Performative Elements in Cicero’s Orations: an Experimental Approach

Introduction

Roman oratorical delivery has received considerable scholarly attention in recent years. This energy has been directed in part towards Quintilian’s theoretical treatment of the subject, but there has also been a growing interest in the performative elements of Cicero’s orations. As has been increasingly recognised, to appreciate fully the impact of his speeches, we need to take into consideration various elements outside the written text. His use of voice and gesture, for example, as well as the physical environment in which the speech was delivered, all made an important contribution to the overall oratorical performance.

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1 See Quintilian 11.3.1-184; Elaine Fantham, ‘Quintilian on Performance: Traditional and Personal Elements in Institutio 11.3’ Phoenix 36 (1982), 243-63; Ursula Maier-Eichhorn, Die Gestikulation in Quintilians Rhetorik (Frankfurt am Main, 1989); G. Wührle, ‘Actio: Das fünfte officium des antiken Redners’ Gymnasium 97 (1990), 31-46; P. Wülffing, ‘Antike und moderne Redegestik: Quintilians Theorie der Körpersprache’ AU 37 (1994), 45-63. In the following text and notes, all references to primary sources are by Cicero unless stated otherwise; all references to Quintilian are from Institutio Oratoria.

problem, however, is that these performative elements leave very little trace in the literary or historical record. We can glean a modest amount of information from the Roman rhetorical writers; but even this evidence has its limitations. As is the case with most performance arts, it is very difficult to get a full sense of the dynamics of the original occasion from written accounts alone.

The following discussion presents the results of our attempts to apply an experimental performance-based approach to this problem. Through practical reconstructions of Cicero’s speeches we hoped to be able to test the usefulness of the rhetorical information available on delivery, and to gain a deeper appreciation of their performative elements. Although this kind of practical analysis of performance has proved profitable in the field of ancient drama, it has not to our knowledge been applied before now to Cicero’s orations.3 To this extent then our


experiments are the hesitant first steps in a largely unexplored area. Our findings are presented not as the definitive word on the subject, but as a stimulus to further discussion and debate.

Method

The project was undertaken by the authors between January and November 2001. Nine passages from Cicero’s speeches were selected for performance, ranging in length from a single sentence to some 45 lines. Several criteria determined the selection of these passages. Four passages featuring different oratorical styles were chosen from Pro Caelio in order to explore the different approaches to delivery associated with them. The opening sentences of the speech, for instance, provided an example of the calm, smooth language often employed in exordia, sections 27.64-5, in which Cicero ridicules the prosecution’s account of Licinius in the baths, 58-78. Oliver Taplin, Greek Tragedy in Action (London, 1978) provided the impetus for much of this kind of research (see eg 1-8).

4 Using Cicero’s oratorical texts as scripts for performance raises the complex question of how closely these written versions represent what he actually said. For important discussions of the problem (and contrasting views), see J. Humbert, Les Plaidoyers écrits et les plaidoiries réelles de Cicéron (Paris, 1925), and W. Stroh, Taxis und Taktik: Die advokatische Dispositionskunst in Ciceros Gerichtsreden (Stuttgart, 1975), 31-54. It is clear enough that many of Cicero’s orations were put in their extant written form only after they had been delivered, and are therefore unlikely to be verbatim transcripts of what was said. It is the degree of these alterations that provokes dispute. (Cicero’s practice in fact probably varied from speech to speech). For our own purposes, the fact that Quintilian views the extant texts as scores to which his precepts of rhetorical delivery can be applied (see eg 11.3.39 and 11.3.47-51) suggests that they are not significantly divorced from their performative function. Even though Cicero probably did not set out to record in his texts the exact words that he used, it is likely that he composed them with an eye to the general style of performance employed on the original occasion. For a useful recent overview and bibliography, see Andrew Riggsby, Crime and Continuity in Ciceronian Rome (Austin, Texas, 1999), 178-84. It is worth noting perhaps that scholars who base interpretative studies closely on the written text are inclined to argue strongly for a close correspondence between the spoken and written word.
demonstrate the vigorous style typical of refutations; his impersonation of Appius Claudius Caccus at sections 14.33-4 supplies an interesting example of the use of prosopopoeia; and the concluding sections (32.79-80) employ an especially emotional style of oratory. Three other passages—the opening sentences of Pro Archia and Pro Ligario, and part of the peroration of Pro Milone (37.101-38.105)—were chosen because Quintilian refers to them specifically in his discussion of oratorical delivery. In these cases we were able to examine how far his remarks prove useful in helping to turn text into performance. Our last two passages (In Catilinam 2.4.7 and Orationes Philippicae 6.5.12-3) were taken from speeches delivered at public meetings (contiones) rather than in a court of law, and were selected in order to explore the orator's opportunities for interacting with his audience on such occasions.

As we shall see, our general approach was to try to reconstruct the delivery of these passages according to the guidelines presented in Roman rhetorical discussions. Robin Bond, a professional Latinist with over thirty years of semi-professional acting experience, took on the role of Cicero, while Jon Hall assumed the responsibilities of director and main researcher. Rehearsals over the months allowed us to experiment with various interpretations and try out different solutions to the problems that arose. At the end of the rehearsal period, a final version of each passage was filmed for reference purposes.5

While we attempted to recreate as accurately as possible the original physical environment of Cicero's oratory, two significant compromises had to be made. First, technical considerations required our reconstructions to be filmed inside a small theatre. In Rome of course most legal cases and contiones were conducted outdoors at the full mercy of the elements; indeed Quintilian (11.3.27) notes that the orator had to be prepared to speak in the wind and rain if necessary.6 Such conditions,

5 For information on how to view the filmed versions of our performances, see the following website: http://www.otago.ac.nz/classics/staff/hall.html.

6 The orator in the forum also had to compete with the bustle of surrounding activities (Quintilian 10.3.30; cf Brutus 92.317 and 84.289). For similar compromises in an attempted reconstruction of a Roman dramatic performance in Latin, see Stroh and Breitenberger, 'Inszenierung Senecas' (as in n.3), 252-3.
however, are not ideal for filming, and it would have been difficult to accommodate the vagaries of the weather within our tight shooting schedule and limited budget. Filming our scenes indoors was certainly not entirely satisfactory: The theatre that we used certainly differed considerably from the Roman forum in terms of acoustics and spatial dynamics; but it was our best practical option.

Second, the 'crowd' used in our reconstructions of the contiones consisted of only four individuals, far fewer of course than the hundreds or even thousands that regularly attended such events at Rome. This small number no doubt failed to reproduce accurately the scale on which the orator's interaction with the audience was usually conducted, but hopefully it succeeded in establishing at least the essential dynamic that could exist between the two. Overall we believe our reconstructions were accurate enough in their other details to allow us to explore profitably a number of important issues concerning Roman oratorical delivery.

Gesture

As Quintilian's discussion of the subject shows (11.3.65-130), gesture was an important feature of oratorical delivery, and one of our first tasks was to decide which gestures should be used to accompany the text of our various passages. Thirteen gestures in particular, drawn mainly but not exclusively from Quintilian's recommended repertoire, were used in our reconstructions:

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7 See Aldrete, Gesture and Acclamations (as in n.2), 78-82 on the problems of voice projection and the usual size of audiences in the forum (and elsewhere).

8 The application of Quintilian's precepts to Cicero's texts is not without its problems, given the difference in dates between the two men and the differences in their theoretical approaches. The information on gesture provided by rhetorical treatises of the Late Republic, for example, is notably meagre (see Orator 18.59-60; De Oratore 3.59.220; Auctor ad Herennium 3.15.26-8); and the archaeological and artistic evidence gives little help for the period. (See Richard Brilliant, Gesture and Rank in Roman Art [New Haven, 1963] 31 and 58-70, and the synthesis of available material by Carl Sittl, Die Gebärden der Griechen und Römer [Hildesheim and New York, 1970; originally published Leipzig, 1890], 191
(1) At 11.3.92 Quintilian describes a gesture particularly suited to the *exordium* of a speech:

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est autem gestus ille maxime communis, quo medius digitus in pollicem contrahitur explicitis tribus, et principiis utilis cum leni in utramque partem motu modice prolatus, simul capite atque umeris sensim ad id, quo manus feratur, obsecundantibus.
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But the most common gesture is the one in which the middle finger is placed against the thumb and the other three extended. It is suited to the openings of speeches; the hand is carried forward a short distance with a gentle movement to left and right, while the head and shoulders slowly follow the hand's direction.

This gesture was inserted at various points in our reconstructions of the openings of *Pro Caelio*, *Pro Ligario* and *Pro Archia*.9

(2) At 11.3.96-7 Quintilian describes a gesture which he claims Cicero would have used in the opening sentence of *Pro Archia* in order to convey a sense of modesty:

199-211). This paucity of material contrasts quite sharply with Quintilian's lengthy discussion over a hundred years later. Aldrete, *Gesture and Acclamations* (as in n.2), 73 therefore postulates a significant increase in the use of oratorical gesture during the early Imperial period, and suggests that Cicero's practices were probably quite different from those of later speakers. This argument, however, assumes a close link between rhetorical theory and practice. In fact, as Fantham, "Quintilian on Performance" (as in n.1), 261 observes, a general distaste of technical discussion, as well as the existing handbook tradition within which he was working, explain quite adequately Cicero's cursory theoretical treatment of the subject. It is likely that he used gesture a good deal in practice, but simply preferred not to discuss the matter in detail in his theoretical works. Overall it is not unreasonable to suppose that gestures similar to those described by Quintilian were familiar to Republican orators also.

9 Cf also Quintilian's comments at 11.3.161 on the restrained style of delivery during the *exordium* and the understated gestures that usually accompanied it.
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est et ille verecundae orationi aptissimus, quo, quattuor primis leviter in summum coeuntibus digitis, non procul ab ore aut pectore fertur ad nos manus et deinde prona ac paulum prolata laxatur. (97) Hoc modo coepisse Demosthenen credo in illo pro Ctesiphonte timido summissoque principio, sic formatam Ciceronis manum cum diceret: 'si, iudices, ingeni mei, quod sentio quam sit exiguum.'

