. quare, si tibi est commodum, ede illa quae coeperas et Bruto et mihi. (19–20)

We are again brought back to the theme of silence and the importance of writings: *conticuerunt tuae litterae*. For all the strictures against discussing the republic, the preface circles incessantly around that topic, just as Cicero's refusals to discuss himself in the dialogue only advertise the extent to which he does. In a literal sense Atticus brings up the republic when citing Cicero's dialogue by name: *ut illos de re publica libros edidisti* (19).The *de Republica* (discussed below) was the immediate precursor to the present dialogue, and citing it also aligns the *Brutus* with its focus on Roman government.

Just as the dedicatory exchange of books forges connections between the interlocutors' writings, providing sources of mutual inspiration, so too do past conversations inspire the present one (*sermo*): Atticus tells Brutus about the *sermo* that Cicero began in his Tusculan villa, which inspires in Brutus a desire for another *sermo*, the present dialogue. In Cicero's dramatic portrayal of the work's genesis the *Brutus* has a double origin: it is inspired simultaneously by written works and oral accounts, a duality replicated in the word *sermo*, as the term means both the act of talking *viva voce* ("speaking" or "a speech") and the written account of such

talking in published form ("a literary dialogue").[39] Conflation of the written and the performed in the *Brutus* is even given a humorous metafictional twist when Brutus expresses concern about the orators not included in Cicero's catalogue: "I think you're worried that your discussion here might become known through us and that those whom you've omitted will be angry with you" (*vereri te . . . arbitror ne per nos hic sermo tuus emanet et ii tibi suscenseant, quos praeterieris*, 231). The written work lightheartedly trades on the fiction that it exists only in oral format.

Cicero calls attention to yet another source, Brutus' speech on behalf of King Deiotarus:

> Indeed, Pomponius, then the discussion began after I had mentioned having heard that the case of Deiotarus, a most faithful and excellent king, was defended by Brutus with remarkable adornment and fullness.

> [Atticus:] I know that the discussion began there and that you, grieving on Brutus' behalf, almost wept at the desolation of the courts and the forum.

> Nempe igitur hinc tum, Pomponi, ductus est sermo, quod erat a me mentio facta causam Deiotari fidelissimi atque optumi regis ornatissume et copiosissume a Bruto me audisse defensam.

> Scio, inquit, ab isto initio tractum esse sermonem teque Bruti dolentem vicem quasi deflevisse iudiciorum vastitatem et fori. (21)

He traces the beginning of the previous discussion with Atticus back to the speech Brutus delivered before Caesar at the town of Nicaea, near the southeastern coast of the Black Sea, in the summer of 47 BCE. Brutus defended Deiotarus, the tetrarch of Galatia (in central Asia Minor), who took Pompey's side in the civil war.[40] Again Cicero's deftness in tracing out inspirations is remarkable: a dialogue purporting to discuss and assess Roman oratory (the *Brutus*) is motivated by a discussion and assessment of an orator (Brutus). Reference to that speech again undermines claims to avoid politics. Atticus refocuses attention onto Caesar and notes Cicero's pain at the absence of forensic opportunities (again, the aforementioned

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[39] *OLD* s.v. *sermo* 3a, "conversation, dialogue," and 3b, "a discussion on a literary, philosophic, scientific, etc., topic; a literary work cast in the form of such a discussion, a dialogue." Barwick (1963) 28–31, Zoll (1962) 105–24; on generic self-identification in Cicero's dialogues (focusing on *Tusculan Disputations*) see Gildenhard (2007) 1–88, esp. 1–34 and 63–65. Mankin (2011) 19–23 (with bibliography) reviews the conventional terminology.

[40] Hendrickson (1962) 32 n.a remarks "With the words *me audisse* Cicero observes the fiction of oral communication for knowledge derived from a written source."

key term, *dolor*). All signs indicate that the dialogue will address the immediate political crisis despite any claims to the contrary.

Though subtly presented throughout the preface, the immediate sources and inspirations cited for the *Brutus* are remarkable. If we step back and consider their content and occasions, it becomes clear that Cicero outlines an impressive range of activities and contexts: moral philosophy and ethical conduct in civic crisis (*de Virtute*); national histories and civic events (*Liber Annalis*); statehood and the "republic" (*de Republica*); public oratory and the civil war (Brutus' *pro rege Deiotaro*); learned conversational exchange (*sermo*). Reference to texts, discussion, and speech creates a complex web of cultural production and exchange, all portraying key activities of Roman elite life. Furthermore, the connections back to these works deeply implicate the dialogue in the contemporary political context, even when its ostensible subject is the past and its oratory. The new project announced by Cicero in the preface suggests that it will offer a clear alternative to political quietism and withdrawal. The possibilities for public engagement are preceded by and continue to be carried along by a torrent of writings, writings that are inspired and interconnected in a constant feedback loop of authorial performance and exchange in the service of the republic.[41]

Intellectual Traditions and the *Brutus'* Uniqueness

As should be clear from examining the preface, there is no single source, inspiration, or model for either the form or the content of the *Brutus*. Examination of the work's implicit or acknowledged debts can nevertheless shed further light on the intellectual foundations for Cicero's account. The aim in what follows is not to comprehensively document every influence or connection to earlier texts, but rather to provide an overview of the main characteristics and similarities to earlier authors, thinkers, and texts (including some of Cicero's own) that may have had the greatest intellectual affiliation with or influence on the *Brutus*.[42]

Literary dialogue at Rome was relatively new, though with a rich history of Greek precedents. Several forerunners in the Greek tradition stand out. Plato best represents (for us) the dialogue genre. Heraclides of Pontus and

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[41] *Orator* 148 equates Cicero's new intellectual endeavors with his previous forensic and political accomplishments.
[42] I briefly address the tradition of (auto)biography in Chapters 1, 6, and the Conclusion.

