CHAPTER 7

Cicero's Attici

It is both expected and also surprising that Cicero's history of Roman orators begins with a survey of the craft in Greece (26–51). Greece had long been the cultural *exemplum* against which to measure artistic achievement at Rome. Surprising, however, is the length, range, and structure of the twofold digression, the first of many in the dialogue. It might seem superfluous for a critical history of speakers at Rome. Yet Cicero's vision of Roman oratory requires looking to, emulating, and evolving beyond Greek achievements. The survey concludes with an embedded joke, a wink and a nudge for those who have paid close attention through the entire digression. *Brevitas* is commendable in certain parts of speaking but not in eloquence as a whole (*brevitas autem laus est interdum in aliqua parte dicendi, in universa eloquentia laudem non habet*, 50). Cicero then wonders if the synopsis of Greeks was all that necessary (*forsitan fuerint non necessaria*, 52). Brutus hesitates, with a touch of coyness, given that the digression announces several programmatic emphases. If anything the opening was pleasing and perhaps shorter than he would have liked (*ista vero, inquit, quam necessaria fuerint non facile dixerim; iucunda certe mihi fuerunt neque solum non longa, sed etiam breviora quam vellem*, 52). The response draws attention to the digression's importance and reaffirms the rhetorical principle that Cicero had proposed earlier: brevity, though not a universal virtue, still suits certain rhetorical contexts.

The passage exudes polite urbanity but accomplishes much more, since the exchange relies on an important feature of Roman dialogue technique. It fulfills argumentative and persuasive functions, even in the case of apparently anodyne banter crafted to break up the monotony of sustained exposition. By confirming the pleasurable brevity of the synopsis, Brutus implicitly endorses the rhetoric that Cicero employs for the dialogue itself. Moreover, Cicero sets himself in good stead by showing that he appreciates and has mastered one aspect of rhetorical – and ultimately Atticist – values before challenging the fundamental tenets of brevity and Atticism as he

perceives them.[1] He also forestalls potential criticism that he has simply made a virtue of necessity because his preference for fullness arose from the inability or unwillingness to be terse. Cicero's shunning embrace of *brevitas* reflects the dialogue's treatment of the Atticists and the rhetorical strategies that constantly undermine them. He does not closely analyze stylistic differences or demonstrate his principles at length, as he will do months later in the *Orator*, which closely examines prose rhythm as a stylistic necessity for the grand oratory espoused by Cicero and spurned by his Atticist detractors.[2] Instead, the arguments are largely rhetorical, rejecting Roman Atticism with a definitional quibble over the term *Atticus* before attempting to redefine and coopt Atticism in the service of his own rhetorical ideals.

For all the similarities of the *Brutus* to the *Orator*, the prevalent assumption has been that Cicero's anti-Atticism is uniform and coherent across the works, a more or less stable and independent doctrine that finds its way into both dialogues.[3] Yet to understand Atticism as doctrine requires considering how it appears in each text, which for our purposes means asking how Cicero adapts the portrayal of it to the local considerations of the *Brutus*. The discussion of Atticism surfaces in a range of passages in addition to Cicero's famous diatribe (284–91). The long section beginning with Calidius and running through Atticus' objections are crucial to it (274–300). No less relevant is the Ciceropaideia (301–29, see Chapter 1), which contains his educational biography and a syncrisis with his great rival Hortensius. These passages challenge Atticism and Asianism and offer an intermediate alternative to the geographical binary Athens/Asia: Rhodes. Rhodianism is the stylistic tendency espoused in the *Brutus*, even if Cicero never illustrates what it entails.

The discussion of Atticism is intertwined with two tangential issues: the historical evaluation of early Roman orators, including the perplexing problem of antiquarianism (Cato and Lysias as stylistic models, 66–69, 292–300), and the best means by which to appropriate Greek culture, and,

[1] *Brevitas* is often used in two senses without a clear distinction: treatment of subject matter and linguistic compression. Brevity was especially important for *narratio* and valued along with lucidity and realism (the three features at Quint. *Inst.* 4.1.31; cf. *Rhet. Her.* 1.14; Lausberg (1998) §§294–314; *HWRh* s.v. *brevitas* [Kallendorf, 1994]. Cicero ascribes it to Lysias and Cato (63).

[2] I write the following discussion of Atticism from the perspective that Cicero provides, which is neither endorsement nor corroboration, historical or logical, of that perspective (its tendentiousness will soon be apparent). As this book's prefatory note indicates, I avoid repeated disclaimers such as "according to Cicero" or "as Cicero claims." *Caveat lector*.

[3] The other major text is *de Optimo Genere Oratorum*; *Tusc.* 2.3–4 is also illuminating but should be read with its own ends in mind (justifying philosophy).

specifically, the emulation of Greek oratorical greats. Cicero crafts a grand narrative that attacks the so-called Atticists but then coopts their values with arguments that range from specious to spectacular. The terminology of the Atticism debate has its origins in Hellenistic thinkers, but Cicero reworks it in line with his own vision of grand oratory. Ultimately, he argues that only a diversity of Greek and Roman models can ensure the forceful and persuasive style required for the forensic (and therefore political) sphere.

An Overview of Atticism

The stylistic tendencies and debates transmitted along with the labels "Atticism" and "Asianism" have a fraught and uncertain history. In Greek letters the key terms, the verb ἀττικίζειν and the noun ἀττικισμός, originally indicated military allegiance to the Athenian *polis*, but the meaning gradually migrated from the military to the linguistic sphere, denoting the speaking of the Attic dialect rather than a neighboring one. With the establishment of Greek *koine* in the wake of Alexander the Great's conquests, and with the natural linguistic evolution of speakers in Athens and the Greek world, the terms eventually came to denote the speaking of proper classical Attic, a mobile literary ideal rather than a fixed spoken reality.[4]

Atticism also could denote a rhetorical (rather than linguistic) tendency. And in this sense it was opposed to Asianism (or the Asians, *Asiani*), which is even more of a conceptual unicorn, because it was only used in a negative sense to criticize the stylistic exuberance of someone else.[5] Authors never claimed that their own style was Asian. What's more, the term had only a brief lifespan at Rome, lasting from Cicero's writings in the 40s to the Greek Augustan critic and historian Dionysius of Halicarnassus in the 20s. Later discussions refer to these earlier debates

[4] The bibliography on Atticism/Asianism is considerable (the list is hardly exhaustive): Norden (1898), Wilamowitz (1900), Desmouliez (1952), Dihle (1957), Leeman (1963) 97–111 and 136–67, Lebek (1970), Bringmann (1971) 21–24, Douglas (1973) 119–31, Dihle (1977), Bowersock (1979), T. Gelzer (1979), Delarue (1982), Wisse (1995), O'Sullivan (1997), Hose (1999), Narducci (2002) 408–12, Dugan (2005) 214–32, Aubert (2010), Kim (2010), Guérin (2011) 342–49, O'Sullivan (2015), Kim (2017), *HWRh* s.vv. *Asianism* [Robling and Adamietz, 1992] and *Atticism* [Dihle, 1992]. Kim (2017) offers the best concise overview for Greek authors. Wilamowitz (1900) challenged the thesis of Norden (1898) that the Atticism/Asianism debate at Rome was part of a long-standing well-defined conflict between the traditional Attic and the new Asian styles.

[5] The order of my presentation is not intended to stake a position in the debate over the precedence of linguistic/grammatical and stylistic Atticism. See O'Sullivan (2015) for arguments against the common view that stylistic Atticism preceded grammatical Atticism and for complications in such a distinction.

and have little independent life beyond them. The originator of the decadent Asian style was allegedly Hegesias of Magnesia-on-Sipylus, a third-century BCE writer from Asia Minor.[6] The stylistic faults of Asian speakers typically included short, choppy sentences without subordination (parataxis rather than hypotaxis), similar word endings (homoioteleuton), sing-song rhythms (especially the ditrochee) or lack of rhythmic variation, clauses of equal syllables (isocolon), and a penchant for extravagance and bombast.