There is also that gesture especially suited to modest language: the thumb and the next three fingers are gently converged to a point and the hand is brought close to the mouth or chest, then allowed to fall palm downwards and a little in front. It was with this gesture that I believe Demosthenes began his apprehensive and deferential exordium in the speech in defence of Ctesiphon, and it was, I think, with his hand held in this way that Cicero spoke the words, ‘If, gentlemen of the jury, I have any talent—and I am conscious how little it is’.

The use of credo here suggests that this is little more than a guess on Quintilian’s part; ¹⁰ but since it is a sensible one, we incorporated the gesture into our reconstruction of this particular sentence.

(3) It is clear from Quintilian (11.3.89 and 96) that the Roman orator used simple pointing gestures when referring to himself or to other people or things. Various phrases in our passages seemed suited to such gestures. At Pro Caelio 1.1, for example, Cicero contrasts the activity of the present lawcourt (unum hoc iudicium) with the leisure of everybody else in the city (diebus festis ludisque publicis, omnibus forensibus negotiis intermissis). It is easy to imagine him using a pointing gesture with his reference to the court for the sake of emphasis.

(4) The index finger pointed downwards towards the ground was sometimes used to express insistence (Quintilian 11.3.94). This gesture

¹⁰ This interpretation seems more likely than supposing that Quintilian is asserting here his agreement with previous writers on the subject, as suggested by Gunderson, Staging Masculinity (as in n.2), 49.
complemented well the tone and intent of Cicero’s phrase *muliebrem libidinem comprimendam putet* (‘he’d think that the woman’s lust ought to be restrained’) at *Pro Caelio* 1.1, where the sense of obligation contained in the gerundive *comprimendam* implies an assertive, insistent manner.

(5) According to Quintilian (11.3.101), questions were often accompanied by a slight turn of the hand (*vertentes manum*), the precise arrangement of the fingers in this case being of little importance (*utcumque composita est*). This gesture was used with several of the questions that occur in our passages (eg those in Cicero’s refutation at *Pro Caelio* 27.64-5).

(6) Quintilian regards one gesture as especially appropriate for expressions of wonder (11.3.100): *est admiracioni conveniens ille gestus, quo manus modice supinata ac per singulos a minimo collecta digitos redeunte flexu simul explicatur atque convertitur.* (‘Suited to showing surprise is that gesture in which the hand is turned slightly upwards and the fingers brought together one by one, beginning with the little finger. Then the hand is opened again in a single reverse movement and turned over.’) This gesture was employed for mild ironical effect with the phrase *miretur profecto* at *Pro Caelio* 1.1.

(7) *Auctor ad Herennium* (3.15.27) in his discussion of gestures especially appropriate to vigorous debate mentions the use of a quick forward movement of the arm (*porrectio perceleris brachii*).11 He gives no further details, but presumably this rapid motion serves to reinforce the assertiveness of the orator’s argument. Quintilian tells us that this gesture could also be adapted to suit more flowing passages (11.3.84): *brachii moderata proiectio, remissis umeris atque explicantibus se in proferenda manu digitis, continuos et decurrentis locos maxime decet.* (‘A slight extension of the arm, with the shoulders thrown back and the fingers opening as the hand is brought forward, is especially becoming in continuous passages that flow smoothly.’) The arm could be stretched out yet more expansively (11.3.84: *exspatiatur in latus*) to complement a grander style. Evidently then arm movements of different types played an

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11 Cf also *Orator* 18.59 on this gesture.
extensive part in the Roman orator’s repertoire of gestures, and we endeavoured to incorporate a selection of them in our reconstructions.

Several especially dramatic gestures were included in the passages from porations and contiones.

(8) A clenched fist pressed to the breast, as described by Quintilian at 11.3.104, was used to reinforce the sense of anger in the exclamation o impudentiam incredibilem! (Orationes Philippicae 6.5.13).

(9) Vows and invocations of the gods (eg the phrase o di immortales at Pro Milone 38.104) were accompanied by a gesture in which both arms were stretched outwards (Quintilian 11.3.115: protendimus).

(10) The angry exclamation malam quidem illi pestem (‘to the devil with him!’) at Oratipnes Philippicae 6.5.12 was emphasised by striking the thigh, a gesture of indignation frequently mentioned in rhetorical discussions.¹²

(11) A theatrical striking of the forehead, a gesture said by Cicero to accompany expressions of extreme emotion, was incorporated into the lament o me miserum, o me infeliciex at Pro Milone 37.102.¹³

(12) A gesture of supplication, with the arms thrust out at a level below the shoulders (Quintilian 11.3.115), was used several times during the two porations. It seemed particularly suited, for example, to Cicero’s earnest plea to the jurors at Pro Milone 37.103 (nolite, obsecro vos, etc.).

¹² Auctor ad Herennium 3.15.27; Brutus 80.278; Quintilian 2.12.10; 11.3.123. Cf Homer Odyssey 13.198-9 for the emotional use of this gesture in a non-oratorical context.

¹³ Brutus 80.278; also Auctor ad Herennium 3.15.27 (capitis ictu); Quintilian 11.3.123; and cf Epistulae ad Atticum 1.1.1 (ut frontem ferias).
(13) Cicero at De oratore 3.59.220 notes that stamping the foot can add emphasis to the beginning or end of a vigorous argument.\(^{14}\) This gesture seemed an especially effective accompaniment to Cicero’s climactic expostulation *mimi ergo est iam exitus, non fabulae* (‘This is the ending of a mime, then, not a proper play!’) at the end of Pro Caelio 27.65.

In general the Roman orator seems to have remained fairly stationary while speaking. *Auctor ad Herennium* (3.15.27) advises a degree of walking to and fro (*inambulatio*) during a speech’s refutation, presumably to help emphasize the vigour of the orator’s arguments; and this precept falls generally in line with those of Cicero and Quintilian. Cicero allows the orator a degree of pacing around, but is careful to impose limits (*Orator* 18.59): *rarus incessus nec ita longus; excursio moderata eaque rara.* (‘His pacing back and forth will be infrequent and not over a long distance. He will step forward only a short way and even then not frequently.’) Quintilian concurs, but adds that it can be effective to walk back and forth while waiting for applause to die down (11.3.126). To stride around excessively was to invite ridicule (11.3.126).\(^{15}\)

It will be clear already from our discussion that some degree of subjective interpretation is involved in attempting to assign appropriate gestures to our texts. We cannot be sure, for example, that Cicero really did use a pointing gesture to underscore the phrase *unum hoc indicium* at Pro Caelio 1.1; this is merely a conjecture based on the sense of the passage and information available about oratorical gesture in general. Unfortunately, given the lack of ancient evidence linking specific gestures

\(^{14}\) Cf Auctor ad Herennium 3.15.27; Brutus 37.141, 43.158, 80.278; De oratore 1.53.230. Quintilian 11.3.128 advises the student not to overuse this gesture.

\(^{15}\) The tendency of L. Crassus, a much respected speaker, to deliver his speeches from more or less the same spot (Brutus 43.158: *nulla inambulatio*) was evidently something of an idiosyncrasy. It is possible, however, that Cicero and Quintilian both present an ideal of controlled, stately delivery that was traditionally aristocratic. There are some indications that a more energetic and bustling style of oratory was preferred by more radical speakers who specialized in stirring up public assemblies. See Jean-Michel David, *Le patronat judiciaire à Rome au dernier siècle de la république romaine* (Rome, 1992), 553-4.
with specific phrases, this element of conjecture is inevitable. In most cases our approach of fitting gestures to words on the basis of a similarity in tone and function is not likely to be too misleading. In some instances, however, rather more complex considerations come into play.

In our passage from *Pro Caelio* 27.64-5, for example, Cicero claims that the prosecution’s version of events is no more credible than the plot of a comic farce. During rehearsals it occurred to us that a comic miming of the actions that Cicero describes here in detail—*pyxidem expediret, manum porrigeret, venenum traderet* (‘he was bringing out the box, stretching out his hand, giving over the poison’)—would help to heighten his tone of ridicule, while also leading neatly into the final exclamation where the comic mime is explicitly mentioned (*mimi ergo* etc.). One consideration, however, worked against this interpretation. As a general rule, both Cicero and Quintilian advise against the use of crude mimicry in gesture, on the grounds that it smacks too much of the stage and thus detracts from the aristocratic orator’s dignity.\(^\text{16}\) On the other hand, comedy plays an important part in *Pro Caelio* as a whole, and this kind of touch would be quite in keeping with the general tone of the speech.\(^\text{17}\) And in fact such deliberate use of humorous gesture for specific effect need not run counter to the strictures against its use in general.

In such cases our general approach was to risk over-interpretation rather than leave a passage’s potential for gesture unexplored. The main advantage of this particular method of research over traditional text-based ones is that it contextualizes oratorical delivery in the most direct and logical way: it investigates performative elements through performance. It therefore seemed both consistent and productive to retain in our final

\(^{16}\) *De oratore* 2.60.244; 3.59.220; Quintilian 11.3.88-91; 11.3.182-84; cf Aulus Gellius *Noctes Atticae* 1.5.2-3 on Hortensius.

\(^{17}\) See Katherine A. Geffcken, *Comedy in the Pro Caelio* (Leiden, 1973). Cicero was also a friend and admirer of the great comic actor Roscius; see F.W. Wright, *Cicero and the Theater* (Northampton, 1931), 16-20. For a brief survey of Cicero’s oratorical exploitation of comic elements, see Joseph J. Hughes, ‘*Inter tribunal et scaenam*: comedy and rhetoric in Rome’, in William J. Dominik (ed.), *Roman Eloquence: Rhetoric in Society and Literature* (London and New York, 1997), 182-197.
interpretation any gestures that the process of rehearsal recommended as
effective and plausible (and which other evidence did not discount as
inappropriate).

On the whole, recreating the precise form of the gestures described
by Quintilian did not present too many difficulties. Some
experimentation was required, however, in the cases of stamping the foot
and slapping the thigh, since for some people these two gestures have
connotations quite different from those exploited by Roman orators.
Stamping the foot is associated in New Zealand more with childish
petulance perhaps than with impressive assertiveness; and slapping the
thigh is generally used to suggest an enthusiastic heartiness (sometimes
with ironic intent). Such connotations would of course have a disastrously
bathetic effect if they were introduced into a Ciceronian passage of high
indignation. To overcome this problem we endeavoured to execute these
gestures in a curter, brisker manner than is generally the case in our own
usage. The result (we hope) is something that suggests passion and
frustration rather than petulance or heartiness; how closely this
corresponds to the way in which the Roman orator performed these
gestures, however, is difficult to know.