Aristotle built on his legacy, although we know few direct details from their dialogues.[43] A strong nod to Plato occurs when the interlocutors sit in a grassy area near a statue of Plato (*in pratulo propter Platonis statuam consedimus*, 24).[44] Atticus later accuses Cicero of employing Socratic irony, while Cicero insists on the seriousness of his account (292–99). Heraclides of Pontus included long expository sections and interlocutors who present his own points of view, features prominent in Cicero's other dialogues. Aristotle is the closest forerunner: "but what I've written in recent years follows Aristotelian custom, in which others participate in a way that has the author taking the lead" (*quae autem his temporibus scripsi Ἀριστοτέλειον morem habent, in quo ita sermo inducitur ceterorum ut penes ipsum sit principatus*, *Att.* 13.19.4 [SB 326]).[45] Also important is Aristotle's Συναγωγὴ Τεχνῶν, a survey of rhetorical theorists praised in Cicero's *de Inventione* and probably drawn on in the *Brutus'* Greek history (esp. 46–48).[46] The post-Platonic rise of literary-critical and literary-historical dialogue, emerging alongside Alexandrian scholarship and Homeric philology, remains shrouded in mystery, though we do get some sense of it from the fragments of Satyrus of Callatis' lively dialogue on the life of Euripides.[47]

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[43] Hirzel (1895) remains the seminal study of Greco-Roman dialogue. Cf. Hösle (2006), whose focus on the philosophical tradition excludes the *Brutus*. The bibliography on Ciceronian dialogue is immense. I have found the following especially useful for Cicero's relationship to Plato: Zoll (1962), Görler (1988), Schütrumpf (1988), MacKendrick (1989), Gaines (1995), Zetzel (1995) *passim*, May and Wisse (2001) 20–27, Zetzel (2003), Hösle (2008), Mankin (2011) 9–23, Stull (2011), Gildenhard (2013a), Jazdzewska (2014), Altman (2016). For Cicero's dialogue technique (with bibliography): Gildenhard (2007) 1–88, esp. 1–34 and 63–65, Schofield (2008), various essays in Schofield (2013) and Föllinger and Müller (2013). Long (1995) is illuminating on Aristotle and Cicero, as is Fox (2009) on Heraclides of Pontus and Cicero; van den Berg (2014) examines Tacitus' reuse of the inherited Ciceronian material and models for interpreting dialogue as a genre.

[44] On the motif, see Cic. *Rep.* 1.18.4 (*in aprico maxime pratuli loco*), Cic. *Att.* 12.6.2 (SB 306), and *de Orat.* 1.24, with Zetzel (2003). Plato's importance is stressed as well in the report that Demosthenes had closely read and perhaps even heard Plato (121).

[45] Cf. Cic. *Fam.* 1.9.23 (SB 20; on *de Oratore*).

[46] *Inv.* 2.6; cf. *de Orat.* 2.160. Douglas (1955b) on the Συναγωγὴ Τεχνῶν notes its distortions: "however valuable for its summaries of earlier rhetorical teaching . . . [it] was on the historical side highly tendentious" (539). Cicero will have followed Aristotle's lead. Schöpsdau (1994) is an excellent overview and analysis of sources for the material in the *Brutus*; Noël (2003) examines the remnants of the treatise found in Cicero's rhetorical works (*Inv.*, *de Orat.*, *Brut.*). Adamietz (1966) on Quint. *Inst.* 3.1.8–15 usefully details Quintilian's adaptations from Cicero. Chapter 5 examines Cicero's double history of Greek oratory and rhetoric (26–51).

[47] *P.Oxy.* 9.1176. Shorn (2004) for text; Leo (1960) 365–83, Jazdzewska (forthcoming). Leo (1960) 366 notes the special place of Satyrus and the lineage from Aristotle to Cicero: "wir haben auf einmal den peripatetischen Dialog litterarischen Inhalts vor uns, ein Stück der Linie, an deren Anfang Aristoteles περὶ ποιητῶν steht und am andern Ende Cicero."

Cicero had helped to forge the Roman dialogue tradition already in the 50s, although some forerunners are known. Varro's *Menippean Satires* probably contained dialogue elements, and the famed jurist Marcus Junius Brutus wrote a three-book dialogue on law addressed to his son and with villa settings.[48] The *Brutus* also criticizes a predecessor in the Roman tradition, lambasting Curio's dialogue on Caesar for its anachronisms. The objection may have been valid, although Cicero occasionally indulged in implausibility.[49] The genre, however, was still in flux and, like many genres, would continue to undergo developments and refinements of technique and presentation. Furthermore, it is essential to recognize that every dialogue, like nearly any worthwhile work of literature, contributes to its own terms of evaluation and to the shape of its tradition. While we can always speak of sources and inspirations for a given work, generic precedents can only go so far in explaining later innovations.

Cicero derives his framework for literary history from Hellenistic scholarship on arts and artists, which his contemporaries also diligently adapted.[50] Varro's *de Poetis*, written shortly before the *Brutus*, stands in this tradition and, along with the somewhat later *de Poematis*, was probably the most characteristic Roman adaptation of it. Cicero probably draws from the *de Poetis* in the *Brutus*, most prominently in dating the beginning of Latin literature to Livius Andronicus' play in 240 BCE.[51]

The differences of method and presentation, however, between (what we know of) Varro's writings and Cicero's *Brutus* suggest a limited

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[48] *De Orat.* 2.224; Fantham (2004) 50–51 suggests that Curio's dialogue may predate *de Oratore*, but we lack evidence.