Most evidence for the Atticism controversy comes (or is derived) from Cicero. The debate had yet to emerge, in the extant record, when Cicero wrote *de Oratore* (ca. 55 BCE). This fact, along with the claim that Gaius Licinius Calvus misled others in his stylistic preferences and wanted to be called *Atticus orator* (284), has prompted the conclusion that Calvus spearheaded the movement of Roman Atticism among a younger generation of orators in the years before his untimely death at some point before 47 BCE.[7] Cicero's criticisms of Atticism are coherent unto themselves, yet the accuracy of his portrayal has been challenged, especially his assessment of Calvus (see below). Given the polemical tone of the debate, he most assuredly obscures as much as elucidates its terms. Later authors claim or suggest that detractors accused Cicero of Asianist tendencies, although he never cites such attacks in the *Brutus* or *Orator*, and instead ridicules the jejune weakness of the Atticists and criticizes the unreformed Asianism of his biographical foil Hortensius. If ancient authors never called themselves Asianists, Cicero extends the taboo by never claiming that his rivals had pinned the label on him. We do learn of his exuberant delivery as a young man (discussed in Chapter 1). He dampened his excesses while in Rhodes, but nowhere mentions being called *Asianus/Asiaticus*. He consistently and doggedly aligns his developing talent with Rhodianism, the stylistic middle ground between these two extremes.[8]

[6] Cic. *Orat.* 231; Str. 14.1.41; cf. Dion. Hal. *Comp.* 4 and 18. Larry Kim (*per litteras*) urges caution: no one before Strabo explicitly cites Hegesias as the first Asianist, although Cicero groups him with other Asian orators and criticizes his use of ditrochee in *Orator*. It is hard not to imagine Hegesias as, if not the founder, then at least an infamous representative of Asianism in the eyes of later critics, including Cicero.

[7] "Jungattiker" is a favored term in the German scholarship. Wisse (1995) suggests 60 BCE as a starting point; *de Oratore* nowhere mentions Atticism.

[8] See Chapter 1 on Cicero's biography, abandonment of his early style, and depiction of Hortensius (Asian) and himself (Rhodian). Quint. 12.10.18–19 discusses a Rhodian school and the categories for it, but his summary and lack of specificity suggest that he largely draws inferences from Cicero's texts.

Criticisms of the Atticists in the *Orator* are fairly straightforward and familiar from the *Brutus*:[9] their overly simplistic style barely merits the title Attic (*Orat.* 23–32; cf. *Orat.* 231, 234–35); they prefer the simplest of three styles, the *genus tenue*, which receives extensive treatment (*Orat.* 75–90). The *Orator* focuses on prose rhythm and consequently portrays the Atticists' neglect of its persuasive potential. The simple style is restrained and lacks *ornatus* ("embellishment," *Orat.* 79), but requires considerable skill to master. It has a studied, carefree quality, nicely summed up with etymological wordplay as "a kind of diligent neglect" (*quaedam etiam neglegentia est diligens*, *Orat.* 78). It is likened to a woman who stands out for natural rather than made-up beauty (*Orat.* 79). Ornamental devices are used sparingly and with an eye toward propriety. Humor, especially wit, should be part of the stylistic repertoire, a virtue mastered by the Athenians but ignored by the Roman *Attici* (*Orat.* 89–90).

While the *Orator* discusses Atticism more directly and coherently, the *Brutus* integrates the debate into various issues spread across the length of the dialogue. Oratorical decline – as much a possibility of stylistic development as continued progress – beset Greek oratory after the classical period and is described in geographical terms as movement from Athens to Asia (51). The exemplary role that Lysias plays for the Atticists is tied to the early history of Roman oratory through the unbalanced and murky comparison with Cato the Elder (63–69). Linguistic purism, a crucial feature of Greek Atticism, especially among later Greek imperial authors, has a parallel in the discussion of Caesar and his treatise on language regulation, *de Analogia* (251–62), but plays only an indirect part in the attack on Atticism.[10] The core discussion of Atticism (283–91) is intertwined with a discussion of Calvus, itself one of the digressions built into the discussion of Hortensius, as we are intermittently reminded (e.g. *sed redeamus rursus ad Hortensium*, 291).[11] The diatribe against the Atticists is framed by Atticus' adamant objections against Cato and older orators as a

[9] Although this chapter focuses on the *Brutus*, it still occasionally draws on the *Orator* for clarification (as here). The rhetoric in each work is tailored to the local text, which does not preclude examining parallels to understand the workings of that rhetoric.

[10] But see below on Gaius Titius for a pointed example. For Greek Atticizers linguistic purism mandated copying classical Attic by appealing to canonical authors, which is considerably closer to the Latin criterion *auctoritas* ("authoritative usage"). The criterion, *ratio* or *analogia*, quite differently regulates morphology through systematization. The closest Roman equivalent to the purist strand of Greek Atticism was the vogue of Latin archaism in the second century CE.

[11] He begins to outline Hortensius' career at 229. On the marking of digressions, cf. 232, 279.

stylistic model, which touches on the core questions of canon building and the value of older authors for literary history and criticism (292–300).[12]

The Atticists employed a restrained and (overly) learned style, as in the case of Calvus:

> And he was an orator more learned in matters of theory than Curio and even wielded a more meticulous and refined style. Although he handled it in a knowledgeable and discriminating manner, still he was too given to self-examination and, while scrutinizing himself and worrying that he might make a mistake, ultimately lost true vigor. As a result, his speaking style, reduced by excessive scruple, shined for the learned and those paying close attention, but would be swallowed down whole by the masses in the forum, for whom true eloquence was created.
>
> qui orator fuit cum litteris eruditior quam Curio tum etiam accuratius quoddam dicendi et exquisitius adferebat genus; quod quamquam scienter eleganterque tractabat, nimium tamen inquirens in se atque ipse sese observans metuensque, ne vitiosum conligeret, etiam verum sanguinem deperdebat. itaque eius oratio nimia religione attenuata doctis et attente audientibus erat inlustris, <a> multitudine autem et a foro, cui nata eloquentia est, devorabatur. (283)

Cicero will go on to call it thinness or dryness (*exilitas*, 284) and will remark that the proper admirer of the Attic style "despises tastelessness and arrogance as though some kind of illness of speech, but approves of the orator's health and wholeness as though it were scrupulous respectfulness" (*insulsitatem . . . et insolentiam tamquam insaniam quandam orationis odit, sanitatem autem et integritatem quasi religionem et verecundiam oratoris probat*, 284). Cicero provides both negative and positive versions of Atticism, which establishes a tension that will remain important throughout the discussion: he does not reject Atticism wholesale, but rather begins to redefine what Atticism should mean in order to suggest that it is one crucial element within the true orator's full stylistic repertoire.[13] We can bracket this ambiguity for now and revisit it in conjunction with Cicero's other challenges to the meaning of *Attici* in his attacks on the Roman Atticists.

The Distortion of Calvus

The main orator Cicero aligns with Atticism is Calvus, but circumspection is warranted, since the criticisms do not match what little we possess of his

[12] Discussion of the *Attici oratores* occurs as well at 51, 67–68, 167, 172, 284, 289, 315.

[13] This aspect of the argument is common to the three works of 46 that discuss Atticism (*Orator* and *De Optimo Genere Oratorum* being the other two). Its rhetorical purpose, to minimize and thus coopt Atticism, has received less attention than Cicero's quibbling over *Atticus*.

speeches or later testimony about them.[14] References in the later tradition outline a dispute between Calvus, Cicero, and Brutus. Seneca the Elder, Quintilian, Tacitus, and Pliny, variously contradict the *Brutus*.[15] Seneca notes that Calvus took Demosthenes as a model for his *compositio* and possessed a lively style (*Con.* 7.4.8). Pliny set him alongside Demosthenes as a model for imitation, highlighting the forcefulness of both speakers (*vim tantorum virorum*, *Ep.* 1.2.2).[16] Seneca quotes Calvus playing to the audience's emotions in the epilogue of the third speech in defense of Messius: "believe me, there's no shame in taking pity" (*credite mihi, non est turpe misereri*, *Con.* 7.4.8). The emotional appeal concludes with the powerful – and notoriously Ciceronian – rhythm: resolved cretic plus trochee. A fragment from Calvus' second speech against Vatinius, whom Cicero defended at the urging of Caesar and Pompey (and to his own chagrin), has likely been modeled on the famous *climax* from Demosthenes' speech *On the Crown* (18.179).[17]

In Tacitus' *Dialogus* Aper criticizes Cicero's generation for being outdated:

> the prosecution speeches "Against Vatinius" are in the hands of all the students, especially the second speech. You see, it's embellished in words and thoughts, accommodating the tastes of the judges, so that you know that even Calvus himself knew what was better, and he lacked not the will to speak in a loftier and more refined manner, but the talent and strength.
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> in omnium studiosorum manibus versantur accusationes quae in Vatinium inscribuntur, ac praecipue secunda ex his oratio; est enim verbis ornata et sententiis, auribus iudicum accommodata, ut scias ipsum quoque Calvum intellexisse quid melius esset, nec voluntatem ei, quo <minus> sublimius et cultius diceret, sed ingenium ac vires defuisse. (*Dial.* 21.2)

[14] On Calidius see Douglas (1955a), who argues that he was not an Atticist, and the discussion of him in Chapter 6. On Calvus, including Cicero's distortions, see Leeman (1963) 138–42, Gruen (1967), Lebek (1970) 84–97, Fairweather (1981) 96–98, Aubert (2010) 92–93 n.26, Guérin (2011) 342–49, and below.