A more pressing problem, especially in the perorations, was
judging the exact tenor in which a passage and its accompanying gestures
were to be performed. An emotional plea to the jurors clearly involves
some measure of passion; but precisely how restrained or extravagant the
delivery should be is not always evident from the text itself. In fact, the
Romans themselves had differing opinions on the subject. Quintilian, for
example, disapproves of some of the gestures mentioned by Cicero on the
grounds that they are too theatrical (11.3.123): *quamquam, si licet, de
fronte dissentio, nam etiam complodere manus scaenicum est [pectus
caedere].* (‘With regard to the forehead, I beg to differ. For even to clap
the hands [strike the breast] is melodramatic.’) We can infer from this of
course that Cicero himself did not shy away from an animated style of
delivery. Indeed, it seems that the Roman orator in the lawcourts was

18 Maier-Eichhorn, *Die Gestikulation* (as in n.1) and Aldrete, *Gestures and
Acclamations* (as in n.2) provide useful discussions and illustrations of many of
these gestures.
generally expected to undertake an energetic and impassioned performance on behalf of his client. As Quintilian admits, a certain degree of dishevelment in dress at the end of a speech suits the orator; it shows that he has made strenuous efforts on his client’s behalf. Grand appeals to pity thus not only worked to evoke sympathy from the audience; they conveyed an important social message about the orator’s commitment to the case that he was arguing.

Various anecdotes confirm the theatrical manner in which these displays could be conducted. In a trial c 95 BC the famous orator M. Antonius was able to secure the acquittal of Manius Aquillius by ripping open the man’s tunic and displaying the scars that he had gained while fighting for Rome (De oratore 2.46.194 - 2.47.196). In similarly dramatic style, Servius Galba (c 149 BC), in order to gain sympathy for himself, brought a young relative who was under his guardianship before a public assembly, and, raising him virtually onto his shoulders, moved the people to tears by evoking the memory of the boy’s father (De oratore 1.53.228; Brutus 23.90; Quintilian 2.15.7-8). Indeed, Cicero himself admits to resorting to such ploys in the lawcourts (Orator 38.131):

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\text{nec vero miseratione solum mens iudicum permovenda es—qua nos ita dolenter uti solemus ut puerum infantem in manibus perorantes tenuerimus, ut alia in causa}
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19 Quintilian 11.3.147-8; see also the good comments by Fritz Graf, ‘Gestures and Conventions: the gestures of Roman actors and orators’, in Jan Bremmer and Herman Roodenburg (eds.), A Cultural History of Gesture From Antiquity to the Present Day (Cambridge, 1991), 36-58 at p.44.

20 Cicero claims to have been able to raise suspicion against an opposing speaker in a murder trial on the grounds that the man showed very little emotion while presenting the case (Brutus 80.278). (It is this passage to which Quintilian refers at 11.3.123.) Cf also the famous case of P. Rutilius Rufus, who was convicted of mismanagement of his province after he had conducted his defence without resorting to the usual emotional appeals (De oratore 1.53.230; Brutus 30.115-6; Quintilian 11.1.12).

21 For brief but astute discussions of this topic, see Gotoff, ‘Oratory: The Art of Illusion’ (as in n.2), 299-302; May, ‘Persuasion, Ciceronian Style’ (as in n.2).
excitato reo nobili, sublato etiam filio parvo plangore et lamentatione compleremus forum.

Nor indeed are the emotions of the jury moved solely through the appeal to pity—a device that I often employ to stir up such sorrowful emotions so that I have held an infant son in my arms during the peroration and, in another case, when I had told the noble defendant to stand up, with his small son raised up too, I filled the forum with wails and lamentation.

The same tricks, and more, continued to be used into Quintilian’s day.22

Clearly then the conventions of the Roman lawcourt gave the orator considerable latitude for theatrics. What we lack, however, is a standardised scale that helps us to measure and describe the tenor of this kind of performance objectively. Terms such as ‘theatrical’, ‘extravagant’ and ‘overstated’ tend to be imprecise and based on subjective cultural norms. In the end we aimed at what seemed to us a grandly histrionic manner; but how far this corresponds to what other readers understand by these terms can only be judged perhaps by reference to our documentary film clips.

While a considerable proportion of our texts could be scored with gestures by applying the criteria that we have just described, it became clear early on in our rehearsals that our overall rate of gesturing was a good deal lower than that mentioned by Quintilian. How frequently the orator should gesticulate was in fact a matter of some debate among the rhetoricians. Quintilian (11.3.107) notes that certain earlier writers had tried to establish a fixed rate: one gesture for every three words spoken. This kind of pedagogical guideline, observes Quintilian, is good in theory,

22 See Quintilian 6.1.30, where he mentions bringing into court the children and parents of the accused, as well as displaying to the jury emotive pieces of evidence such as blood-stained swords, fragments of bone taken from wounds, and garments stained with blood. See also 6.1.32-41 for some examples of less effective theatrical devices in the lawcourts.
but cannot possibly be applied in practice.²³ He goes on to note that most speakers fit their gestures to the underlying ‘beats’ or rhythm of the language (sermonis percussiones). Thus, he claims, they would score the opening sentence of Pro Ligario as follows (11.3.108):


So there will be one movement at novum crimen, another at C. Caesar, a third at et ante hanc diem, a fourth at non auditum, and then others at propinquus meus, ad te, Quintus Tubero, and detulit.

This approach involves some eight gestures in the space of seventeen words—an even higher rate than the one-in-three advocated by the earlier writers. Quintilian himself adopts a rather different criterion, preferring to fit his gestures to the phrasing naturally required by the orator’s breathing (11.3.110): *melius illud, cum sint in sermone omni brevia quaedam membra, ad quae, si necesse sit, recipere spiritum liceat, ad haec gestum disponere.* (‘Since in all speech there are short clauses at the end of which one may, if necessary, gather one’s breath, it is better to fit our gestures to these.’) He would therefore make one gesture with the phrase novum crimen, Gai Caesar, and another with et ante hanc diem non auditum (11.3.110). Even this more restrained approach requires three, perhaps four gestures within the sentence’s seventeen words.

Unfortunately Quintilian gives us no indication of the types of gesture to be used in this sentence from Pro Ligario; but it is difficult to see how as many as eight gestures could be incorporated with the text if they were all intended to underscore or emphasize a particular idea or emotion. As Aldrete notes, many of them are therefore likely to have been ‘baton gestures’ (so-called on analogy with the rhythmic hand movements employed by orchestra conductors). Such gestures are used to

²³ Quintilian 11.3.107: *quod neque observatur nec fieri potest* (‘This is not observed and is impracticable’). Such a crude and mechanical measure presumably fails to take into consideration the variety and flexibility of Latin sentence structure.
add a general emphasis to what is being said by following the rhythm and
tempo of the words; they rarely have any specific meaning associated
with them. The problem for us, however, is that Quintilian does not
describe many gestures of this type. The smooth movement of the arm to
the right and left designed to match the flow of the language (described at
11.3.92, quoted above) is almost certainly one instance. And since the
distinctive configuration of the fingers described at 11.3.98 is not
associated with a specific idea or emotion, it too may have been used as a
general baton gesture. Overall, however, our information regarding such
gestures is minimal.

We were therefore faced with the dilemma of wanting to include in
our reconstructions a relatively high rate of baton gestures, but not
knowing exactly what form these should take. Our solution was
straightforward enough, although not entirely ideal: we chose to

\[\text{24 Aldrete, Gestures and Acclamations (as in n.2), 40. For this terminology and}
\text{the different categories of gesture identified by modern studies, see David Efron,}
\text{Gesture, Race and Culture (The Hague and Paris, 1972), 96 (originally published}
\text{New York, 1941 as Gesture and Environment); P. Eckman and W. Friesen, ‘The}
\text{Repertoire of Non-Verbal Behavior: Categories, Origins, Usage and Coding’}
\text{Semiotica 1 (1969), 49-98 at pp.68-9; Adam Kendon, ‘Did Gesture Have the}
\text{Happiness to Escape the Curse at the Confusion of Babel?’, in A. Wolfgang (ed.),}
\text{Nonverbal Behavior: Perspectives, Applications, Intercultural Insights (New York}
\text{and Toronto, 1984), 75-114 at 82-9.}

\[\text{25 Cf Aldrete, Gestures and Acclamations (as in n.2), 34 and 40; Maier-Eichhorn,}
\text{Die Gestikulation (as in n.1), 107. Quintilian’s reference to gestures that match}
\text{the sermonis percussiones (stresses or beats of speech) suggests that he is talking}
\text{about baton gestures; as he notes, when the tenor of the speech becomes more}
\text{animated, so too does the motion of the arm. Graf, ‘Gestures and Conventions’ (as}
\text{in n.19), 39 thus seems mistaken in his statement that Quintilian makes no mention}
\text{of this kind of gesture.}

\[\text{26 Quintilian (11.3.98): binos interim digitos distinguimus, sed non inserto pollice,}
\text{paullum tamen inferioribus intra spectantibus, sed ne illis quidem tensis, qui supra}
\text{sunt. (‘Sometimes we may separate the first two fingers from the others, but}
\text{without the thumb inserted between them, and with the remaining two pointing}
\text{inwards a little; the first two fingers themselves are also not stretched out}
\text{straight.’) Cf Maier-Eichhorn, Die Gestikulation (as in n.1), 81:}

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incorporate a number of baton gestures from our own contemporary repertoire along with those mentioned by Quintilian. To do so of course risks confounding Roman practices with modern; but not to do so was to risk losing an essential feature of Roman delivery: its general energy and vitality in gesturing. Moreover, it should be stressed that Quintilian’s treatment of gesture is in fact far from complete. His detailed, careful presentation of some twenty different gestures involving the fingers and hands (11.3.85-116) can perhaps give the impression of a meticulous and extensive catalogue; but it is clear enough from other parts of his discussion that his treatment is not comprehensive. At 11.3.102, for example, he notes that a gentle movement of the hand (manus lenior) expresses promise or assent (promittit et adsentatur), while a brisker motion suggests exhortation or praise (citator hortatur, interim laudat). This account gives a general indication of what was involved in these gestures, but does not describe precisely how the fingers were arranged or the hand moved. Quintilian may be assuming here that the reader is already familiar with these gestures and so does not require a detailed description of them; but it is also likely that there were so many subtle variations that they defied neat systematization. The same is probably true too with the turn of the hand that he tells us regularly accompanied questions (discussed above as gesture 6).