[49] E.g. Rutilius Rufus relays the opening of *de Republica*, including events that preceded his arrival. See Chapter 4 on Curio's dialogue.

[50] See *CAH²* IX.2: 689–728 for a survey of intellectual developments at Rome in the late republic, *CAH²* VIII: 422–76 on contact with Greeks. Hutchinson (2013) for an in-depth study of Greco-Roman (textual) interactions. On Hellenistic scholarship: Pfeiffer (1968), Montana (2015), and Nünlist (2015). On Greek literary historiography, see Grethlein and Rengakos (2017); Grethlein (2017) 11–22 surveys methodological questions.

[51] Varro is less visible than we might expect, in part because Cicero promotes Atticus' *Liber Annalis*, which relied on Varro's work. Cicero (surely or probably) cites Varro at 60 (contradicting him), 72–73 (Livius Andronicus), 78 (death of Ennius). At 229 Cicero cites Accius, although Dahlmann (1962) 614 claims Varro as his source. On Varro's scholarship on poetry, see also Dahlmann (1953) and (1963). Paucity of evidence obscures Varro's potential methodological influence on Cicero. See Rösch-Binde (1998) for a general overview of their intellectual relationship; Kronenberg (2009) 88–93 on (potential) parody of Cicero's philosophical self-presentation; Wiseman (2009) 107–29 on political aspects. Smith (2018) for an incisive overview of Varro's antiquarian project, with challenges to the label "Roman antiquarianism" in MacRae (2018); Momigliano (1950) and (1990) 54–79, Rawson (1985) 233–49, Moatti (1997) 97–155, Sehlmeyer (2003), Volk (2020).

influence on the *Brutus*.[52] Greek writings περὶ τέχνης and περὶ τεχνιτῶν (for Roman poetry, Varro's *de Poematis* and *de Poetis*) contained an introductory *praelocutio* defining the technical field (*ars*) and the artist (*artifex*). Hellfried Dahlmann saw in the *Brutus'* Greek history the traditional elements: εὕρησις, ἀρχή, αὔξησις, ἀκμή, that is, the early discovery (26), beginning (27–28), a period of growth (29–31), and a mature highpoint (32–38, although Demetrius initiates decline, 37–38). The *Brutus*, in his account, exemplified technographic writing (*enumeratio oratorum*, 319) and followed Varro's adaptation of the tradition.[53]

Cicero, however, goes well beyond these inherited elements. He does use some topoi also found in Varro, but the methodologically rich introduction powerfully and differently synchronizes Greek history with the Roman history that follows it and tailors that synchrony to Cicero's own aims in constructing an oratorical history (26–51; see Chapter 5).[54] The use of Varro is like his eclectic borrowing from other Greek and Roman authors to whom he explicitly or implicitly refers. Cicero drew from several sources for the account of oratorical history and the conceptual framework for writing literary history.

Ciceronian Dialogue

Cicero's own dialogues also offer crucial comparanda for the *Brutus*. Yet, as was the case with texts written by others, comparison to his own texts shows in many ways what the *Brutus* is by showing what it is not. Despite the similar focus on public speech between the *Brutus* and his other rhetorical works (e.g. *de Inventione*, *de Oratore*, *Orator*, *de Optimo Genere Oratorum*), the differences of form and subject emerge clearly. The *Brutus* is far more casual in surveying the technical explanations of the art of oratory:

> At this point it's neither necessary nor our aim to praise eloquence and to indicate its power and how much respect it brings to those who have it.

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[52] Dahlmann (1962) 654 overstates Varro's influence. Cf. Lebek (1970) 191 n.42, Rösch-Binde (1998) 470–89, Lehmann (2004).

[53] See Chapter 4 on Accius and Porcius Licinus. Douglas (1966a) xxiii notes that Aristotle's περὶ ποιητῶν may have included dialogue elements.

[54] Leo (1901) 220 already understood the uniqueness of the *Brutus* as more than mere biographical histories. Dahlmann (1962) 565–66 n.2 unconvincingly objects to Leo's views. He argues that Cicero draws on the topoi of the *praelocutio* from Greek scholarly treatises on arts and artists, with 26–51 subsequently offering the anticipated historical overview. See Bringmann (1971) 21–24 on the shortcomings of his analysis. In particular, there is no *praelocutio* for Roman oratorical history, and the Greek history anticipates and establishes much of the intellectual framework for understanding the Roman one.

But I'll unflinchingly assert that it's the most difficult of all things, whether it's acquired by doctrine or practice of some kind or by nature. You see, it's said to consist of five departments, each of which is a great art unto itself. For this reason, it's possible to imagine the great power and difficulty in the combination of these five very great arts.

laudare igitur eloquentiam et quanta vis sit eius expromere quantamque eis, qui sint eam consecuti, dignitatem afferat, neque propositum nobis est hoc loco neque necessarium. hoc vero sine ulla dubitatione confirmaverim, sive illa arte pariatur aliqua sive exercitatione quadam sive natura, rem unam esse omnium difficillumam. quibus enim ex quinque rebus constare dicitur, earum una quaeque est ars ipsa magna per sese. quare quinque artium concursus maxumarum quantam vim quantamque difficultatem habeat existimari potest. (25)

He rejects traditional praise for oratory's power and glances only cursorily at the traditional subject matter. The relative importance of doctrine, practice, or talent for the orator was the motivating question of *de Oratore*, and builds on earlier Greek debates, which have little place in the *Brutus*.[55] The praise of oratory also was and would remain a standard topic.[56] Perfunctory mention of rhetoric's five departments (invention, arrangement, style, memory, delivery) minimizes their individual importance and promotes instead oratory's unity.[57] Technical divisions fall by the wayside as topics of greater magnitude come to the fore, with a brief (and subsequently repeated) notice of the art's difficulty. Cicero essentially advertises: "This Is Not A Rhetorical Treatise."