[15] Cic. *Fam.* 15.21.4 (SB 207): "he pursued a certain style and, although his normally strong judgment failed him, still attained what he approved; there was much deep learning, but no force" (*genus quoddam sequebatur, in quo iudicio lapsus, quo valebat, tamen adsequebatur quod probaret; multae erant et reconditae litterae, vis non erat*). The obvious opposition learned/forceful matches the criticism of Calvus in the *Brutus*, as does the general criticism that Calvus achieved what he pursued.

[16] Is Cicero's claim about the sleep-inducing style of the Atticists (Calidius) echoed in Pliny's arousal (*me longae desidiae indormientem excitavit*, *Ep.* 1.2.3)? He then names Cicero (*Marci nostri*, 1.2.4.).

[17] Lebek (1970) 86–87, with *ORF*[4] no. 165 fr. 25, Quint. *Inst.* 3.9.56, and Aquila Romanus (*RLM* 35 Halm). For Quintilian *gradatio/climax* "possesses more obvious and studied artistry" (*apertiorem habe artem et magis adfectatam*, *Inst.* 9.3.54); Cicero insists that the Attic *genus tenue* avoid obvious artistry (*Orat.* 75–90, esp. 78, 82, 84).

Even this staunch critic accords Calvus some virtues that Cicero found wanting: accommodation to the audience and embellishment (*ornatus*) of words and thoughts; both men do cite Calvus' lack of forcefulness.[18] Twenty-one of Calvus' speeches still existed for Aper to heap scorn on (*cum unum et viginti, ut puto, libros reliquerit, vix in una aut altera oratiuncula satis facit*, 21.1). If Calvus was as deficient as Cicero claims, his impressive afterlife seems unlikely. Quintilian happily praises him: "his style is venerable and serious, it is also restrained and often vigorous" (*est et sancta et gravis oratio et castigata et frequenter vehemens quoque*, Quint. *Inst.* 10.115). Vatinius himself was moved in court to interrupt Calvus: "I implore you, judges: surely I don't deserve to be condemned just because this man speaks well?" (*rogo vos, iudices: num, si iste disertus est, ideo me damnari oportet?*).[19] Calvus seems to have emerged as a challenge to Cicero's supremacy, and criticizing his one-sided adherence to Atticism is steeped in concerns about the appropriate models to imitate. It is only speculation, but perhaps Cicero already feared losing the reception wars – were younger contemporaries, including Brutus, in the thrall of his recently dead rival?

Lysias, Cato, and History

Cicero returns to the complex questions about what to imitate and how to assess Greeks versus Romans, and his answers invariably reflect his evolutionary understanding. The desire to integrate the stylistic debate into the larger historical thrust of the *Brutus* explains the perplexing, if crucial, syncrisis of Cato and Lysias (63–69), revisited in Atticus' later charges of antiquarianism (293–300). The first similarity cited is their prolific production of speeches (*Catonis autem orationes non minus multae fere sunt quam Attici Lysiae*, 63), an oddly superficial similarity, which becomes the springboard for several others (*non nulla similitudo*, 63).[20] Emphasis on their productivity may foreground Lysias' primary activity as a *logographos*, a professional speech writer. He was born in Athens, but because his father was not an Athenian he was a metic without full citizen rights and could not have spoken in the courts or public

[18] It's tempting to see Aper's faulting of Calvus' talent as a response to Cicero's claims that it was a question of choice (284), perhaps suggested too in the ambivalence about whether Demetrius had a milder style by nature or by choice, *natura quaedam aut voluntas*, 285). Aper places his response squarely in the binary opposition of *ingenium/iudicium* that Cicero first develops in his dialogues of the 40s BCE and that would become central to stylistic judgment soon after, especially in Seneca the Elder and in Quintilian's reading canon in Book 10.

[19] Sen. *Con.* 7.4.6; cf. V. Max. 9.12.7, Apul. *Apol.* 95.5.

[20] Lebek (1970) 179. Dion. Hal. *Lys.* 17 lists 200; [Plut.] *X orat.* 836a lists 425.

assemblies (although he did fulfill numerous public duties, as Cicero notes).[21] This is an important distinction, since Cato's speeches presumably all had a specific political or juridical occasion to explain their existence, and for Cicero eloquence is nearly unimaginable outside of a specific civic context. Cicero here may allude to a fundamental difference between the two: one active only as a kind of Greek intellectual for hire, the other as a dyed-in-the-wool public figure of the middle republic.[22]

In terms of style "they are pointed, elegant, clever, terse; but that famous Greek has fared better in all manner of praise" (*acuti sunt, elegantes faceti breves; sed ille Graecus ab omni laude felicior*, 63). *Subtilitas*, unobtrusive exactness, above all is Lysias' chief virtue, but Cato has several too: "who is weightier in praise or harsher in criticism, more acute in thoughts, more exact in demonstrating and explaining?" (*quis illo gravior in laudando, acerbior in vituperando, in sententiis argutior, in docendo edisserendoque subtilior?*, 65). The differences from Lysias, especially weight and sharpness, along with the later claim that Cato excels in the various *schemata*, suggest an orator much more like Cicero than like a contemporary Atticist (or even Lysias himself). Despite Cato's antiquity and acknowledgment that his speeches could be updated (68), Cicero presents him as the ideal starting point for substantive oratory, the first stage in a trajectory toward Cicero. Cato also has a remarkable stylistic range.[23] For this reason he inaugurates the evolution of the art at Rome, much as Crassus' speech of 106 inaugurates the evolution of modern style.[24]

Diatribe against the Atticists (285–91)

The ultimate purpose of this syncrisis becomes clear some two hundred chapters later, when Cicero revisits Atticism in a diatribe that targets its

[21] Even Lysias' most widely read speech, *Against Eratosthenes*, may not have been delivered (like Cicero's *Second Philippic*). See Todd (2000) 114. Lysias notes his liberality in carrying out public duties (Lys. 12.20).

[22] The *Orator* singles out Lysias as a *scriptor* (*Orat*. 29), but treats him like other oratorical models.

[23] Lebek (1970) 179–80 and 190, although the self-serving nature of Cicero's history is evident throughout. The schemata (later termed *lumina*) are essential to *ornatus*: *ea maxume ornant oratorem* (141); *et verborum et sententiarum illa lumina, quae vocant Graeci schemata, quibus tamquam insignibus in ornatu distinguebatur omnis oratio* (275). The crucial feature of the *genus grave* is reflected in *laudando/vituperando*, parts of emotionally charged *amplificatio*, especially in a peroration (cf. *de Orat.* 3.105, *Part.* 52–58). Plut. *Cat. Mai.* 7.2 rejects the comparison of Cato to Lysias.

[24] To inaugurate evolution is not to be the beginning (Cethegus). Crassus' speech was the best Latin speech available in his youth (*adulescentes quid in Latinis potius imitaremur non habebamus*, 298); the mature Cicero sees its shortcomings.

unnamed adherents – presumably detractors of Cicero – and the models they imitate. As critics have observed, this "notable example of monologistic dialogue" is "initiated by the author with an imaginary interlocutor whose objections and comments the author in turn snatches up and refutes."[25]

Imitation of Lysias alone might seem to be the main purpose of his dispute with the Atticists, since Cicero insists on Demosthenes' superiority and proposes the imitation of several models.[26] The syncrisis of Cato and Lysias and the heroization of Demosthenes suggest that Cicero attacks the Lysianic predilections of Roman neo-Atticists. Yet the *Brutus* and the *Orator* only imply but never confirm that exclusive preference.[27] Lysias was named, along with Hyperides, as a model for the Atticists in the earlier discussion of Cato.[28] The emphasis on Lysias emerges clearly only in the *Orator*, and even there it is only part of Cicero's arguments.[29] We have no evidence, for example, that Calvus followed Lysias alone; Quintilian calls him an "imitator of Attic speakers" (*imitator . . . Atticorum*, *Inst.* 10.115), the plural suggesting more than one model.