This problem of description and categorization is quite important. Most of the gestures that Quintilian includes in his discussion are in fact ‘emblematic’; that is, gestures used to underscore a specific emotion or idea. These gestures tend to be the easiest to identify and catalogue, as the emphasis of several modern ethnographies of gesture clearly shows. Baton gestures, on the other hand, being more fluid in form and less specific in reference, are often overlooked, even in relatively sophisticated studies. We cannot conclude then that the paucity of baton gestures in Quintilian’s catalogue shows that few such gestures were used by the Roman orator; indeed, as we have seen, the rates of gesturing mentioned...
by Quintilian imply the contrary. Given these circumstances, combining baton gestures from our own repertoire with those mentioned by Quintilian is the best practical solution to an awkward problem. It enables us to gain a satisfactory sense of the general style of Roman oratorical delivery, and ensures in our reconstructions a fluency of gesture that would otherwise be impossible.

**Voice**

Much of the advice given by the rhetorical handbooks about the orator's use of his voice tends to be sensible and unsurprising. Quintilian, for example, tells us that voices that are too low or too high in pitch are difficult for audiences to hear (11.3.41-2), that clear pronunciation is desirable (1.11.8), and that the orator should strive for a variety of tone across longish passages (11.3.43); these are all principles that the skilled modern actor is likely to have applied in any case. Again, Cicero (Orator 17.55-7), Auctor ad Herennium (3.13.24—14.25) and Quintilian (11.3.48) all advise the orator to vary his tone and volume according to the sense of the text, something that most good speakers do as a matter of course. Some of their advice, however, is more specific. At De oratore 3.58.217-9 Cicero describes the tones of voice appropriate to the expression of different emotions. Anger (iracundia), for example, is best expressed (he claims) by a voice that is sharp (acutum), swift (incitatum) and abrupt (crebro incidens); fear (metus) by one that is subdued (demissum), hesitant (haesitans) and downcast (abiectum). Overall these inflections seem to correspond closely enough to those that we would use today to express the same emotions. The modern actor then can probably employ the same approach to his vocal interpretation of Cicero's texts as he does to contemporary pieces.

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28 For the rhetorical handbooks' traditional division of delivery into the two parts of voice and gesture, see Auctor ad Herennium 3.11.19; Orator 17.55; Quintilian 11.3.1-2. Quintilian at 11.3.47-51 provides detailed guidelines for the effective vocal delivery of the opening sentences of Pro Milone, and this discussion would furnish profitable material for future attempts at reconstruction. Given that our own emphasis, however, was primarily on visual performative elements, it was not included in the present experiments.
Special attention, however, needs to be paid to the projection of the voice. Since most Roman oratory was performed in front of large audiences, a strong, powerful voice was required for effective delivery. Thus, while Cicero (Brutus 68.241) can find little else complimentary to say about the oratorical skills of P. Autronius, he does acknowledge that his voice was impressively loud and piercing (peracuta atque magna). The ideal voice, however, not only had power, but an attractive, sonorous resonance as well. This need to project the voice forcefully can present something of a challenge with passages that are gentle in tone and subtly nuanced; but such a challenge is again familiar to most modern actors with experience of performing in largish theatres.

Perhaps our most difficult problem of vocal interpretation involved the delivery of the phrase *o me miserum, o me infelicem* in the peroration from Pro Milone. Quintilian refers to this passage explicitly when he states that such exclamations require a drawn-out and highly modulated manner of delivery (11.3.172): *infinito magis illa flexa et circumducta sunt*: ‘me miserum, me infelicem’ et ‘quid respondebo liberis meis?’ (*Ah, how wretched, how unhappy I am!’ and “What shall I reply to my children?”) The expression *infinito magis flexa* here seems to imply a much greater fluctuation in pitch than is normally used in everyday speech, while *circumducta* perhaps points to some of the syllables being

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29 P. Sulpicius, for instance, is admired for his *vox cum magna tum suavis et splendida* (Brutus 55.203), P. Lentulus for the *vocis et suavitatem et magnitudinem* (Brutus 66.235), and Lucius Lentulus for his *vox canora* (Brutus 77.268). See also Brutus 66.234 and 68.239.

30 Cicero’s criticisms of Roman orators give some indication of what faults to avoid in vocal delivery. T. Iuventius (Brutus 48.178) is described as *nimis lentus in dicendo et paene frigidus* (‘too slow and almost cold in his way of speaking’); C. Staienus tended towards the other extreme (Brutus 68.241): *fervido quodam et petulanti et furioso genere dicendi* (‘[he employed] a kind of fiery, impetuous and crazed style of speaking’). See also Brutus 66.233 on C. Fimbria and 70.246 on M. Pontidius. For biographical information on these individuals, see A.E. Douglas, *M. Tulli Ciceronis Brutus* (Oxford, 1966).
extended for a longer duration.\textsuperscript{31} Even with these guidelines, however, there is considerable room for different interpretations; after some experimentation we favoured a higher than normal pitch for the syllables \textit{o} and \textit{me}, followed by an even higher one for \textit{mi-}, before dropping sharply to a lower pitch for the last two syllables. Each syllable was extended in duration by a factor of around three or four. A similar approach was followed for the phrase \textit{o me infelicem}, with the highest pitch again coinciding with the natural word stress (in this case, the penultimate syllable).

In delivering the phrase we also endeavoured to give it something of the character of an operatic wail or lament, in an attempt to achieve the effect that Cicero himself describes as appropriate to highly emotional passages (\textit{Orator} 17.57):

\begin{quote}
\textit{est autem in dicendo quidam cantus obscurior, non hic e Phrygia et Caria rhetorum epilogus paene canticum, sed ille quem significat Demosthenes et Aeschines, cum alter alteri obicit vocis flexiones.}\textsuperscript{32}
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{31} \textit{TLL} vol. 6, pt. 1, col. 898, 2-3 surprisingly assigns to \textit{flexa} the meaning \textit{perplexus, obscurus} (and reads \textit{circumdata} for \textit{circumducta}); the meaning given by \textit{OLD}, \textit{flexus} 2, seems more appropriate (‘having a rise and fall of tone, modulated’). The verb \textit{circumduco} is twice used by Quintilian to refer to sentences that are extended in length (9.4.124 and 10.2.17), and our phrase here at 11.3.172 is catalogued with these two examples at \textit{TLL} vol. 3, fasc. 5, col. 1135, 21-4. Cf \textit{OLD}, \textit{circumduco} 4, ‘to prolong (a sound)’. But since the collocation \textit{flexa circumducitur} at Quintilian 12.10.33 is used to refer to the pronunciation of a circumflex accent, it is just possible that \textit{flexa} and \textit{circumducta} in our example at 11.3.172 both refer to a modulation of pitch alone.

\textsuperscript{32} We follow here the text of Wilhelm Kroll, \textit{M. Tullii Ciceronis Orator} (Berlin, 1958; originally published 1913). Cicero’s phrase \textit{vocis flexio} may be a translation of \textit{ὁ τόνος τῆς φωνῆς} at Aeschines 3.210, which refers clearly enough to vocal pitch, although Aeschines and Demosthenes also criticize each other for the jarring volume and raucous voice of their delivery; see Demosthenes 18 \textit{Crown} 259 (φθέγγεσθαι οὔτω μέγα) and 291 (λαρυγγίζων); and Aeschines 3.210 (τίς ἢ κραυγὴ).
PERFORMATIVE CICERO

There is moreover even in speech a sort of singing—I do not mean this style of peroration practised by Phrygian and Carian rhetoricians which is almost like a canticum in a play—but the style which Demosthenes and Aeschines mean when they accuse each other of vocal modulations.

It is difficult to be sure exactly what the phrase quidam cantus obscurior means; 'a sort of singing' may be the best rendering. In this case, the essential point seems to be that there are distinct changes in pitch and syllable length which give the delivery certain qualities of song; but these are not developed in any sustained way so as to resemble actual singing or chanting. Our version (we hope) succeeded in capturing these fundamental features. The use of a tone of voice that differs sharply from everyday speech conveys quite effectively the speaker's extreme emotional state; and its overwrought manner is quite consistent with the theatrical tendencies that we have already noted in many Roman trials.

The process of performance also served to highlight some of the subtle ways in which Cicero varies his tone within an extended passage of

33 OLD, at obscurus 4, suggests a meaning of 'muffled' or 'muted' and refers to Cicero's use of the phrase here. Cf Donald Russell, Quintilian: The Orator's Education, Books 11-12 (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2001), 117 and 175. Such a translation, however, seems to imply that certain elements of the delivery are somehow indistinct, even though the exclamation as a whole was presumably quite forceful and emphatic. Quite how these two features are to be combined is difficult to imagine. 'A sort of singing' is the translation of H.M. Hubbell (with G.L. Hendrickson), Cicero: Brutus, Orator (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1939), 349; but this in turn risks underplaying the contribution of obscurior to the expression as a whole. TLL vol. 9, fasc. 2, col. 173, 32-4 does not really help to solve the problem: auditui minus perceptibilis, lenis.

34 See Quintilian 11.3.164-8 for further discussion of this style of vocal delivery. It is worth stressing that this quasi-musical element has little connection with the use of the fistula by C. Gracchus in his speeches (as discussed by Cicero at De oratore 3.60.225-61.227 and Quintilian 1.10.27). Gracchus seems to have used the instrument primarily to ensure that he maintained a pleasing variety in vocal pitch throughout the course of a long speech (De oratore 3.60.225): quo illum aut remissum excitaret aut a contentione revocaret. ('either to rouse him when he was getting slack or check him from overstraining his voice').
The peroration of *Pro Milone*, for example, clearly strives for a generally grand and dramatic manner. But within the final forty lines Cicero deftly contrives various climaxes and modulations in tone. The exclamation *o me miserum* (37.102), for example, with its distinctive drawn out delivery clearly constitutes one emphatic and climactic moment. Similar crescendos are signalled by the further exclamations at 38.104 (*O di immortalés!* ) and 38.105 (*O terram illam beatam!*). But the tone between these emotional peaks is subtly varied in several ways.