Even as Cicero undertakes a different kind of project, rhetorical categories inevitably sneak back in. He compliments Brutus using the tripartite evaluation of individuals: "your admirable talent and refined learning and matchless diligence" (*tua et natura admirabilis et exquisita doctrina et singularis industria*, 22). These are the orator's individual qualities or attainments rather than areas of mastery, and they are the most common way to assess individual speakers, whom the dialogue often finds wanting in at least one area. The assessment of personal rather than technical criteria reflects the work's intense emphasis on biography. Such an emphasis reflects a deeper concern about the continued public role of the orator in Roman society, no longer just connecting oratory to great men of the past as, for example, *de Oratore*

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[55] *De Orat.* 1.5.   [56] E.g. Cic. *Inv.* 1.5, *de Orat.* 1.34; Tac. *Dial.* 5.3–8.4.
[57] See May and Wisse (2001) 20–39 for a synopsis and history of oratory's technical divisions.

had, but seeking to judge all public figures by the standards of oratorical success.

The *Brutus* is the least overtly technical of Cicero's rhetorical works, perhaps in order to give it a distinctly Roman rather than Greek cast. Alternatively, the pursuit of simplicity and comprehensibility may explain deviations from inherited doctrine, such as neglecting the tripartite aims of oratory, *docere*, *delectare*, and *movere* (to teach, to please, and to move), in favor of the bipartite *docere* and *movere* (clearly favoring the latter). This modification was essential for the use of syncrisis to evaluate individuals. It also pigeonholed the Atticists as practitioners of elucidation (*docere*) without emotive force (*movere*). Even so, rhetorical categories are not abandoned altogether. Some figures are discussed by reference to one or more of the five departments of rhetoric, but only rarely – notably with Hortensius – do all five departments structure the judgments. The *Brutus* remains patently untechnical and avowedly historical, stressing instead individual or generational styles as embodiments of oratorical development across history.

Ciceronian Dialogue and the *Brutus*

Whatever the differences of the *Brutus* from Cicero's other dialogues, several similarities elucidate commonalities in the intellectual mindset underlying them. Examining these works can shed valuable light on the subsequent conceptual framework developed for the *Brutus*. First in the 50s and then in a feverish outpouring during 46–44, Cicero wrote on oratory, statehood, religion, and ethics. The *Brutus* would seem to have the most in common with two other works on rhetoric, *de Oratore* (the grand three-book dialogue of 55 BCE), and *Orator*, composed in the months after the *Brutus*. But the connections back to *de Republica* are just as crucial as those to the rhetorical works, and all three should be taken into account in contextualizing the *Brutus*.

Orator

The *Orator* addresses some of the main themes of the *Brutus*, especially the use of Greek role models and the debate with the Atticists. Emphasis is placed above all on the development of prose rhythm in Latin oratory and its Greek forerunners. Cicero will look back in the *Orator* to his laudatory defense of Cato the Younger, written soon after the *Brutus*: "As soon as the *Cato* was finished I began this work" (*hoc sum agressus statim Catone*

absoluto, *Orat.* 35).[58] The *Brutus* also receives notice in *Orator* (*in illo sermone nostro qui est expositus in Bruto*, *Orat.* 23), and the two share a clear emphasis on the superiority of Demosthenes' forceful style. Cicero asserts that "you'd have no problem saying that Demosthenes is in fact simply perfect and lacking nothing (*plane quidem perfectum et cui nihil admodum desit Demosthenem facile dixeris*, 35).[59] Indeed, *Orator* prizes Demosthenes above all others (*recordor longe omnibus unum me anteferre Demosthenem*, *Orat.* 23). Isocrates also garners notice as an authority, and is as much *Orator*'s Greek hero as Demosthenes due to his perfection of prose rhythm.

Cicero also promotes the orator's role in the governance of the state and the renown that accrues from it.[60] In the debates over language and style he again targets the Atticists and dismisses Analogy in favor of Anomaly. With considerable rhetorical deftness he avoids direct mention of Caesar's *de Analogia*. Instead he transitions from discussing word-placement and hiatus to defending customary usage (*consuetudo*), which sets up a vigorous attack on the Analogists for disregarding Roman custom and the linguistic sensibilities provided by one's ears (*Orat.* 152–61). While *Orator* continues certain crucial themes and doctrinal debates of the *Brutus*, it pursues them to different ends.

Important differences between the *Orator* and *Brutus* surface as well, most immediately in the quest for the true orator in *Orator*, an ideal unattainable even for Cicero's Greek hero, Demosthenes (*Orat.* 104). Certain terms determine its emphases, especially the justification of prose rhythm through the concepts of moderation and fitting apportionment, expressed in such terms as *moderatio*, *moderor*, and *temperor*. The term *modus*, meaning both "measured restraint" and "rhythm," conceptually connects the judicious mixing of styles with the variation of rhythms. He partly takes his cue from the *Brutus*, in which he portrayed himself as a moderate Rhodian orator between the Atticist and Asianist extremes. *Orator* partly suggests and partly argues that the grand style consists of mixing various styles and rhythms to produce the most persuasive effects.