Uncertainty about the extent of Lysianic imitation reflects the larger impossibility of distilling clear arguments from Cicero's criticisms, not least because the diatribe style tends to locate inconsistencies or catch out naiveté attributed to an imaginary interlocutor without then fleshing out the terms and logical consequences of the questions or answers. Confusion is compounded by Cicero's failure to propose clear criteria or to indicate how multifaceted imitation works. He also refuses to clearly define *Atticus*: quite to the contrary, as I noted earlier, he variously deploys the term, allowing it to mean different things at different points to best suit each argument. These conspiring factors have led scholars to varying

[25] First quotation: Hendrickson (1962) 250–51 n.b; second: May (1990) 177, comparing Hor. *Ep.* 2.1. Quintilian imitates with his own diatribe against Atticism (*Inst.* 12.10.22–26).

[26] Guérin (2011) 341: "La façon qu'eut Cicéron de critiquer ce choix est connue. Elle consiste à défendre l'extension maximale du qualificatif d'attique: Démosthène et les orateurs de sa génération étant tout aussi attiques que Lysias, il n'est pas possible de limiter la remontée vers les classiques au seul logographe athénien."

[27] *Pace* Lebek (1970) 90. He asserts that Lysias and Hyperides are paired at 68–69 but that Lysias is the real focus for the remainder of the work; he overlooks other references to Hyperides (e.g. 285). Cf. Aubert (2010) 92–93 n.26.

[28] Admiration for Lysias is discussed at 64, but there is no indication that it is for him alone. Hyperides is also mentioned at 67 (*Hyperidae volunt esse et Lysiae*) and again at 68.

[29] At *Orat.* 28, 30 (*qui Lysiam sequuntur*), though the evidence for Atticists' adherence to Lysias as their primary model is not as strong as has often been assumed, e.g. by Lebek (1970) 90, although he also argues that there is a group of Demosthenic imitators manqués.

interpretations. Yet recognizing rather than dismissing the shortcomings and ambiguities will better illuminate his arguments.

The first claim, "I wish to imitate the *Attici*" (*Atticos . . . volo imitari*, 285), is easily demolished. Cicero asks which *Attici*, since the term, taken literally, indicates a diverse group of classical Athenian speakers: Demosthenes, Lysias, Hyperides, Aeschines, etc. But one can't imitate fundamentally different styles simultaneously:

> Now what's more different than Demosthenes and Lysias, or Lysias and Hyperides, or than all of these and Aeschines? Whom then do you imitate? If you choose one, did the others therefore not speak in the Attic style? If you choose all, how can you imitate them, since they're so different?
>
> nam quid est tam dissimile quam Demosthenes et Lysias, quam idem et Hyperides, quam horum omnium Aeschines? quem igitur imitaris? si aliquem: ceteri ergo Attice non dicebant? si omnis: qui potes, cum sint ipsi dissimillumi inter se? (285)

His unstated target is the Roman Atticists' allegiance to a single "Attic" norm, the misguided belief in a notional essence of style dominant in the city of Athens and its canon of speakers. The emphasis on dissimilarity also allows Cicero to respond to a later claim from his fictive interlocutor: "We want to be like the Attic speakers" (*Atticorum similes esse volumus*, 287). Having already made the case for dissimilarity, he swiftly discards the attendant possibility of imitation: "how can you [imitate men] who are different from one another and from others too" (*quo modo, qui sunt et inter se dissimiles et aliorum?*, 287).

The absurdity of the fictive response is brought out fully when Cicero moves from the classical models to Demetrius of Phalerum. Cicero trades on the geographical ambiguity of the term *Atticus* by focusing on Demetrius' association with Athens: "Athens itself seems to waft from his speeches; yet he's what you might call more flowery than Hyperides or Lysias" (*ex illius orationibus redolere ipsae Athenae videntur. at est floridior, ut ita dicam, quam Hyperides, quam Lysias*, 285). The implicit argument is that no one (including the classicizing *Attici*) will want to imitate Demetrius' pleasant, learned, and yet impractical style, which Cicero earlier slighted (37). The term *floridior* also emphasizes that Demetrius, a practitioner of the middle style, embellished his speeches, unlike the Atticists with their smooth, simple leanness.[30]

[30] Cf. the description of Cato's *Origines* (66, 298) and the connection of *flos* to ornament (*lumen*).

Cicero undermines the notional ideal of "Atticism" by adducing the diversity of styles among Athenians and then offering a geographical argument *ad absurdum* – shouldn't anything produced in Athens be called *Atticus*?[31] The Atticists presumably emphasized certain qualities and authors while overlooking other valid details and styles, as any movement based on a collection of models invariably must. This does not mean that its adherents failed to find in Atticism a coherent and recognizable program, and catching out fictive interlocutors should not be confused with sound argument. To isolate a weak spot in the movement's self-portrayal by quibbling over an ambiguous term is hardly a masterstroke of logic or criticism.

Instead, his strongest arguments are integrated into the larger intellectual framework of the *Brutus*. We next get a historical example of Greeks who imitated classical speakers:

> And in fact there were two contemporaries who were different from each other but still Attic: Charisius wrote numerous speeches for others, since he seemed to want to imitate Lysias; Democharés, the nephew of Demosthenes, wrote several speeches and a history of contemporary events of Athens, less in a historical than in an oratorical manner. But then Hegesias wanted to be like Charisius and thought himself so Attic that he considered those real Attic forerunners almost uncouth. Yet what is so broken, so minced, so childish as that very refinement he sought?
>
> Et quidem duo fuerunt per idem tempus dissimiles inter se, sed Attici tamen; quorum Charisius multarum orationum, quas scribebat aliis, cum cupere videretur imitari Lysiam; Democharés autem, qui fuit Demostheni sororis filius, et orationes scripsit aliquot et earum rerum historiam, quae erant Athenis ipsius aetate gestae, non tam historico quam oratorio genere perscripsit. at Charisi vult Hegesias esse similis, isque se ita putat Atticum, ut veros illos prae se paene agrestes putet. At quid est tam fractum, tam minutum, tam in ipsa, quam tamen consequitur, concinnitate puerile? (286–87)

In essence, Cicero says: "Let's put your idea to the test and consider a Greek example of what it means to 'imitate the *Attici*,' now that it's become clear that there's such a diversity of models." Pointedly, the two models are Lysias and Demosthenes. Charisius imitated Lysias by writing speeches for others, a rather weak connection, since it entails copying a practice rather than emulating a style. Democharés follows Demosthenes, although Cicero will not claim that explicitly, relying instead on family

[31] Cicero's undermining of the term *Atticus/Attici* is discussed below.

lineage as a surrogate for artistic allegiance. It's hardly a ringing endorsement, and little is known of Democharesʼ speeches and rhetorical afterlife beyond what Cicero tells us. The emphasis on a style of history appropriate to oratory anticipates that later claim that Thucydidesʼ speeches possessed an inimitable – often incomprehensible – denseness (287–88, discussed below), as modern students of the speeches in his history readily attest.[32] Both examples make clear the impossibility of imitating fundamentally different styles.

Yet that point had already been made, and its true purpose is the withering criticism of Hegesias. Hegesias believed that earlier, notionally classical orators were uncouth (*paene agrestes*); he sounds like Ciceroʼs contemporary *Attici*, who similarly criticized earlier Roman authors. Most importantly, Hegesias allegedly "invented" Asianism, a crucial detail passed over in blaring silence.[33] These lineages are a rhetorical masterstroke, aligning the *Attici* with the origins of Asianism and suggesting that veneration of Lysias is not at all Atticism, but a false version of Atticism that is ultimately revealed, through recourse to historical proofs, to be Asianism. The concluding stylistic bravado (*tam fractum, tam minutum, tam in ipsa, quam tamen consequitur, concinnitate puerile?*) reinforces in form the content of the argument: the tricolon crescendo concludes with the quintessentially Ciceronian rhythm, resolved cretic plus trochee. These metrical fireworks are made possible by not one but two instances of "long-range" hyperbaton, postponing *concinnitate* after the relative clause and *puerile* to the end.[34] Such hyperbaton, Jonathan Powell notes, tends to mark passages "with a somewhat higher than usual rhetorical or emotional 'temperature.'"[35]

Thucydides, Lysias, Cato

Notice of Democharesʼ histories paved the way for discussion of Thucydides (287–88), whose speeches in his history have no place in the courtroom despite their grandeur. Cicero admires and dismisses them at a

[32] Democharesalso famously attacked Demetrius of Phalerum (again, a suggestion that is in line with the *Brutus'* negative view of Demetrius). His histories also criticized the Macedonian cause.

[33] Cicero lambasts him (*Orat.* 226, 230), as does Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Comp.* 4.11, 18.21–29).