Between the first two exclamations (*o me miserum!* and *o di immortalés!* ) Cicero strives to maintain a high emotional intensity through the use of successive rhetorical questions; he carefully varies their tone, however, by making some plaintive (*eg Quid tibi, Quinte frater...?*, *Mene non potuisse...?*), and others more indignant (*eg quodnam ego concepit...?*). The plea to the jurors that follows (*nolite, obsecro vos...*) is likewise highly charged, but the shift from rhetorical question to direct address is crucial for introducing a further element of variety into the delivery. Cicero next expresses the wish that the gods had allowed his enemy Clodius to live, and even to become dictator (38.103)—a striking formulation, yet a rhetorically contrived one that opens the way for the emotional directness of the following climax, the exclamation *o di immortalés! Fortem et a vobis, iudices, conservandum virum!* (‘O you immortal gods! What a brave man this is, and one whose life, gentlemen, it is up to you to save!’) This variation in syntactical construction allows him to modulate the emotional tenor of the passage, and hence his delivery, with considerable finesse.

His next change in tone is much sharper. At 38.104 Milo is assigned an imaginary interjection in dignified, understated language (*minime, minime, inquit etc.*) which adroitly introduces a momentary respite from the grand style. From this point Cicero is able to build up to his grand finale. He contrives an artful triad of rhetorical questions with anaphora and polyptoton (*hicine..., huius..., hunc...*),

\[35\] which in turn leads to the final climactic exclamation of *o terram illam beatam* etc. As his claim to being on the verge of tears shows—*sed finis sit; neque enim prae lacrimis iam loqui possum* ('But let this be the end; for I am no longer

\[35\] For this device, see *Auctor ad Herennium* 4.22.31.
able to speak because of my tears')—this outburst is designed to be even more dramatic and emotional than the previous two; Cicero naturally saves the biggest climax to the end.

And yet this is not the final sentence of the speech. Here, as in Pro Caelio, Cicero concludes on a diminuendo. There are probably several reasons for this. Having made his extravagant appeal to pity, Cicero now varies his approach and attempts to clinch the matter with a gracious form of flattery (Pro Milone 38.105): \textit{vestram virtutem, iustitiam, fidei, mihi credite, est maxime probabit, qui in iudicibus legendis, optimum et sapientissimum et fortissimum quemque eligat.} (‘Your courage, justice, and honour will, believe me, meet with high approval from him who, in choosing the jury, selected the best, the wisest, and the most brave’).\footnote{Cicero's final remark at Pro Caelio 32.80 is directed more to the jurors' self-interest: \textit{omniumque huius nervorum ac laborum vos potissimum, iudices, fructus uberes diuturnoque capietis.} (‘It is you above all, gentlemen, who will reap the rich and lasting fruits of all his exertions and labours’).}

But just as importantly perhaps, it quickly brings the speech to a clearly defined conclusion, while leaving the sorrowful emotional appeal hanging still thick in the air. Such a diminuendo also conveniently allows the orator to regain his composure before making the transition from impassioned advocate to dignified Roman senator as he relinquishes the floor.

These subtleties of Cicero's art operate to some extent on the literary level: a degree of variety is required for linguistic and emotional contrast, and indeed the preceding analysis has used a good deal of standard literary terminology to describe its effect. But considerations of delivery are also likely to have played their part here. In the first place, a relentlessly \textit{fortissimo} approach would have placed immense physical demands on the orator. Secondly Cicero no doubt wanted to exploit the full range of performative possibilities open to him. Variations in syntax and literary tone provide excellent opportunities also for changes in the pace of delivery, for example, while shifts in rhetorical construction allow for differences in gesture and facial expression. These aspects, however,
are often overlooked in traditional commentaries on the speeches. Even discussions that pay special attention to the form and structure of Cicero’s sentences rarely consider the full interplay of these literary features with the performative elements of gesture and vocal phrasing. This reticence is understandable up to a point; as we have seen, often there is little hard evidence with which ideas about the delivery of such passages can be supported. But our experiments suggest that much in Cicero’s artistry can be illuminated by considering the literary elements of a speech in conjunction with its performative ones.

Our reconstructions of these passages also forced us to address one further aspect of vocal delivery: the degree of hiatus and elision that prevailed in spoken Latin prose. It is often asserted that every possible elision in the clausulae of Cicero’s sentences would have been observed invariably. This may well be correct for terminal phrases delivered within a single breath; but the matter becomes rather more complex when we turn to consider whole sentences with a succession of syntactical units. As Sturtevant and Kent persuasively argue, elision in fact probably did not

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37 For example, the generally admirable commentary of R.G. Austin, *M. Tulli Ciceronis Pro M. Caelio Oratio* 3rd edition (Oxford, 1960) offers only general remarks about Roman oratorical delivery (pp.141-3 and 173-5); it makes no attempt to consider how *Pro Caelio* itself might have been performed or the possible interplay between style and delivery. The first edition (Oxford, 1933) omits even these general remarks.

38 The sensitive study of (eg) Harold C. Gotoff, *Cicero’s Elegant Style: An Analysis of the Pro Archia* (Urbana, Chicago and London, 1979) shows an interest in the tone and pacing of Cicero’s sentences, but (like ancient rhetorical treatments of elocutio) discusses their form and structure purely in terms of literary style, with little reference to concerns of delivery.

occur at minor pauses within such sentences.\textsuperscript{40} Our own experience supports this contention. On one occasion we attempted to include every possible elision in our performance of a particular passage. We soon found, however, that many of the elisions that we were trying to incorporate occurred across word-ends where sense, gesture or general oratorical effectiveness called for a pause. To eliminate such pauses in order to effect elision frequently involved disrupting what seemed the natural flow of Cicero’s language. What is more, these pauses in any case often removed the impetus towards elision. The gap between words meant that they could be articulated in full without any unpleasant sound of clashing vowels; and these pauses ensured that there was no need to run words together in order to ease pronunciation.\textsuperscript{41}

Where these pauses tended to be required, however, did not conform to neat and tidy principles. A number of factors usually came into play, including the length of the phrases in a sentence and their syntactical structure, as well as the need for vocal emphasis and contrast, and the use of facial expressions and gesture.\textsuperscript{42} Many of these aspects are tied in closely with the individual orator’s own interpretation of a passage. This subjective element makes it frustratingly difficult to formulate general principles that may help us in the delivery of Cicero’s speeches; but personal interpretation is an inherent part of most performance arts. As Adrian Gratwick notes with regard to the spoken recitation of Terentian verse, the actor’s own sense of the flow of the words should

\textsuperscript{40} Sturtevant and Kent, ‘Elision and Hiatus in Latin Prose and Verse’ (as in n.39), 132. According to Roman discussions of style (eg Auctor ad Herennium 4.12.18 and Orator 44.149-50) literary language should attempt to distinguish itself from casual speech by eliminating hiatus through careful word arrangement (compositio). In practice, however, hiatus (and so the potential for elision) occurs frequently in Cicero’s speeches.

\textsuperscript{41} On the sound of vowels in hiatus, see Auctor ad Herennium 4.12.18; Orator 44.150; Quintilian 9.4.33-7.

\textsuperscript{42} H.D. Broadhead, Latin Prose Rhythm: A New Method of Investigation (Cambridge, 1922), 60-5 usefully notes a number of rhetorical constructions where such pauses may typically be found; but in our experience they are not confined only to these instances.
always take precedence in performance over other formal considerations: '
... any vowels in contact between words within lines normally mean elision, at least on paper. In reciting, we should certainly substitute our own ideas of what seems convincing, and respect what seems natural pacing and tempo, letting the rhythm as affected by elision look after itself'.

Other performative elements

*The orator's dress*

As the long discussion allotted to it by Quintilian (11.3.137-49) shows, the toga played a vital role in the orator’s performance. Part of this importance lay in its physical constraints on the orator’s movements, part in its contribution to the overall image that the orator strived to project. In order to reproduce these features as accurately as possible, we used in our performances a specially made replica of the Republican toga. While the processes involved in its actual manufacture were inevitably rather different from those used by the Romans themselves, our finished article came reasonably close in terms of shape, size and weight to the garment that Cicero would have worn. It must be stressed that this

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44 For discussions of the toga and its role in Roman oratory, see Lillian M. Wilson, *The Clothing of the Ancient Romans* (Baltimore, 1938), 36-54; Emmelin Hill Richardson and L. Richardson, Jr., ‘*Ad Cohibendum Braccium Toga*: An Archaeological Examination of Cicero, *Pro Caelio* 5.11’ *YCIS* 19 (1966), 253-68; also Graf, ‘*Gestures and Conventions*’ (as in n.19), 44-6; and Jean Cousin, *Quintilien: Institution Oratoire* VI (Paris, 1979), 369-70 with bibliography.

45 The toga was designed and made by Fiona Milne of the Department of Clothing and Textiles Sciences at the University of Otago, under the supervision of Elaine Webster. One compromise involved in its manufacture was the use of a pre-woven length of wool which was then cut to shape (the Roman garment would almost certainly have been made to measure in a single piece on a large loom). Dye was also applied separately in order to represent the senatorial stripe (originally this feature would probably have been added in the process of weaving, using dyed yarn). Our methods were based largely on the research of Wilson,
Republican toga differs in several ways from the type worn in the Imperial period by Quintilian and his contemporaries: it is a good deal smaller, and, since it makes no use of a fold (sinus) when draped around the body, its arrangement is considerably simpler. Hence, while our practical performances were able to reproduce something of the conditions under which Cicero himself spoke, they could not test with any reliability Quintilian’s statements about the toga worn in the later period.