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58 C. P. Jones (1970) on *Cato*, with *Att.* 12.4.2 (SB 240), *Att.* 12.5.2 (SB 242). Caesar's response, the *Anticato*, was written in two books in March 45, during the battle of Munda; cf. Corbeill (2018a). Fabius Gallus and Brutus also wrote eulogistic *Catones*, and Aulus Hirtius and Caesar an *Anticato* (cf. Plut. *Cic.* 39 on Caesar's favorable response to Cicero's *Cato*, comparing him to Pericles and Theramenes).

59 On defining the *perfectus orator*, see Barwick (1963) 7–13.

60 E.g. *Orat.* 141–42 defends its superiority over jurisprudence for the Roman state in peaceful conditions.

One glaring difference is in the *Brutus'* claim that Isocrates first conceived of prose rhythm (*primus intellexit*, 32). *Orator* makes Thrasymachus the *inventor*, while Isocrates is the *perfector* (*Orat.* 174).[61]

As in the *Brutus* moderation allows Cicero to repudiate two extremes, the Atticists without rhythm and Thrasymachus without restraint: "But the discoverer was Thrasymachus, all of whose writings are even excessively rhythmic" (*sed princeps inveniendi fuit Thrasymachus, cuius omnia nimis etiam exstant scripta numerose*, *Orat.* 175). Isocrates truly embodies polished and restrained prose rhythm: he built on his predecessors and did so by applying restraint (*Orat.* 175–76), an idea captured perfectly in the phrase *moderatius temperavit* ("blended more temperately," *Orat.* 176). Despite the *Brutus'* complex evolutionary scheme and continued reverence for Atticus' *Liber Annalis* (*Orat.* 120), development in the *Orator* is far cruder.

Yet the most notable difference between the two texts is the emphasis on three styles versus two: *Orator* connects the three styles to the orator's three chief offices: "there are as many duties of the orator as there are genres of speech: the subtle for demonstrating, the middle for pleasing, the grand for persuading; and in this last one alone lies all the orator's power" (*quot officia oratoris, tot sunt genera dicendi: subtile in probando, modicum in delectando, vehemens in flectendo; in quo uno vis omnis oratoris est*, *Orat.* 69). The *Brutus*, perhaps because of its reliance on binary syncrisis, focuses on two styles and their aims, the simple to instruct and the grand to excite the listeners' susceptibilities (*cum duae summae sint in oratore laudes, una subtiliter disputandi ad docendum, altera graviter agendi ad animos audientium permovendos*, 201). It still acknowledges three chief duties (*docere, delectare, movere*, 185, 276) without schematically assigning a *genus* to each *officium* as does *Orator*.[62] While *Orator* demonstrates how the mixing of genres and blending of rhythms create the grand style, the *Brutus* insists that *vis* and *gravitas* inevitably trump the instructive simplicity of the Atticists. Even when dealing with similar material, each work pursues a distinct purpose in assessing its subject matter. While it is true that *Orator* (and probably the fragmentary *de Optimo Genere Oratorum*) was written around the same time as the *Brutus* and focuses on the Atticism debate, the

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[61] Gorgias' prose rhythm results from chance and diligently structured writing, which is missing in Thucydides (*in Thucydide orbem modo orationis desidero*, *Orat.* 234). Cicero seeks to associate Thucydides with the Atticists or those like them (cf. *Orat.* 30–32).

[62] Hendrickson (1904). See Guérin (2014) for one explanation of the differences, and Chapter 7.

Brutus is quite different from these works, and we will need to look to other dialogues for further conceptual filiations and similarities.

De Republica *(and* de Oratore*)*

The *Brutus'* conceptual framework overlaps in several important ways with the *de Republica* of 54–51 BCE.[63] Its six books on statehood, written on the model of Plato's ten-book *Republic*, though quite different in scope, theme, and presentation, are not an immediately obvious source of inspiration for the *Brutus*. Yet shared themes and ideas, especially from the first two books of *de Republica*, do emerge: the condition of the state and its traditions, how Greek models and intellectual inquiry elucidate Roman achievements, a survey of earlier Roman history through prominent figures, and analogies to biological aging to explain Rome's development. *De Oratore* offers a sustained apology for the value and purpose of oratory. Drawing on prominent political figures from his youth, especially Lucius Licinius Crassus and Marcus Antonius, Cicero reworks inherited Greek theory on rhetoric into a persuasive account of Roman oratory in the service of the state.

There are several similarities (and some minor differences) in how *de Republica* and the *Brutus* portray the past, and to a lesser extent some overlap with Cicero's *de Oratore*. All three works analyze Roman institutions in a moment of crisis, signaled by the impending deaths of Scipio and Crassus, the recent death of Hortensius, and the possible death of oratory (all embodying the republic in some way). All three evince an "elegiac quality," as Catherine Steel has dubbed it, through this motif adapted from dialogues about Socrates' (impending) death.[64] The works form an intellectual trajectory that runs from *de Oratore* through *de Republica* to the *Brutus*. *De Republica* appeared soon before Cicero's departure for Cilicia in 51 and the *Brutus* is his first dialogue after returning.[65] The construction of

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[63] Zetzel (1995) 1–3 (with bibliography) on the dating. It was publicly available shortly before his departure for Cilicia in mid-51. Zetzel (2013) for an introduction to Cicero's political philosophy, especially in *de Republica*; J. W. Atkins (2013) and (2018) for in-depth discussions.

[64] C. Steel (2013a) 229.