[34] Note that *concinnitas* could, perhaps should, result in good *compositio* or rhythm, as in Gorgias' case: "symmetry on its own often created the rhythm" (*plerumque efficit numerum ipsa concinnitas*, *Orat.* 167; cf. *Orat.* 165, 175). Cicero here tantalizingly literalizes the possibility that *concinnitas* produces moving rhythms. Does he coyly draw our attention to word placement by making *consequitur* ("pursue, obtain, follow") precede *concinnitas*?

[35] "Long-range" is from J. G. F. Powell (2010b) 179, who illuminates prose hyperbaton in Cicero. He further notes that "Cicero cultivates this type of hyperbaton partly for rhythmical reasons" (179; see the preceding note).

stroke; he has neither the talent nor the desire to imitate them: *imitari neque possim, si velim, nec velim fortasse, si possim* (287). Most striking is the abrupt segue into the odd, and seemingly unjustified, claim that Thucydides' inapposite oratory results from his antiquated style:

> As in the case of a man who likes Falernian wine, but not wine so new that he'd want last year's vintage or in turn so old as to search out the vintages of Opimius [121 BCE] or Anicius [160 BCE]. "But those are great vintages." True, but excessive age has neither the smoothness we're seeking nor is it tolerable any longer. A man who thinks this way surely won't therefore suppose, when he craves wine, that he should drink from a fresh vat. "Of course not." Let him seek out wine of a certain age. I think then that your friends should shun this newfangled style, seething in ferment like must in a vat, and that renowned Thucydidean style, too old just like the Anician vintage. Thucydides himself, if he had come later, would have been much better aged and milder.
>
> ut si quis Falerno vino delectetur, sed eo nec ita novo ut proximis consulibus natum velit, nec rursus ita vetere ut Opimium aut Anicium consulem quaerat – 'atqui hae notae sunt optumae': credo; sed nimia vetustas nec habet eam, quam quaerimus, suavitatem nec est iam sane tolerabilis – : num igitur, qui hoc sentiat, si is potare velit, de dolio sibi hauriendum putet? minime; sed quandam sequatur aetatem. sic ego istis censuerim et novam istam quasi de musto ac lacu fervidam orationem fugiendam nec illam praeclaram Thucydidi nimis veterem tamquam Anicianam notam persequendam. ipse enim Thucydides, si posterius fuisset, multo maturior fuisset et mitior. (287–88)

Cicero here relies on several unstated arguments.[36] Denseness and harshness mark Thucydides as outdated, which essentially reverses cause and effect: not "Thucydides is antiquated and therefore harsh" but "Thucydides is harsh and therefore antiquated." Cicero seeks to explain a signal feature of Thucydidean style that might have little to do with his antiquity – Cicero readily admits that his historical works are not appropriate for the courts, but this is surely a question of genre and personal style as much as age. The contrastingly fulsome praise in *de Oratore* may also give us pause.[37]

[36] For Lebek (1970) 155 Thucydides' antiquity is "die als bekannt vorausgesetzte Prämisse seiner Argumentation."

[37] *De Orat.* 2.56. Philistus is said to be an imitator of Thucydides, and the genre culminates in Theopompus and Ephorus (2.57). In the *Orator* the (unnamed) followers of Thucydides (*se Thucydidios esse profitentur*, *Orat.* 30) are chastised for preferring his abrupt, dense style, but antiquated style is not cited. He is paired with Herodotus and both are compared favorably to Thrasymachus and Gorgias (*Orat.* 39), but also likened to Crassus, classified as *vetus*, and praised for careful word order leading to serendipitous rhythms (*Orat.* 219).

The arguments about his antiquity are crafted with the Atticists in mind. The emphasis on the age of a suitable model does not seem to have a place elsewhere in the discussion of Attic style. It does, however, anticipate Atticus' objections about relative standards (292–97). This preemptive strike allows Cicero to turn the tables on the Atticists. Atticus, having bided his time, challenges Cicero's attachment to Cato (and Crassus) and charges him with Socratic irony. Cicero – and we would do well to believe him – rejects any suggestion that he was employing irony: his qualified admiration for Cato and Crassus was sincere.[38]

Atticus levels criticism at the outdated speakers up to and including Crassus' generation. He rejects the comparison of Cato to Lysias because of the latter's unquestionable polished acuity and chides the likening of Cato's *Origines* to Thucydides and Philistus:

> But when you said the *Origines* were filled with all the orator's virtues and compared Cato with Philistus and Thucydides, did you think you'd convince Brutus and me?
>
> Origines vero cum omnibus oratoris laudibus refertas diceres et Catonem cum Philisto et Thucydide comparares, Brutone te id censebas an mihi probaturum? (294)[39]

Atticus cites the appraisal of Cato (66, discussed below), but mention of Thucydides also sends us back to the immediately preceding discussion of him. The placement of Atticus' objections has been engineered perfectly to follow on Cicero's Thucydidean digression, which, unlike Atticus' false dilemma – either presentism or antiquarianism – proposes a middle ground in the assessment and imitation of stylistic models of the past. In line with Atticist positions, Atticus essentially argues that a style is either modern (contemporary) or antiquated (the generation of Crassus and older) and that Cicero unreasonably defends outdated style. Through Atticus, Cicero has his detractors claim that he is on the wrong side of a dilemma, an antiquarian to their presentism. This is, however, a false dilemma, and having manufactured it Cicero manages in advance, through

[38] See Lebek (1970) 178 n.7 (not ironic) and n.8 (ironic) for older literature, and his valuable discussion, 176–93, which I differ from on several points. Desmouliez (1982) remains the best argument against irony (cf. Chapter 6). For revival of the ironic position, see, e.g., Dugan (2005) and (2012), Fox (2007).

[39] The *Origines* reflects Cato's abilities not as a writer of history but as a speaker, reinforced by Atticus' surprise: "you're comparing a man from Tusculum to these men, even though he didn't yet have a sense of what it means to speak fully and elaborately" (*his tu comparas hominem Tusculanum nondum suspicantem quale esset copiose et ornate dicere*, 294). Historiography, no less than poetry, reveals the style of an orator or age.

his criticism of Thucydides, to move beyond its straitjacketed terms, presenting himself instead as a happy adherent of a mature stylistic mean, neither too old nor too young.[40] The arguments here accord well with Cicero's avowed "golden mean," which figures so prominently in the narrative of his own development toward a tempered "Rhodian" style between the extremes of Atticism and Asianism.[41] Cicero has carefully preempted any charge of antiquarianism.

Atticus' claim that Cicero compared Cato to Thucydides and Philistus is important as well because Atticus misunderstands Cicero's earlier comments, a meaningful error that redirects our focus onto the earlier statements:[42]

> As for his *Origines*, what flower or embellishment of eloquence do they not have? He lacks admirers, just as the Syracusan Philistus and Thucydides himself did many centuries ago. You see, just as Theopompus, with the height and grandeur of his style, blocked out their thoughts, which were terse and even sometimes made obscure by brevity and intricacy – Demosthenes had the same effect on Lysias – so too the style of later orators, heaped up (as it were) to the sky, has blocked out Cato's brilliant features.
>
> iam vero Origines eius quem florem aut quod lumen eloquentiae non habent? amatores huic desunt, sicuti multis iam ante saeclis et Philisto Syracusio et ipsi Thucydidi. nam ut horum concisis sententiis, interdum etiam non satis apertis [autem] cum brevitate tum nimio acumine, officit Theopompus elatione atque altitudine orationis suae – quod idem Lysiae Demosthenes – , sic Catonis luminibus obstruxit haec posteriorum quasi exaggerata altius oratio. (66)

Theopompus overshadowed Philistus and Thucydides, just as recent authors overshadow older ones; Cicero nowhere claims that Cato rivaled these Greeks.[43] Chronology is the crucial issue, and Cicero draws attention to it in Atticus' later remarks in order to impose his own interpretation of what is antiquated and what is modern. He achieves this precisely through

[40] Chapter 6 examines Atticus' objections in light of the conflict between absolute and relative standards in literary history.

[41] Cicero's choice of a middle ground will virtually become *the* guiding value of the *Orator* through the use of terms such as *moderatio*, *temperatio*, etc. See below for discussion of this passage in light of Atticus' later objections and the relative chronologies of historians and orators.

[42] Such "errors" are often meaningful and productive features in the genre of dialogue, because they invite closer scrutiny of the arguments under discussion. It is worth comparing interpretations of Tacitus' *Dialogus de Oratoribus*, which is filled with these kinds of errors. Tacitus' insertion of them has often been a pretext for modern readers to disqualify one or another speaker. However, it is more fruitful to look at such flaws or inconsistencies as a way for the author to promote the reader's close involvement with the terms and arguments of the text.