It is sometimes claimed in discussions of oratorical delivery that the orator’s movements were significantly restricted by his toga. One authority, for example, asserts: ‘At most, the left hand could hold a manageable object, staff or scroll, or balance the fasces against the left shoulder, but any vigorous gesture with it would have disarranged the whole garment.’ The phrase ‘any vigorous gesture’ here is not all that precise, and it is worth noting that Quintilian mentions several gestures involving the left hand that could apparently be employed without difficulty (11.3.114):

\[\text{manus sinistra numquam sola gestum recte facit: dextrae se frequenter accommodat, sive in digitos argumenta digerimus sive aversis in sinistrum palmis abominamur}\]


Wilson, Clothing of the Ancient Romans (as in n.44), 40-4; Shelley Stone, ‘The Toga: From National to Ceremonial Costume’, in J.L. Sebesta and L. Bonfante (eds.), The World of Roman Costume (Madison, Wisconsin, 1994), 13-45 at p.17; cf Quintilian 11.3.137: \textit{nam veteribus nulli sinus, perquam breves post illos fuerunt}. (‘For the ancients wore no folds, and their successors wore them very short’). Quintilian counted Cicero among the \textit{veteres} (see 11.3.143 on Cicero’s contemporary Nigidius Figulus). It was no great surprise to find that the climate in Dunedin in November did not succeed in reproducing the heat of the Roman forum and the sweat soaked clothes that Quintilian notes at 11.3.23.

Richardson and Richardson Jr., ‘Archaeological Examination of Cicero’ (as in n.44), 266. Fantham, ‘Quintilian on Performance’ (as in n.1), 250-1 places similar emphasis on these difficulties.
sive obicimus adversas sive in latus utramque distendimus,  
sive satisfacientes aut supplicantes ... summittimus, sive  
adorantes attollimus sive aliqua demonstratione aut  
invocatione protrudimus.

It is never correct to employ the left hand alone in gesture;  
but it will often fit its motion to that of the right, as, for  
example, when we count our arguments on our fingers, or  
express our horror of something by turning the palms of  
our hands to the left, or make an objection by thrusting  
them out in front, or spread them out to right and left, or  
lower them in apology or supplication ... or raise them in  
prayer or stretch them out to point to something or in an  
invocation.

In fact throughout our rehearsals we encountered no occasion  
where the left hand’s range of movement seemed significantly restricted  
by the toga, or where the toga’s arrangement was substantially altered as a  
result of its gesturing.48 These findings are by no means conclusive of  
course, but they do lend weight to the arguments of those who suggest that  
the dominance of the right hand in gesturing may have as much to do with  
physiological or cultural factors, such as custom, superstition or a sense of  
social propriety, as with the constraints of the toga.49

This is not to deny, however, the general inconveniences that the  
toga presents as a garment. Since none of our reconstructed passages was  
more than five minutes in length, it was difficult to investigate rigorously

48 We also had no experience of the ‘Laocoon effect’ as proposed by Fanham,  
‘Quintilian on Performance’ (as in n.1), 251. Richardson and Richardson Jr.,  
‘Archaeological Examination of Cicero’ (as in n.44) argue convincingly that  
Quintilian at 11.3.138 is wrong to suppose that Late Republican orators were  
invariably restricted in their arm movements during the exordium.

49 See Maier-Eichhorn, Die Gestikulation (as in n.1), 114-6; Graf, ‘Gestures and  
Conventions’ (as in n.19), 46; Wülfing, Antike und moderne Redegesitik (as in n.1),  
58. It is worth noting in this connection that Auctor ad Herennium (3.15.27)  
assumes that any stamping of the foot during an oration will be done with the right  
foot. In this case it is difficult to attribute the preference for right over left solely  
to the toga’s influence.
the degree to which the toga would become loose in the course of a speech. According to Quintilian, it could sometimes slip at the very beginning of a speech, although he clearly views this as undesirable and something to be corrected immediately (11.3.149): At si incipientibus aut paulum progressis decidat toga, non reponere eam prorsus negligentis aut pigri aut quomodo debeat amiciri nescientis est. (‘However, if the toga falls down at the beginning of our speech, or when we have proceeded only a little way, not to rearrange it is a sign of carelessness, slackness, or ignorance of the way in which the toga should be worn.’) In our experience, the toga stayed firmly enough in place for a good period of time (usually long enough for the rehearsal and performance of three or four passages). After a while, some minor rearrangements were necessary, a feature consistent perhaps with Quintilian’s comments at 11.3.144.50 These adjustments, however, were usually prompted not by some especially vigorous gesturing but from the general business of moving about in the toga.

Difficulties were experienced too in restoring the toga to its original neat state once its drapery had started to come loose. It was easy enough to prevent it from falling off completely;51 but careful rearrangement required the help of assistants (as of course did its initial draping). This fact has some relevance to Quintilian’s suggestion at 11.3.156 that the orator may take a moment or two to throw on his toga afresh (ex integro initienda) after stepping up to speak. He may mean here that the orator is to redrape only one part of the toga; the orator by himself could not successfully do much more. But it is also possible that we are to imagine the orator surrounded by his librarii or sodales who help him to put the whole toga on anew.52 If so, we have here another

50 Quintilian 11.3.144: procedente vero actu, iam paene ab initio narrationis, sinus ab umero recte velut sponte delabitur. (‘In fact virtually at the beginning of the narrative it is quite proper for the fold to slip down from the shoulder of its own accord, as it were.’) As we have noted, however, Quintilian is discussing here a toga of rather different design from our own.

51 See Quintilian 11.3.146 on good and bad ways of coping with a dishevelled toga.

52 See Quintilian 11.3.131 on the presence of these individuals at the orator’s side.
way in which the toga made a contribution to the orator’s overall performance: by ostentatiously keeping his audience waiting, the grand Roman orator slyly contrives a sense of awe and expectation. It is of course a sign of respect to the jurors that he makes the effort to dress smartly; but this little charade also helps to project an image of him as a man of importance and poise, deferentially attended by satellites.53

The orator’s performance can thus begin even before he has uttered a word. Indeed, Quintilian’s advice at 11.3.158 shows a similar concern for image-management and the projection of the orator’s ethos at the very beginning of his speech:

\[
\text{in hac cunctatione sunt quaedam non indecentes, ut appellant scaenici, morae: caput mulcere, manum intueri, infringere articulos, simulare conatum, suspiratione sollicitudinem fateri, aut quod quemque magis decet, et ea diutius si iudex nondum intendet animum.}
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In this preliminary delay there are certain ‘stop-gaps’, as the actors call them, which are not unbecoming. We may stroke our head, look at our hand, crack our knuckles, put on a pretence of making a great effort, confess to nervousness by a deep sigh, or adopt whatever device best suits our individual character. These proceedings may be extended over some time, if the judge is not yet giving us his attention.

The orator’s aim here is partly to engage the attention of the jury before he begins to speak (si iudex ... animum); but again he is also striving to present a favourable image of himself. By wringing his hands or sighing nervously, the orator avoids any impression of arrogance or over-confidence, and may even succeed in gaining the jurors’ sympathy. As Quintilian’s use of theatrical jargon (ut appellant scaenici, morae) shows, the orator’s performance can be supplemented by some of the actor’s tricks of the trade.

53 Cf David, Le patronat judiciaire (as in n.15), 419-22; Graf, ‘Gestures and Conventions’ (as in n.19), 45.
The orator’s supporting cast

The orator’s performance could be further enlivened by bringing other characters ‘on stage’ with him. We have already noted in passing some examples of this practice (such as children brought into court to play upon the sympathy of the audience), and it so happened that this feature played a part in both of our perorations. In Pro Caelio Cicero’s final pleas are based around the figures of M. Caelius the defendant and his aged father, Caelius senior. His repeated use of demonstratives (eg 32.79 huius ... huius ... hoc ... huius ... hunc ... hunc) suggests that he is using the men as a kind of visual aid to augment the force of his words. Our reconstruction therefore involved a sort of tableau with Cicero standing between the defendant and his father. The orator thus no longer forms the sole focus of attention, and the close relationship between himself and his client receives additional visual emphasis. Moreover the father, and probably Caelius himself, would originally have been dressed in vestes sordidae, a visual feature which Cicero now exploits to strengthen the impact of his appeal to pity.\(^5^4\) We cannot be sure that this is exactly how Cicero would have arranged things during the actual trial, but our version succeeds at least in conveying the visual potential of this kind of passage and the different dynamic that such ‘extras’ can introduce to the oratorical situation.\(^5^5\)

We adopted a rather different approach in our reconstruction from Pro Milone. As we have seen, Cicero towards the end of the passage inserts an imaginary objection from Milo (minime, minime, inquit etc.), thus bringing the defendant explicitly to the juror’s attention. Milo would presumably have been visible to them throughout the speech and may well

\(^{54}\) See Pro Caelio 2.4 (squalor patris); Quintilian 6.1.30 and 33; also RE 2nd ser. vol. 12 (1937), cols. 2229-30; and Julia Heskel, ‘Cicero as Evidence for Attitudes to Dress in the Late Republic’, in J.L. Sebesta and L. Bonfante (eds.), The World of Roman Costume (Madison, Wisconsin, 1994), 133-145 at pp.141-2.

\(^{55}\) Cf Pöschl, ‘Zur Einbeziehung Anwesender Personen’ (as in n.2), 210-2. Because of budget constraints we made no attempt to dress our extras in the appropriate ancient costume.
have been coached beforehand to make some show of resistance to which
Cicero can respond.\textsuperscript{56} But overall Cicero's approach in this
deroration differs significantly from the one adopted in \textit{Pro Caelio}. Cicero focuses
the jurors' attention not on Milo's plight but his own. He does this not
because of any egotism on his part, but because, as Quintilian notes
(6.1.23-7), he was well aware that an appeal to pity on behalf of a
notorious gang-leader (Milo), who had admitted killing a member of a
prestigious Roman family (Clodius), was not likely to have much success.
He therefore tries to make \textit{himself} the object of the jurors' pity,
emphasising the distress and embarrassment that he would feel if Milo
were convicted. By thus linking his own fate with Milo's, he is able to
make an appeal to the emotions that would scarcely be plausible if applied
to Milo alone. In our reconstruction then we placed Cicero alone centre-
stage, so as to constitute the same focus of attention on camera as he does
in the text. Milo was depicted as being just 'off camera.' Again we have
little way of knowing how accurately this represents the actual spatial
relationship between the two men during the trial.