[65] Cicero began *de Legibus* in the 50s but (probably) never finished; the *Brutus* does not mention it. On the date see Dyck (2003) 5–7 and Zetzel (2017) xxii–xxvi. Several similar features of *de Legibus* are worth noting: a long, intricate preface; mention of or allusion to past texts (Cicero's poem *Marius* and *de Republica*, Plato's *Republic, Laws*, and *Phaedrus*); a request that Cicero produce some (historical) work; playful notice of the dialogue's fictional status; and intense focus on the interplay of orality and textuality; two of three interlocutors are the same (Cicero and Atticus). If the *Paradoxa Stoicorum*, which is also dedicated to Brutus and suggests Cato is living, preceded the *Brutus*, it is treated as nonexistent.

generations also connects *de Oratore* to *de Republica*: Scaevola Augur is the son-in-law of Laelius and father-in-law of Crassus; Publius Rutilius is the "source" of the *de Republica* and is the uncle of C. Cotta, Cicero's "source" for *de Oratore*. The *Brutus* succeeds *de Republica* in a different manner: *de Republica* inspired the *Liber Annalis*, which in turn inspired the *Brutus*.

Although *de Oratore*, *de Republica*, and the *Brutus* form a kind of dialogue lineage, considerable formal differences separate the first two from the *Brutus*. The earlier dialogues more closely follow Plato (and the Platonist Heraclides of Pontus). The *Brutus* is more Aristotelian: the author speaks at considerable length in his own voice. The earlier works put the dramatic setting into the past and the discussion into the mouths of political giants (the "Scipionic" and "Crassan" groups).[66] Sizeable chunks of Greek doctrine are digested into Romanized versions. Political crisis at Rome is the backdrop for aristocratic *otium* at a countryside villa, as the interlocutors break the discussion up across several days. In *de Oratore* Roman authorities offer Greek doctrine with considerable skepticism, if not discomfort, about the value and purpose of Greek theory. Such anxiety does not trouble *de Republica*'s interlocutors to the same extent; the *Brutus* openly embraces Greek examples and theory while criticizing the Atticists' philhellenism. Potential qualms about seeming too Greek are dispelled by refocusing the problem onto the Atticists and by the work's insistence on Rome's ascendancy.

The presentation of theory is leavened by the citation of historical examples. This interlacing of theory and practice also helps to minimize apparent overreliance on Greek thinkers. Across its six books *de Republica* pairs theory with history by interleaving one book on theory with another showing its application to Roman history: a theory of constitutions (1) and Rome's constitutional development (2); a debate over justice and its utility (3) and a survey of Roman morals and education (4); the *rector rei publicae*, the ideal leader (5) and the statesman in crisis, including an example of the true statesman and his everlasting rewards (6). With greater flexibility the *Brutus* alternates between methodological or technical digressions and the historical accounts of succeeding generations. The *Brutus* treats theory and doctrine briefly and informally without fretting over adapting Greek theory to Roman contexts.

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[66] The fiction of the "Scipionic circle" has long since been debunked. See Zetzel (1972). Hodgson (2017), focusing on Sulpicius, suggests that Cicero similarly portrays a coherent group of political and intellectual figures around Antonius and Crassus in *de Oratore*.

It is unlikely that equanimity toward adaptation of Greek material in the *Brutus* reflects a substantive change in attitudes toward hellenization. Admittedly, the dialogues of the 50s hark back to the unimpeachable *exempla* of a bygone era, Scipio (d. 129) and Crassus (d. 91), while the *Brutus* is contemporary. And the instructive account of Zethus and Amphion, who represent the active and contemplative lives (*Rep.* 1.30), may serve to acknowledge and alleviate any anxiety. But political pragmatism is stressed throughout that work. Despite apparent differences, the notional separation of doctrine and history in *de Republica* and the *Brutus* is never absolute, in part because the theoretical sections structure their historical counterparts (with history often exposing the limitations of theory), and in part because abstract knowledge and practical experience are ultimately inseparable: the true statesman, like the true orator, relies on theory to foster and to explain practical success in a Roman context.[67]

Considerable stress is laid on how Romans appropriate or adapt Greek predecessors in order to fashion a superior Roman version of an art, be it government or oratory. This chauvinistic appropriation is all too evident in Scipio's unabashed claim that "things taken from elsewhere have in our hands been made better than where they first had existed and where they had been before being brought here from there" (*aliunde sumpta meliora apud nos multo esse facta quam ibi fuissent unde huc translata essent atque ubi primum extitissent*, *Rep.* 2.30).[68] With greater deference Cicero suggests that Roman oratory has outstripped its Greek forerunners: "You see, the one domain in which we were being conquered by conquered Greece we have now either taken from them or surely share with them" (*quo enim uno vincebamur a victa Graecia, id aut ereptum illis est aut certe nobis cum illis communicatum*, 254).[69]

History in *de Republica* and the *Brutus*

Both works have a shared intellectual apparatus for presenting history: Cicero structures and assesses the past, promotes synchronism across cultures, and relies on biological analogies and evolution as explanatory devices. His research into the past adopts the pose of the Greek scholar. He ostentatiously dismisses historical inaccuracy, such as the idea that Numa

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[67] Also a central point of *de Oratore*, which criticizes the separation of philosophy from rhetoric.
[68] Cf. *de Orat.* 3.95, *Rep.* 3.18.
[69] Oratory at Rome reached maturity and rivaled the Greek canon in the age of Crassus (161); see Chapters 4 and 6. Claims about subsequent improvement are also claims of superiority over Greek oratory. Plutarch has Apollonius Molon confirm what Cicero implies (*Cic.* 4.7).