[43] Lebek (1970) 185–86.

the complex analogy of historians and orators. That extended comparison is already hinted at with the passing notice that Demosthenes overshadowed Lysias.[44] Thucydides (ca. 460–ca. 400) was a rough contemporary of Lysias (ca. 460/445–ca. 380)[45] and appears in the *Brutus* at the origins of Greek oratory, first named alongside Pericles (27) as the oldest extant record of oratory and then also associated with one of the early generations of speakers: Alcibiades, Critias, and Theramenes (29). Theopompus (ca. 400/380–ca. 320), by contrast, was a later near-contemporary of Demosthenes (384–322). Cicero has crafted a fairly rough analogy of older and younger historians in parallel to older and younger orators in the Greek world.[46]

Cicero, as so often, makes his arguments not through close stylistic analysis, but by relying on cross-generic developments and patterns that plausibly organize the past into a coherent order. Atticus does not object to the claim that later authors eclipsed their forerunners; he focuses instead on the problem of cross-cultural syncrisis between Lysias and Cato.[47] Cicero had earlier remarked that "the same men who delight in the Greeks' antiquity and in that preciseness they call Attic, do not even recognize it in Cato" (*hi ipsi, qui in Graecis antiquitate delectantur eaque subtilitate, quam Atticam appellant, hanc in Catone ne noverunt quidem*, 67). He manufactures

[44] Attention is also drawn to this claim when one considers that Lysias' *Nachleben* was surely more secure than Cato the Elder's at this time, and Demosthenes' overshadowing of him is a forced analogy. Lebek (1970) 96 n.53 remarks that there's no clear connection between Demosthenes' overshadowing of Lysias and the Atticist controversy, but the comment does make sense if we see it as part of the careful chronological scheme that Cicero establishes throughout sections 66, 287–88, and 294.

[45] Most modern scholars place his birthdate near 445 BCE (see *OCD*[4]). Dion. Hal. *Lys.* 1.12 and [Plut.] *Vit. Lys.* 835c, 836a put it with the foundation of Thurii (459/8). If Cicero followed that tradition, then Lysias and Thucydides were essentially coevals. In *de Oratore* Cicero aligns Thucydides with Pericles, and describes them as *subtiles, acuti, breves* (*de Orat.* 2.93), quite similar to Cato and Lysias (*acuti sunt, elegantes faceti breves*, 63). Still, Cicero does place Lysias in the next generation of orators (*de Orat.* 2.93–95), and Lebek (1970) 154–55 notes that Thucydides "vertritt . . . das älteste noch faßbare Stadium in der griechischen Eloquenz." Cf. Lebek (1970) 155 n.12 (for historiography Herodotus represents an older stage; *de Orat.* 2.55).

[46] The earlier contrast between Charisius and Democharesalso suggests a difference in style based not on imitation, but on chronology: Democharesimitated a modern model, Demosthenes, whereas Charisius imitated an outdated model, Lysias, which also caused the outlandish decadence of Hegesias.

[47] Cicero's interest in this chronology may help to explain why Herodotus, the "father of history," is conspicuously absent in the *Brutus* from any discussion of historiography at Greece, whereas Cicero elsewhere acknowledges his foundational role, and in the *Orator* twice pairs him with Thucydides (39, 219). Cf. *Herodotum patrem historiae* (*Leg.* 1.5) and *princeps genus hoc ornavit* (*de Orat.* 2.55). Thucydides is close in age to Lysias, and thus represents "antiquated" history in the *Brutus*, just as Lysias represents "antiquated" oratory. Herodotus (ca. 480 – ca. 425), at least a full generation before Thucydides, offers a less compelling chronology, and Cicero astutely ignores him in the *Brutus*.

a dilemma for his opponents: either you accept Demosthenes' superiority over Lysias, or you choose to value Lysias, despite his antiquity, in which case you must appreciate the merits of Cato as well.[48]

With Thucydides out of the way, the fictive interlocutors finally cite Cicero's hero:

> "Let's imitate Demosthenes, then." Good god, yes! What else, I ask you, do I pursue and hope for? Even so, we don't obtain our goal. Of course, our Atticist friends here surely do obtain what they want.
>
> 'Demosthenem igitur imitemur'. o di boni! quid, quaeso, nos aliud agimus aut quid aliud optamus? at non adsequimur. isti enim videlicet Attici nostri quod volunt adsequuntur. (289)

The idea quickly advances from selecting appropriate models to recognizing Demosthenes' inimitable virtuosity, as Cicero admits.[49] This is in stark contrast to the Atticists, who can acquire the limited and restrained style that they pursue. This might at first seem like defeat, but Cicero offers two crucial points, which again rest on several unstated assumptions. That Demosthenes is hard, indeed impossible, to imitate is precisely a reason in favor of emulating him. The essential nature of oratory is its difficulty because of all that it demands, and Cicero here turns that difficulty into a virtue. It is crucial, however, not to imitate the style of a single individual but to emulate an ideal possessing all the requisite stylistic virtues. Imitation of Demosthenes implies ceaseless striving after an unattainable goal, which requires constant improvement, in individuals and across the history of the art. We are reminded too that Demosthenes may be the best model but cannot be the only model. Cicero's elevation of Demosthenes anticipates the classicizing attitude that Quintilian will take toward Cicero: he is a preeminent model, but diverse authors must be read and emulated for their distinctive virtues.

At the heart of this ideal lies a paradox that is also a justification of Cicero's literary history: one model is best and yet also unattainable. As a result, contemporary orators must look to the long history of Greek and Roman style with all its potential resources. The complexity and difficulty of oratory make *varietas* not just an aesthetic – but also a historical – ideal: diversity must be sought from past models. For the Greek tradition this means appreciating the ranks, differences, forcefulness, and variety of the

[48] Craig (1993) on dilemma in Cicero.

[49] The suggestion (Castorina 1952 212 n.1, cited at Lebek 1970 93 n.44) that *at non adsequimur* is a response by Cicero's interlocutors has merits (but would not affect my argument).

Attic canon (*videat ne ignoret et gradus et dissimilitudines et vim et varietatem Atticorum*, 285).[50]

Cicero also enlists help from his own history of Roman oratory against the Atticists. The seemingly artless comparison of Gaius Titius, a Roman *eques* contemporary with Lucilius, is devastating:

> At about the same time there was the Roman equestrian Gaius Titius, who seems in my opinion to have progressed about as far as any Latin orator could without Greek learning and much activity. His speeches have so many clever refinements, so many historical precedents, and so much sophistication that they seem almost to have been written with an Attic pen.
>
> eiusdem fere temporis fuit eques Romanus C. Titius, qui meo iudicio eo pervenisse videtur quo potuit fere Latinus orator sine Graecis litteris et sine multo usu pervenire. huius orationes tantum argutiarum tantum exemplorum tantum urbanitatis habent, ut paene Attico stilo scriptae esse videantur. (167)

The comparison to Attic style, matched with Titius' lack of education and training, is hardly innocent. Clever refinement, historical precedents, and sophistication could be mastered by an *eques* without the support of Greek learning or significant practice.[51] To equate his Latin with an Attic style lacking adornment is a backhanded way to suggest that Roman Atticists have no genuine connection to Greek intellectual culture or forensic practice. Yet such learning was a defining characteristic of Roman *Attici*. The description places the style of Roman Atticism far back on the trajectory of stylistic development at Rome (second half of the second century BCE), reinforcing the claim that Atticism is outdated. The analogy surely contains a social and political dig as well: great oratory is the province of senators, not mere equestrians, yet Titius must have avoided a political career and regular activity as a *patronus*.[52]

Recognition of diverse styles begins with the contrast of Crassus and Scaevola (148) but comes to fruition with Cotta and Sulpicius: "And we should notice in these orators the fact that those who are different from

[50] Lebek (1970) 91–93 implausibly suggests that the Atticists also imitated Demosthenes but did so incorrectly, and that this explains Cicero's criticisms here and of Lysianic tendencies among the Atticists in 46 BCE. The point of the passage, rather, is that no one can completely imitate (we should perhaps say, copy) Demosthenes because he represents an ideal. May (1990) 178 says that Cicero "tricks" the interlocutor into agreeing with his Demosthenic viewpoint, but that overlooks Cicero's own remarks on the difficulty of imitating Demosthenes, and so tells only half the story. Again, the point isn't just to imitate Demosthenes, but to take him as a model of the heights to which multifaceted imitation can bring you. On *varietas* see Fantham (1988) and Fitzgerald (2016).

[51] There is considerable overlap between his style and that of the Atticists at *Orator* 75–90.