\textit{Prosopopoeia}

Cicero's use of prosopopoeia at \textit{Pro Caelio} 14.33-4 highlights still
further the theatrical nature of Roman oratory. In this passage, Appius
Claudius Caecus, a long-deceased and renowned member of the Claudian
clan, is represented as launching a tirade against his descendandt, Clodia
Metelli, who was (Cicero claims) the driving force behind the prosecution,
and Caelius' former lover. Appius' stern character is conveyed deftly
enough through the passage's content and style; but the words need to be
delivered in character, and delivered convincingly, if the device of

\textsuperscript{56} We cannot exclude the possibility that Milo's interruption is simply a rhetorical
device fabricated for the published version of the speech, although J.N. Settle,
'The Trial of Milo and the Other \textit{Pro Milone}’ \textit{TAPA} 94 (1963), 268-80 argues that
our extant text does not differ too much from what Cicero actually said. In this
case there seem in fact to have been two different written versions of the oration;
see Asconius \textit{Commentary on Pro Milone} (p.42 Clark) and the discussion by
Humbert, \textit{Les Plaidoyers écrits} (as in n.4), 189-97.
 impersonation is to be successful. In short, it is a task that calls for considerable dramatic talent.57

Cicero certainly had the theatrical flair to execute this kind of conceit successfully. What is less clear, however, is exactly how far he would have exploited the passage’s comic element. For while Appius is brought on stage as an example of the severe, old-fashioned moralist, his apoplectic ranting at 14.33—*non patrem tuum videras, non patruum, non avum, non proavum, non abavum, non atavum audieras consules fuisse?* (‘Had you not seen that your father, had you not heard that your uncle, your grandfather, your great-grand-father, your great-great-grandfather and your great-great-great-grandfather were consuls?’)—seems intended as something of a parody of the ‘crusty old conservative’ stereotype. On the other hand, as we have seen, too exaggerated or ridiculous a style of mimicry risked associating the upper-class orator with the déclassé actor. Moreover, the passage is not intended merely as a comic interlude. Cicero uses the prosopopoeia to depict Clodia as an adulterous, incestuous slut (while pretending of course that these insults are coming from someone else’s mouth). This undermining of Clodia’s credibility plays an important part in his overall rhetorical strategy. The final lines too are clearly designed to pack a powerful punch (*Pro Caelio* 14.34):

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ideone ego pacem Pyrrhi diremi, ut tu amorum turpissimorum cotidie foedera ferires, ideo aquam adduxi, ut ea tu inceste uterere, ideo viam munivi, ut eam tu alienis viris comitata celebroles?
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Was it for this that I tore up the peace with Pyrrhus—so that you could strike bargains everyday involving the most disgraceful love-affairs? Was it for this that I brought

57 Quintilian notes (9.2.29) that the device of prosopopoeia is a bold one requiring considerable vocal power (*maiorum laterum*). The standard rhetorical exercise of the *suasoria* encouraged the student’s ability to write in character (Quintilian 3.8.49-54); we have little information, however, on the extent to which the *grammaticus* and *rhetor* provided extensive training in their effective delivery. (Quintilian’s remarks at 1.8.3 apply only to the early stages of a boy’s training; and at 11.1.39-41 he is interested more in the written style of a passage than its manner of delivery.)
water to Rome—so that you could use it after your incestuous debauches? Was it for this that I paved a road—so that you could crowd it with a procession of other women’s husbands?

Any comic element in the characterization must not be allowed to get in the way of their rhetorical impact.

Our final reconstruction therefore aimed at a judicious blend of comic and serious. The initial transformation of Cicero from orator to blind old curmudgeon was itself probably meant to bring a smile to the jurors’ lips; there is comic potential also in the old man’s blindness, and, as noted, in his overdrawn character. These features then were exploited for understated humorous effect in the opening sentences. As the criticisms of Clodia become more scathing, however, we adopted a correspondingly more forceful tone. The phrase *Quid igitur fuit nisi quaedam temeritas ac libido?* ('What then was it, if not some reckless passion?') in particular provided a useful fulcrum for our performance. From this point on, all comic features were dropped and Appius’ indignation brought to the fore. By the end of the passage it was his famous *gravitas* that prevailed. Again we see that the process of performance can draw attention to issues of literary and rhetorical interpretation that other critical approaches often overlook.  

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58 See Stroh, *Taxis und Taktik* (as in n.4), 280-2 for a good assessment of Cicero’s aims in this passage. Riggsby, ‘Elision and Hiatus in Latin Prose’ (as in n.39), 340-1 suggests that Cicero may have used more hiatus than usual in his delivery of this passage in order to depict Appius as a rugged, antiquated figure. The basis for this suggestion seems to be *Orator* 44.150, where Cicero claims that no one would be so uncouth (*rusticus*) as not to observe elisions when they occur. It does not follow from this, however, that Cicero ever deliberately eschewed elision in order actively to cultivate an image of rusticity. It is not impossible that he did so; but if his aim had been to stress the rough or old-fashioned elements of Appius’ manner, we might have expected the inclusion of some archaic features of syntax or vocabulary to complement what is after all a rather subtle quirk of pronunciation. In fact, the language and sentence structure of the passage are fundamentally Ciceronian. We therefore made no attempt to include this feature in our reconstruction.
The orator’s interaction with his audience

It is clear from various sources that Roman oratory could often involve a degree of participation from the audience.\(^5^9\) Two of our passages were chosen with the aim of investigating how this interaction with the crowd affected the orator’s style of delivery. In the first passage, *Orationes Philippicae* 6.5.12-3, Cicero begins with a provocatively sarcastic description of Mark Antony’s brother, Lucius (*Orationes Philippicae* 6.5.12): *Sed redeo ad amores deliciasque vestras, Lucium Antonium, qui vos omnes in fidem suam recepit.* (‘But I return to your love and darling, Lucius Antonius, who has taken all of you under his charge.’) The next word in the text—*negatis?* (‘Do you deny it?’)—only makes sense if we assume that the audience has noisily disagreed with his remarks. A few lines later we find something similar (*Orationes Philippicae* 6.5.12): *Numquisnam est vestrum, qui tribum non habeat? Certi nemo. Atqui illum quinque et triginta tribus patronum adoptarunt. Rursus reclamatis?* (‘Is there any of you that has no tribe? No one, of course. And yet the thirty five tribes have adopted him as their patron. Do you again shout “No”?’) The phrase *rursus reclamatis* must refer to another shouted objection, and a third such response is indicated a little later (*Orationes Philippicae* 6.5.12): *malam quidem illi pestem! clamori enim vestro adsentior.* (‘To the devil with the man indeed! For I agree with your shouts.’)\(^6^0\)

\(^{59}\) Cf Aldrete, *Gestures and Acclamations* (as in n.2), 115: ‘In reconstructing speeches as they were actually delivered rather than as they were later written down or paraphrased, the loss of the interactions with the crowd and of the interruptions and reactions of the audience constitutes the greatest difference.’ See also pp. 101-27, although his emphasis is on the Imperial, not the Republican period. A particularly striking account of crowd participation at Republican political rallies is given by Cicero at *Epistulae ad Quintum Fratrem* 2.3.2.

\(^{60}\) It is not impossible that Cicero fabricated these details for the published version of the speech to create the impression that the common people supported him in his resistance against Mark Antony. But even if fabricated in this particular case, such details show the kind of oratorical conventions that Cicero and his readers were familiar with in general.
This technique of eliciting responses from the audience seems to have been used most frequently at *contiones*; that is to say, at often chaotic and highly charged public assemblies. For Cicero, however, the physical presence of a large crowd was something that the good orator could exploit for his own benefit; indeed, it was integral to the speaker’s art (*De oratore* 2.83.338): *habet enim multitudo vim quandam talem ut, quemadmodum tibicen sine tibiis canere, sic orator sine multitudine audiente eloquens esse non possit.* (‘For the effect produced by a crowd is such that a speaker can no more be eloquent without a large audience than a flute-player can perform without a flute.’) As a character in Tacitus’ *Dialogus* remarks, the really impressive orator is able to ‘work’ his crowd, turning their shouts and applause to his advantage, much as an actor does with his audience in the theatre (*Dialogus* 39): *oratori autem clamore plausuque opus est, et velut quodam theatro.* (‘But the orator needs the crowd’s shouts and applause; he needs his theatre, so to speak.’)\(^6^1\)

Unfortunately, however, the writers on rhetoric have little advice to offer the student regarding this feature of Roman oratory. Cicero (through the mouth of M. Antonius, grandfather of the triumvir) has some suggestions on how to *placate* a hostile and raucous crowd (*De oratore* 2.83.339-40); but he says nothing about how to exploit this dynamic relationship with the audience in any positive way, as we see him doing in *Orationes Philippicae* 6. This silence in rhetorical theory stems partly perhaps from the tendency of such handbooks to concentrate on forensic oratory, where this kind of interaction with the audience would have been inappropriate.\(^6^2\) But it is also the kind of activity, one suspects, that is not readily susceptible to the taxonomical approach of the theorists. It is a skill that one acquires through observation and practice rather than study.

\(^{6^1}\) Cicero at *De oratore* 2.83.338 calls the *contio* the *oratoris scaena* (‘the orator’s stage’); cf Quintilian 10.7.16. See also Gotoff, ‘Oratory: The Art of Illusion’ (as in n.2), 289-90.

Indeed, Tacitus’ Messalla (Dialogus 34) asserts that orators in the Late Republic acquired their skill in manipulating audiences through the institution of tirocinium fori—a kind of practical apprenticeship in politics under the guidance of an elder. Cicero himself notes that he was in his youth a particularly keen observer of P. Sulpicius Rufus, the turbulent tribune of 88 BC who was renowned for his skill at rabble-rousing (Brutus 89.306). It was from watching men such as this at work that he would have acquired a sense of how best to handle large crowds. When he adroitly exploits the physical props around him at Orationes Philippiicae 6.5.13 by pointing to the nearby statues of L. Antonius and Q. Tremulus, he is almost certainly using the tricks of the trade that he has acquired over the years.