learned from Pythagoras (in *de Republica*). The *Brutus* criticizes Accius'
misdating of the beginning of Roman literature to 207 BCE, which, like
the refutation of Pythagoras' association with Numa, was rather low-
hanging fruit and hardly original to Cicero. He also champions scrupu-
lousness by acknowledging missing evidence rather than embellishing the
gaps: the mother of Ancus Marcius is known but not the father, thus
demonstrating how obscure early Roman history is (*Rep.* 2.33). Similarly,
he notes missing evidence for early Roman orators whom no early records
discuss (*de quibus nulla monumenta loquuntur*, 181).[70]

Most of all both dialogues explain Roman developments by drawing
parallels to the Greek world. Synchronism in *de Republica* is broadly
apparent in the aligning of Roman kings with Greek poets in Book 2,
which Cicero adapts from Cornelius Nepos' *Chronica*.[71] The literary
accomplishments of ancient Greece valorize early Roman history:
Greece's contemporaneous flourishing is cited as evidence of Rome's early
sophistication. Such parallels likewise justify questionable traditions, such
as the story of Romulus' deification: if Rome was advanced like Greece,
then such tales were not the fabrications of an uneducated and gullible
people. This evidence is used as well to equate the Roman and Spartan
constitutions and Romulus with Lycurgus (*Rep.* 2.18). *De Republica* gives
us a glimpse of Cicero's earlier efforts at synchronizing Greeks and
Romans. Such comparisons are made in order to support claims about
Rome's cultural and intellectual importance. Cross-cultural comparisons of
this sort receive new direction in the *Brutus*. The syncrisis of historical
figures, such as the likening of Pisistratus/Solon to Servius Tullius (39),
supports the idea of Rome's early political development. The likening of
Coriolanus and Themistocles (41–44) implicitly argues for considerable
license in the presentation and interpretation of cultural parallels generally.
Most crucially, the long account of Roman orators is modeled on the
miniature Greek version that precedes it (26–51).[72]

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[70] That claim at 181 is rather deceptive. Cf. 52 on the difficulty of interpreting such records
(*monumenta*).

[71] Zetzel (1995) 75–76 for summary. See above on Nepos' *Chronica*. Scholarly developments in the
50s and 40s are visible too, such as the hotly contested foundation date of Rome: 754/53 in the
Brutus, the (now) traditional date, previously 751/50. *De Republica* follows Polybius' chronology
(1.27.4) and is indebted to Nepos. By 46 Cicero trades Nepos for Varro and Atticus, helping 754/
53 become the canonical date. See Fantham (1981). The *Brutus* also abandons Olympic dating and
shows no interest in the *ab urbe condita* dating that Atticus presumably used. See Rawson (1972),
esp. 41–42.

[72] The Greek account is discussed in Chapter 5. The examples of Coriolanus/Themistocles and
Greco-Roman canons are discussed at length in Chapter 4. Parallels between stylistic decline in
Demetrius of Phalerum and among the Atticists are discussed in Chapter 6.

The emphasis on synchrony is also integral to both works' temporal categories and narratives of progress. The biological analogies of *de Republica* are developed in the *Brutus*. Book 1 first mentions a state's age by noting Greece's senescence (*prope senescente iam Graecia, Rep.* 1.58.6), while Book 2 focuses on Rome.[73] We'll better understand Rome's origins, Cicero insists, "if I show you our republic being born, and growing, and mature, and finally steady and strong" (*si nostram rem publicam vobis et nascentem et crescentem et adultam et iam firmam et robustam ostendero*, 2.3.2). Similarly, in a methodological digression (2.21–22) after the account of Romulus, Scipio prompts us to see that under Romulus "not only a new people was born … but one mature already and nearly full-grown" (*non solum ortum novum populum … sed adultum iam et paene puberem*, 2.21.1). Agricultural metaphors describe "sowing the state" (*rem publicam serere*, 2.5.1) and Greek learning grafted onto native Roman stock (*insitiva quadam disciplina*, 2.34.1). The *Brutus* remarks on the birth and growth of *eloquentia* in Athens (*et nata et alta*, 39). Solon and Pisistratus are old by Roman reckoning, but young relative to Athenian history (*ut populi Romani aetas est, senes, ut Atheniensium saecla numerantur, adulescentes*, 39). The explanation uses a biological metaphor to elucidate the relative chronologies of two states.

Such analogies underpin both works' promotion of change and evolution to understand civic developments. One key phrase, *temporibus illis* ("relative to the times"), reflects an awareness that historical change requires an understanding of relative historical contexts: not only do times change, but people and customs can or must be judged relative to their times.[74] Teleology emerges in the remarks on "the republic progressing and arriving at its best condition by a kind of natural path and movement" (*progredientem rem publicam atque in optimum statum naturali quodam itinere et cursu venientem, Rep.* 2.30). Individual kings made successive contributions and improvements (*quanta in singulos reges rerum bonarum et utilium fiat accessio, Rep.* 2.37.1). Cicero credits early leaders with two signal contributions each, just as central figures early in the *Brutus* introduce lasting changes that fostered oratory. Romulus gave Romans the auspices and senate, Numa religion and mildness (*Rep.* 2.17.1, 2.27.4). In the *Brutus* Servius Sulpicius Galba (cos. 144) embellished speeches with

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[73] Cf. *Brut.* 27: *non nascentibus Athenis sed iam adultis.*
[74] *Rep.* 2.4.4; *Brut.* 27, 102, 107, 173, 294 (all preceded by *ut*, which Cicero appears to use in the *Brutus* to distinguish from "at that time"; but cf. 57, without *ut*, although the meaning is hardly certain).

digressions, pleased and moved the audience, and introduced common-places (*loci communes*, 82). Marcus Aemilius Lepidus Porcina (cos. 137) refined style through smoothness of diction (*levitas verborum*) and periodic sentences (*comprensio verborum*, 96). Gaius Carbo (cos. 120) introduced regular training not unlike later declamatory practice (105).