[52] Cf. Macr. *Sat.* 3.16.14–16; Cavarzere (2018), Dugan (2018).

one another can still be the best. You see, nothing was so different as Cotta from Sulpicius" (*Atque in his oratoribus illud animadvertendum est, posse esse summos qui inter se sint dissimiles. nihil enim tam dissimile quam Cotta Sulpicio*, 204). Historical depth in the Roman tradition allows for stylistic breadth, as later authors build on their predecessors, whose relevance abides even as their stylistic flaws may grow increasingly evident and in need of updating. The number of authors drawn on can thus always increase, precisely because literary history, by its nature, must incessantly accommodate as-yet-unknown innovations.

The wealth of possible options would be overwhelming, and Cicero offers an ingenious workaround to the problem of knowing which authors to imitate and how, especially if one's true model (Demosthenes) is inimitable. His discussion unexpectedly shifts from stylistic achievements to pragmatic considerations: emulate not individual styles but rather successful orators in large public venues. The abrupt shift in logic depends on an unstated assumption he argued for earlier: the paramount criterion is the orator's effect on the audience.[53] And the greatest cases demand large crowds. Unsurprisingly, Demosthenes enthralls a crowd of enthusiastic onlookers, while the circle of onlookers (*corona*) and supporters (*advocati*) abandon the Atticists (289).[54] The Roman *Attici* attain the stylistic refinement they seek out, but also render their speech unsuitable for all but the smallest venues, such as civil trials before a praetor in the *comitium*. When emphasizing effectiveness over aesthetic refinement, Cicero names Attic speakers politically active in grand venues: Pericles, Hyperides, Aeschines, and Demosthenes (290). Conspicuously, Lysias is left off the list.[55]

Redefining and Coopting Atticism

Another crucial line of attack against the Atticists is the complex and casuistic redefinition of *Atticus*. This strategy goes well beyond questioning the movement's learned simplicity or its canon of imitation. Cicero destabilizes the meaning of *Atticus* in order to question the legitimacy of Atticism. True Atticism should embrace all rhetorical virtues, but Roman Atticism aspires only to the simple style (*genus tenue*). Cicero, in turn, defines this as a minimum baseline of oratorical propriety. Once he has

[53] Cicero had already made this case in the digression on the judgment of the masses (*volgi iudicium*, 183–200).

[54] The idea is marvelously adapted and updated by Tacitus' Aper (*Dial.* 23.3).

[55] Of course, Lysias was a metic and logographer, which Cicero overlooks. Cicero can exclude Lysias but cannot offer proof that audiences abandoned him.

argued for this restricted definition of Roman Atticism, he can then subsume it under the full panoply of requisite oratorical values: the *genus tenue* is but one register that the true orator masters. Cicero thereby defines and appropriates the Greek oratorical tradition in order to privilege his own comprehensive program for Roman oratory.

This attack on Atticism is carried out partly in the diatribe and partly elsewhere, and it is largely indirect. Nowhere does Cicero engage in an extended abstract debate over the precise technical or doctrinal meaning of *Attikismos*, even if he occasionally touches on its closest analogues, *urbanitas* (170–72) or *Latinitas* (140, 252–62). He focuses instead on the polyvalent terms *Atticus/Attici*.[56] This might seem the weaker strategy, but it allows him to manipulate the flexibility and ambiguity of *Atticus* to craft rhetorical arguments that are more compelling than logical or doctrinal arguments. Cicero crucially redefines Atticism in order to coopt the stylistic precedent of Attic orators and through them the political and artistic authority of Athens. He begins by exploiting ambiguities of geography and identity inherent in the term *Atticus* in order to undermine the stylistic claims of Atticism.

The discussion of Lysias is the first part of a continuous strategy to destabilize the term *Atticus*. It begins with identity: is he Athenian or Syracusan?

> Yet there are about as many of Cato's speeches as there are of the Attic speaker Lysias, which are, I think, very many – you know, he is Attic, since he certainly was born and died at Athens and performed every civic duty, although Timaeus reclaims him for Syracuse as if under the Licinian-Mucian law.[57]
>
> Catonis autem orationes non minus multae fere sunt quam Attici Lysiae, cuius arbitror plurumas esse – est enim Atticus, quoniam certe Athenis est et natus et mortuus et functus omni civium munere, quamquam Timaeus eum quasi Licinia et Mucia lege repetit Syracusas. (63)

Cicero cannot seriously entertain the prospect that Lysias might be considered Sicilian, but inclusion of Timaeus' claim does point up the weak conventionality of the label *Atticus*.[58] More than just the learned insertion

[56] In what follows I use *Atticus* as shorthand for *Atticus/Attici/Attice* (singular and plural cases and the adverb).

[57] *MRR* 3.118 on the Licinian-Mucian law of 95 BCE. It was aimed at false claims of Roman citizenship.

[58] Cf. *Attico Lysiae* (293). Cicero surely is not challenging Lysias' status as an Attic model on the grounds of citizenship.

of a stray detail, it is the first salvo in a terminological battle. The notice anticipates crucial questions of definition: what does *Atticus* really mean, and if no clear answer exists, what use is the term?

Certainly in several cases the term maintains its conventional sense: as a substantival adjective in the plural it essentially means "Athenians" or "Athenian speakers."[59] As an adjective it also denotes "Attic" style.[60] The semantic ambiguity of *Atticus* comes to the fore when it serves as a stylistic label with a restricted scope ("[good] Attic speakers" or "[good] Attic style") or indicates the term's geographical meaning. In the example of Demetrius of Phalerum, Cicero exploits the polyvalence of the term:

> Didn't Demetrius of Phalerum speak Attic?[61] Athens itself seems to me to breathe from his speeches. But he's more flowery (so to speak) than Hyperides, than Lysias.
>
> Phalereus ille Demetrius Atticene dixerit? mihi quidem ex illius orationibus redolere ipsae Athenae videntur. at est floridior, ut ita dicam, quam Hyperides, quam Lysias. (285)

Reference to Athens makes clear the term's geographical aspect. Demetrius is unquestionably Attic, both geographically and lexically (presumably what Cicero means is that he used recognizably Attic language), but as a stylist he differs considerably from the classical generation of Attic speakers whom the Roman Atticists presumably took as their models.

A similar point but from a different perspective emerges from the mention of Theophrastus in the discussion of *urbanitas*:

> So I don't now wonder about what allegedly happened to Theophrastus: he asked some old woman the price of something and she responded and added "you can't go lower, stranger"; he took it badly that he couldn't evade seeming a visitor, although he lived his life at Athens and spoke better than everyone. So, I think, there's a distinct sound among us of Romans just as of Athenians there.
>
> ut ego iam non mirer illud Theophrasto accidisse, quod dicitur, cum percontaretur ex anicula quadam quanti aliquid venderet et respondisset illa atque addidisset 'hospes, non pote minoris', tulisse eum moleste se non effugere hospitis speciem, cum aetatem ageret Athenis optumeque loqueretur

[59] E.g. 51 (Attic speakers); it means "Athenians" at 254, probably to avoid repetition after *Atheniensis Hyperboli*.

[60] In the singular accompanied by a noun indicating style, e.g. *Atticae dictionis* (51); *Attico genere dicendi* (68).

[61] Or "in [an] Attic style." Cicero trades on the semantic flexibility of the adverb.

> omnium. sic, ut opinor, in nostris est quidam urbanorum sicut illic Atticorum sonus. (172)

Cicero likens Attic speech to Roman *Latinitas*, and the anecdote does double duty: undermining the definition of *Atticus* and showing that qualitative speech is independent of geographical origin. Theophrastus, a native of Lesbos, lived in Athens and became the premier speaker of his day. Quintilian's version brings out Theophrastus' hypercorrectness: he gave away his foreign origin by seeming to be too Attic (*Inst.* 8.1.2–3).[62]

Cicero had already begun to undermine *Atticus* earlier in the syncrisis of Lysias and Cato: "The same men, who delight in the Greeks' antiquity and that subtlety they call Attic, do not even recognize it in Cato" (*hi ipsi, qui in Graecis antiquitate delectantur eaque subtilitate, quam Atticam appellant, hanc in Catone ne noverunt quidem*, 67). He objects to the Atticists' attempts to make a stylistic feature the province of one group alone. While defending Cato he shows up the conventionality of *Atticus*. Like most designations of national or group identity, the term and its legitimizing assumptions are contingent and malleable. *Atticus* is not a fixed essence, but rather an identity that is performatively constructed in the process of naming and in the term's subsequent reception. The conventional instability allows Cicero to question its meaning, to suggest alternative ones, and to associate the term with a different set of values.