We have little information then on the orator’s style of delivery when he exploits this kind of interaction with the crowd. We have a few clues, however, about the part played by the crowd in such exchanges. Most often they seem to have used straightforward shouts and cheers to register their approval or disapproval (referred to by the generic term clamor). On occasions, however, specific phrases of approbation such as bene and praeclare might be used (De oratore 3.26.101), and approval was regularly accompanied by a clapping of hands (plausus). Hisses and whistles (sibili / sibila), which were traditionally employed at the theatre and gladiatorial events to show displeasure (Epistulae ad Atticum 2.19.3; Epistulae ad Familiares 8.2.1; Pro Sestio 59.126), were presumably used in the context of oratory too. Objections could be voiced more specifically with expressions such as minime; sometimes, of course, the precise form of the crowd’s response would be shaped by the kinds of cue

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63 See further David, Le patronat judiciaire à Rome (as in n.15), 336-41.

64 Cf. Pöschl, ‘Zur Einbeziehung Anwesender Personen’ (as in n.2), 223-4. The orator’s rhetorical exploitation of his physical surroundings had a long pedigree at Rome; Quintilian at 11.3.115, for example, assumes that C. Gracchus would have stretched out his arms and pointed while delivering the words quo me miser conferam? in Capitolium? (‘Where shall I go in my wretched plight? To the Capitoline?’ For a slightly different account of Gracchus’ words on this occasion, see De oratore 3.56.214.) See also Ann Vasaly, Representations: Images of the World in Ciceronian Oratory (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1993), 40-87 on the orator’s rhetorical exploitation of his surroundings.
presented by the orator, as in our passage from *Orationes Philippicae* 6, and as described by Cicero at *Epistulae ad Quintum Fratrem* 2.3.2.65

We conducted several rehearsals of the passage from *Orationes Philippicae* 6 with a small group of students (four in all) playing the part of the crowd and shouting out responses at the appropriate places. Their contribution prompted an unexpected and quite fundamental shift in the dynamics of delivery. Instead of the formal, quasi-declamatory tone that had frequently been employed in our passages from legal speeches, there was now an impetus towards a more conspiratorial, even sardonic manner. The orator was no longer a legal advocate striving hard for credibility and favour. In the presence of a friendly and enthusiastic crowd he became a charismatic leader with swagger and bravado. This confidence in the audience’s support prompted a less formal and more directly engaging approach.66

A similar result was observed in our second reconstruction from this kind of speech. Quite early in the Second Catilinarian, Cicero embarks upon a list of some fourteen types of miscreant with whom (he claims) Catiline has been closely associated (*In Catilinam* 2.4.7):

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O fortunatam rem publicam, si quidem hanc sentinam huius urbis eiecerit! Uno mehercule Catilina exhausto, elevata mihi et recreata res publica videtur. Quid enim mali aut sceleris fingi aut excogitari potest, quod non ille conceperit? quis tota Italia veneficus, quis gladiator, quis latro, quis sicarius, quis parricida, quis testamentorum subiector, quis circumscriptor, quis ganeo, quis nepos, quis adulter, quae mulier infamis, quis corruptor iuventutis, quis corruptus, quis perditus inveniri potest qui se eum Catilina non familiarissime vixisse fateatur?
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65 See further the discussion of Aldrete, *Gestures and Acclamations* (as in n.2), 128-64.

66 Roman politicians could not of course take for granted a favourable reception (see eg *Epistulae ad Atticum* 2.21.5; *Epistulae ad Quintum Fratrem* 2.3.2); often, however, they took the precaution of packing the crowd with their clients and supporters (eg *Epistulae ad Atticum* 3.23.5; *Pro Sestio* 59.126). Cf Aldrete, *Gestures and Acclamations* (as in n.2), 136-7.
How happy the state would be if it really could succeed in getting rid of all this sewage! Heavens above, even after the purge of Catiline alone, the city seems to me relieved and revived. In the whole of Italy, which poisoner, gladiator, bandit, assassin, murderer, forger of wills, con-man, debauchee, spendthrift, adulterer, woman of ill-repute, seducer of the young, fraud or bankrupt could be found who would claim that he had not lived on the most intimate terms with Catiline?

The final sentence here is of particular interest. At first sight, its unusual concatenation of fourteen *quis-*phrases seems to present significant challenges in terms of delivery, especially if the orator employs a strident, declamatory mode. Somehow a degree of variety has to be introduced across the various elements to prevent them taking on the character of a monotonous and predictable list; and the tone and emphasis have to be arranged so as to produce a suitable climax at the end. Our initial rehearsals without a crowd suggested that, while extremely difficult, such a task was not entirely beyond the skilled performer. Through the sustained projection of a high emotional intensity, the orator can successfully deliver the sentence in declamatory style.

The introduction of a noisy and approving audience, however, once again radically changed the dynamics of delivery. In this friendlier setting, the orator can dispense with strained indignation and exploit instead his sense of camaraderie with the crowd. In place of strident querulousness he can indulge in a more sarcastic abuse of Catiline’s followers. Indeed we found that the insertion of a slight pause between each *quis* and its accompanying noun was particularly effective. This brief hesitation created a sense of expectancy and engagement as the audience was invited to consider what type of worthless individual was to be mentioned next. Shouts and cheers from the crowd each time the answer was revealed gave the sentence its own self-sustaining momentum and ensured that the audience’s interest was maintained.

There is no way of knowing which of these two very different approaches comes closest to the way in which Cicero actually delivered the passage. But these practical experiments serve at the very least to remind us of the importance of the performative context. It is likely that
the orator's style of delivery varied in quite significant ways depending on the type and degree of his interaction with the audience. This dynamic between the two is inevitably ephemeral and elusive. And yet as every actor, and indeed every university lecturer knows, it is something that can affect quite profoundly the approach to, and success of, a public performance.

The interactive nature of much Roman oratory also meant that the good speaker had to be able to improvise. It is likely in fact that much of what Cicero himself said in the forum and senate house regularly involved some element of improvisation. According to Quintilian (10.7.30-1), he often composed beforehand only the most crucial parts of what he had to say, relying on the fluency of language and invention developed over many years of experience to see him through the rest of the speech. Here again practical experience is crucial in honing the orator's technique, although both Cicero and Quintilian note that diligent practice in writing can help to cultivate this skill.67

Sometimes, however, a rather different kind of improvisation was required. On occasions the orator might fail in his attempts to engage the audience and elicit from them the desired response. The thrust of Cicero's argument in *In Catilinam* 1, for example, shifts significantly at times in response to the challenges that Catiline throws at him, and because of the senate's restrained reaction to his proposals.68 We may just be able to discern traces of this improvisatory technique in the final sentence of our passage from *In Catilinam* 2. The additive form of its syntax, with the simple sequence of *quis*-phrases, seems purpose-built for this kind of oratorical context. If Cicero fails to get the desired response from his audience after the first few items, he can abandon this line of approach and bring the sentence quite easily to a swift close. If the audience

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67 On the benefits of practical experience for improvisational skill, see Quintilian 10.7.18; and 10.7.8-9; on the benefit of written exercises for extempore speaking, see *De oratore* 1.33.152; Quintilian 10.7.28.

responds favourably, however, the straightforward quis-plus-noun structure allows him to extend the sequence as long as he likes in order to take full advantage of the crowd’s positive reaction. Indeed the various rhetorical exercises of his youth involving the amplification of crimes and vices would have helped to prepare him well for this kind of improvisation.  

Circulated written texts, however, inevitably mask this improvisatory dimension of Roman oratory. Behind the apparent certainty of the written word may have existed a quite dynamic and fluid oratorical situation. In the same way as scenes of improvisatory comedy may ultimately lie beneath the received texts of Plautus, so may rather more complex oratorical exchanges underlie what we read in today’s books of Cicero’s speeches.

**Future directions for performance-based research**

Our practical reconstructions of Cicero’s speeches constitute a new and experimental way of approaching the issues involved in oratorical delivery. As we have stressed, it is hardly an exact science; but despite the obvious limitations, the very process of performance can often bring to the fore matters of interpretation that more traditional and less engaged approaches overlook entirely. Only by testing Quintilian’s guidelines for gesture through actual performances, for example, can we fully appreciate the ways in which they are deficient and incomplete. It is very easy too for the silent reader of Cicero’s speeches to form a mental

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69 See eg Cicero De Inventione 1.53.102 and Auctior ad Herennium 2.30.49. For Cicero’s use of trusted rhetorical tropes in more or less extempore speeches, see Epistulae ad Atticum 1.14.3-4.


71 Cf. Stroh and Breitenberger, ‘Inszenierung Senecas’ (as in n.3), 256.
impression of the flow and feel of the language that is quite detached from
the performative context. Even if reconstructions cannot hope to portray
precisely Cicero’s own nuances of performance, they have an important
role to play in reminding us that our most common way of engaging with
his texts (ie reading) is limited at best, and at worst potentially misleading.
On a rather more straightforward level, such performances also help us to
gain a greater appreciation of the range of skills required by the Roman
orator. Mastery of language was just the starting point; the effective use
of voice and gesture was also essential, as too was a touch of
showmanship and improvisatory flair.

In some respects, however, our project has done little more than
scratch the surface. Its sample of nine passages covers but a small part of
the wide range of oratorical styles that Cicero employs in his speeches.
And none of them extends beyond several minutes in length. One obvious
challenge for future research is to stage outdoors a complete and
continuous performance of one of the orations, in front of a large
audience. Much could be learned, one suspects, about Cicero’s variation
in pace and tone across such an extended performance, as well as the way
in which these physical conditions affect the orator’s use of voice and
gesture. Such an experiment would also bring us closer to how most
Romans actually experienced oratory. Cicero had various reasons for
writing out and circulating his speeches; and yet, as he himself notes, he
was quite unusual in pursuing this practice.72 Most orators before him
simply could not see the point of doing so. For them, by the time they got
home from the forum or senate house, the important part was already
over. Oratory was not something they wrote, but something they did. For
them it was not a literary pursuit but a performance art. The closer we too
can get to appreciating it in these terms, the better.73

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72 See Brutus 24.91-4; Humbert, Les Plaidoyers écrits (as in n.4), 253-60.

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