Thus *de Republica* anticipates the ways in which the *Brutus* adapts biological analogies and metaphors to describe the evolution of oratory. Biological ages and aging function as an organizational principle within the *Brutus*, as Cicero employs terms such as *aetas* ("age," "lifetime") and various terms that express different stages within the lifecycle of an organism. He speaks of his own life and accomplishments by noting that "(a man of) my age had performed signal achievements" (*aetas nostra perfuncta rebus amplissimis*, 8; cf. 22). His speaking abilities have reached the final stages of the lifecycle: "just when my oratory was growing gray and achieved a kind of maturity and ripe age" (*cumque ipsa oratio iam nostra canesceret haberetque suam quandam maturitatem et quasi senectutem*, 8).

Already in Aristotle's *Poetics*, biology was one way to understand the development of a genre. Aristotle famously described a genre as an organism that contains a beginning, middle, and end, forever connecting the process of literary development to biology. Roman theorists from Cicero to Velleius Paterculus to Tacitus in his *Dialogus de Oratoribus* readily adopted and redeployed the conceit.[75] Cicero capitalizes on this conceit by using it to map his life onto the life of oratory, asserting that oratory had reached its "first flourishing" (*prima maturitas*) with Crassus' speech in defense of the *lex Servilia* of 106, the year of Cicero's birth (161).[76]

This chapter began by surveying the textual influences on the *Brutus*. The conspectus of intellectual discourses sought to illuminate the conceptual breadth of Cicero's literary history. The *Brutus'* reactionary impulses have most tended to capture scholarly attention – the way in which it mourns the loss of traditional ideas and values, such as the eminence of oratory in politics. Lost in this emphasis on Ciceronian malaise is the work's intensely progressive outlook. Intellectually it is daring, conceptualizing and explaining literary history as no work before it had. Politically its commitments are unwavering, exploring an oratorical future that contains a viable alternative to Caesarian politics. It is also hard at first to align

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[75] On schemes of progress, see Dahlmann (1962) 557–79, Edelstein (1967), Novara (1982), esp. 199–270. Halliwell (1986) on the *Poetics*.
[76] The significance of this speech is discussed in Chapter 1.

the work's grander aims throughout with its stated aims in the preface. However, close attention to several contexts valuably illuminates the expansive intellectual scope and contemporary relevance of the dialogue. The *Brutus* draws on several long-standing debates, literary traditions, and contemporary discourses. The filiations and genealogies of Cicero's dialogue are impressively broad-ranging: Greek dialogue and scholarship, Cicero's own endeavors in the tradition of literary dialogue, and the contemporaries whom Cicero explicitly cites: his interlocutors – Atticus and Brutus – and the great scholar Varro. From this wealth of forerunners and influences emerges his eclectic and innovative endeavor to document an artistic tradition in all its complexity.

Cicero's reliance on Greek theory and Greek orators is undeniable, but the presence of Atticus and Brutus, and the overt allegiance to their works as inspirations, stands as a forceful reminder that this dialogue is fundamentally Roman. Cicero treats the works of his interlocutors almost as if they were filters through which scholarship and philosophy can pass, emerging in the *Brutus* as distinctly Roman products. In response Cicero will not merely repay acknowledged debts, but will offer something new to his Roman audience. And that innovation is intertwined with his unrelenting concerns over the civic crisis. His dialogue seeks to open a new entrance onto the intellectual and political stage from which he had so long been barred.

The wealth of possible influences helps us to understand the dialogue's distinct theoretical framework as well as the innovative criteria it uses to document the "literary" time of literary history.[77] Chronology is not the sole marker of progress in the account of oratorical history; rather, Cicero proposes several distinct yet interrelated criteria – analogies and metaphors – that document and explain literary progress. In addition to traditional reckoning by consular years we also encounter biological imagery, biographies, the tenure of political office, the production of artistic works as watersheds to mark development, and the discernment or alignment of meaningful coincidences between artists, states, and literary traditions.

Another crucial effect of the dialogue's explicit lineage through the *Liber Annalis* and the *de Republica* is to remind us of the fundamentally political function of oratorical history. The *Brutus* is a crucial political intervention

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[77] On time in literary history, see Wellek and Warren (1956) 263–82, esp. 263; see also the end of Chapter 6 and the Conclusion. Cicero's criteria to explain literary development are discussed in Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

at a time when traditional forms of participation, especially forensic and deliberative oratory, had been seriously curtailed. In addition to Atticus and Brutus, another figure looms large in the literary exchange that prompted the *Brutus*: Julius Caesar. Cicero cites and discusses Caesar's *de Analogia* at length, giving it an importance similar to the works of Atticus and Brutus. Caesar dedicated *de Analogia* to Cicero even as he may have criticized *de Oratore*'s diminishment of pure Latinity as a stylistic virtue. Caesar is the only other intellectual with whom such dedicatory exchanges are mentioned in the *Brutus* (Varro is cited but remains insignificant in comparison). Caesar's intellectual contributions, and especially his role in the present crisis, are central to the *Brutus* and are the focus of the next chapter.