This revaluation is also achieved in a less perceptible fashion, by drawing on his interlocutor's authority and the name he bears, Atticus. The words *Atticus/Attici/Attice* pervade the *Brutus*, and the virtual ubiquity of 'Atticness' is carefully manufactured by Cicero.[63] The presence of Titus Pomponius Atticus as an interlocutor calls special attention to the term and its polyvalence. His cognomen, we are reminded, derives from his adopted city: "And whenever I consider Greece, your Athens especially, Atticus, meets my gaze and shines forth" (*in quam cum intueor, maxime mihi occurrunt, Attice, et quasi lucent Athenae tuae*, 26).

[62] Hendrickson (1962) 148 n.a calls Quintilian's detail an "inept addition." A different perspective might suggest that Cicero suppresses the detail of hyperatticism to suit the needs of the *Brutus*: a geographically non-Attic speaker can still be a great Athenian speaker. Quintilian's version would undermine this point. Perhaps Quintilian includes a detail Cicero needed to omit.

[63] Cicero's interlocutor is addressed as Atticus (×26), Pomponius (×6), and Titus (×1). *Atticus/Attici* (the style or its adherents) appears 33 times in *Brutus*. *Atticus* appears 24 times in *Orator* (plus 1 for T. Pomponius Atticus). Cicero enjoyed puns in his letters on Atticus' cognomen, Athens, and Atticism. Cf. *Att.* 1.13.5 (SB 13), 6.5.4 (SB 119), 15.1a.2 (SB 378). *De Senectute* opens with double nameplay, citing a passage from Ennius that addresses Titus Flaminius (*O Tite* . . .) and then noting that Atticus had taken his cognomen from Athens (*cognomen . . . Athenis deportasse*, *Sen.* 1); cf. *Leg.* 1.2. See Baraz (2012) 173–82.

Set against Atticus and his cognomen are the aspirations of Calvus: "Attic[us] is what our friend Calvus wanted to be called as an orator" (*Atticum se . . . Calvus noster dici oratorem volebat*, 284). Named for his adopted home, "your Athens" (*Athenae tuae*, 26) as Cicero calls it with an imperialist touch, Atticus adapts Greek scholarship and new knowledge to Roman ends in the production of the *Liber Annalis*. This activity sharply contrasts with Calvus' failure to adapt his philhellenism to a Roman context.[64] We are reminded of another failure, Hegesias, who similarly courted the label (*se ita putat Atticum*, 286). Geographically and stylistically he was Asian, and the language of the *exemplum* contributes to the widespread undermining of the label *Atticus*. The absurdity of the term's geographical denotation similarly emerges in the Ciceropaideia: Menippus of Stratonicea, the most eloquent man of Asia, garners a place among the *Attici* based on his faultless style (315).

Cicero traverses several stages of his argument in order to make the claim that faultlessness is the primary quality of Roman Atticism. After challenging *Atticus* as a label for geography or identity ("Athenian [speakers]") and then criticizing the Atticists for their meager style, he begins to redefine *Atticus* as a stylistic tendency. Of the successful orators who attract a crowd, Cicero says: "to whomever this happens, know that he is speaking in the Attic fashion, as we have heard for Pericles, Hyperides, Aeschines, and especially Demosthenes" (*haec cui contingant, eum scito Attice dicere, ut de Pericle audimus, ut de Hyperide, ut de Aeschine, de ipso quidem Demosthene maxume*, 290). This maximalistic ideal, based on a principle of effectiveness through a diversity of styles (as discussed above), is thoroughly opposed to the Roman Atticists, whom he pigeonholes as practitioners of the *genus tenue*. He does not reject Atticism, but rather accords it a place at smaller venues demanding less oratorical vigor: "if it's the mark of the *Attici* to speak in a restrained and meager manner, let them by all rights be *Attici*; but let them come to the *comitium* and speak before a standing judge: the court benches require a greater and fuller voice" (*si anguste et exiliter dicere est Atticorum, sint sane Attici; sed in comitium veniant, ad stantem iudicem dicant: subsellia grandiorem et pleniorem vocem desiderant*, 289).

This provisional acceptance of Atticism is possible only because Cicero exploits ambiguities in his own redefinitions of *Atticus*. He first criticizes it as a wrongly assumed label ("Roman Atticism"), when in fact it should designate the great range of Athenian models ("Real Atticism"). Since the

[64] Calvus' learning comes through clearly: *litteris eruditior*; *scienter*; *doctis* (283).

Atticists insist on their style of speech, however, Cicero finally concedes that it can designate a minimum level of competence, the faultless employment of the *genus tenue*. The status of Atticism as a kind of minimum level of adequacy is essentially a negative definition, the prospect that "the mark of the Atticists is to have nothing bothersome or inept" (*nihil habere molestiarum nec ineptiarum Atticorum est*, 315). By aligning Atticism with the *genus tenue* he can then claim that any true *orator* must, by definition, have mastered that stylistic register.

With greater precision he later distinguishes the Attic from the grand style:

> If, however, they accept a style that is sharp and sensible while at the same time direct, firm, and dry, and if they don't rely on heavier oratorical embellishment and they understand this to be properly Attic, they praise it rightly. There's a place, you see, in an art form so capacious and varied, for even this small-scale precision. The result is that not all who speak in the Attic style speak well, but that all who speak well speak also in the Attic style.
>
> sin autem acutum, prudens et idem sincerum et solidum et exsiccatum genus orationis probant nec illo graviore ornatu oratorio utuntur et hoc proprium esse Atticorum volunt, recte laudant. est enim in arte tanta tamque varia etiam huic minutae subtilitati locus. ita fiet, ut non omnes qui Attice idem bene, sed ut omnes qui bene idem etiam Attice dicant. (291)

Cicero has redefined Roman Atticism not to reject it out of hand but in such a way that allows him to acknowledge its value as one weapon in the full rhetorical arsenal. His minimalist definition of Atticism and maximalist definition of the orator allow him to coopt Atticism, placing it safely under the all-encompassing umbrella of Ciceronian force, fullness, and variety. Cicero's style here reinforces the conceptual point (as we saw with *brevitas* at the beginning of this chapter). This conclusion to the diatribe against Atticism uses a distinctly Attic flourish: a smooth *sententia* with simple terse language and an unobtrusively chiastic word arrangement.[65]

Cicero disagrees with the Roman Atticists not to defend himself against charges of being "Asian" but to stake a claim as to what "Attic" properly means and what type of orator best represents an ideal that draws on Athenian models. Cicero's response is essentially "I have no problem with Atticism, as long as we understand what it actually means. As a result, I'm

[65] *Attice idem bene ~ bene idem Attice*. See *Orat.* 79 for the *sententia* as a crucial feature of the *genus tenue*.

at least as Attic as anyone else, but more importantly, I'm not *just* Attic." For all the arguments against Atticism, the movement is not in itself his main opponent in the *Brutus*, and his aim is hardly to accurately document a doctrinal disagreement with fidelity.[66] Atticism is as much a foil as it is a target.

It is certainly true that the multifaceted criticisms made in the *Brutus* anticipate the strict equation of the Attic style with the *genus tenue* and its duty to instruct (*docere*) in the *Orator*.[67] Yet the *Brutus* integrates the Atticism debate into the narratives of artistic evolution, stylistic appropriation and Roman identity, contemporary politics, and Cicero's aesthetic commitments. The *Orator* criticizes Atticism in different terms and to different ends, once again pigeonholing the Atticists as practitioners of the plain style, but in order to provide a rhetorical and intellectual justification of prose rhythm. Considerable overlap exists between the *Brutus* and the *Orator*, but the local requirements in each text are what ultimately shape the local forms of Atticism.[68] The importance of history in the *Brutus* means that opposing Cicero's values ultimately means being on the wrong side of Roman history, failing to understand that Roman oratory depends on the diversity found in the Greek and Roman traditions. Aesthetic history in the *Brutus* is inextricable from civic history, which places Cicero's detractors in a bind: to deny his stylistic argument is to deny the greatness of Rome's past and thus to render oratory meaningless in the present.

[66] Lebek (1970) 94: "Cicero schreibt nicht, um die Nachwelt über den Attizismus seiner Zeit zu informieren." Lebek (1970) 89 is, however, unwilling to draw the likely conclusion that Cicero distorts the terms of the disagreement.

[67] Cf. Guérin (2014).

[68] Cicero's later proposal of Thrasymachus as the originator of prose rhythm (*Orator*) rather than Isocrates (32; cf. *de Orat.* 3.173) may not result from revised opinion or access to new knowledge. Each choice is thoroughly plausible in its own context and each best serves the historical narrative of the text in which it appears. See Gotoff (1979) 37–66 on the polemical discussion of style and rhythm in the *Orator*.