

Cicero's Athenian Days: Intellectual Rivalry through Study Abroad¹

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Handout 1

Brut. 22: subito in civitate cum alia ceciderunt tum etiam ea ipsa, de qua disputare ordimur, eloquentia obmutuit.

Suddenly not only other fields in the state collapsed, but *Eloquentia* herself, about whom [they] set out to discuss, also fell silent.

Handout 2

Fin. 3.40: ne tu...Cato, verbis illustribus et id quod vis declarantibus! **itaque mihi videris Latine docere philosophiam** et ei quasi civitatem dare; quae quidem adhuc peregrinari Romae videbatur nec offerre sese nostris sermonibus.

Indeed, Cato, your words are clear and they demonstrate what you wish! **Therefore you seem to me to be teaching *Philosophia* to speak Latin**, you seem to give her citizenship, who thus far seemed to be a sojourner in Rome and not to express herself in our words.

Handout 3

Brut. 51: nam ut semel e Piraeo eloquentia evecta est, omnis peragravit insulas atque ita **peregrinata tota Asia est**, ut se externis oblineret moribus omnemque illam salubritatem Atticae dictionis et quasi sanitatem perderet ac loqui paene dedisceret. *hinc* Asiatici oratores non contemnendi quidem nec celeritate nec copia, sed parum pressi et nimis redundantes.

For once *Eloquentia* was carried out from Piraeus, she traveled through all the islands and **wandered in the entire Asia**, so that she smeared herself with foreign manners and she lost all the health of Attic diction and also sanity, and she almost unlearned how to speak. *Hence* in fact Asian orators should not be despised for either speed or abundance, but for being hardly compressed and overflowing excessively.

Handout 4

Brut. 315-16: cum venissem Athenas, sex mensis cum Antiocho veteris Academiae nobilissimo et prudentissimo philosopho fui studiumque philosophiae numquam intermissum a primaque

¹ All the translations in this handout are mine.

adulescentia cultum et semper auctum hoc rursus summo auctore et doctore renovavi. eodem tamen tempore Athenis apud Demetrium Syrum veterem et non ignobilem dicendi magistrum studiose exerceri solebam. **post a me Asia tota peragrata est** cum summis quidem oratoribus. **quorum erat princeps Menippus Stratonicensis meo iudicio tota Asia illis temporibus disertissimus; et, si nihil habere molestiarum nec ineptiarum Atticorum est, hic orator in illis numerari recte potest.** assiduissime autem mecum fuit Dionysius Magnes; erat etiam Aeschylus Cnidius, Adramyttenus Xenocles. **hi tum in Asia rhetorum principes numerabantur. quibus non contentus Rhodum veni** meque ad eundem quem Romae audiveram Molonem applicavi, cum actorem in veris causis scriptoremque praestantem tum in notandis animadvertendisque vitiis et instituendo docendoque prudentissimum. **is dedit operam, si modo id consequi potuit, ut nimis redundantis nos et supra fluentis iuvenili quadam dicendi impunitate et licentia reprimeret et quasi extra ripas diffluentis coerceret.**

After arriving in Athens, I spent six months with Antiochus, the most noble and learned philosopher of the Old Academy. With the greatest teacher adviser, I renewed my passion for philosophy, which was cultivated from an early age, never interrupted, and always strengthened. Also at the same time in Athens I used to practice enthusiastically with Demetrius of Syria, an old and not undistinguished teacher of speaking. **After that the entire Asia was traversed by me** and I was also with the best orators. **The best of them was Menippus of Stratonicea, in my opinion the most eloquent person in the entire Asia at that time.** And, if it is characteristic of Attic orators to have no affectation nor absurdity, this orator can be justly counted among them. Most constantly, there was also with me Dionysius of Magnesia, Aeschylus of Cnidus, and Xenocles of Adramyttium. **These men were numbered among the leading figures of orators in Asia. Not contented with them I went to Rhodes** and I attached myself to Molon whom I had heard speaking in Rome. He was not only an advocate in actual legal cases and excellent writer, but he was also very intelligent in noticing and correcting mistakes and in instructing and teaching. **He made an effort, as much as possible, to restrain me from overflowing excessively and flowing beyond with a certain youthful impunity and liberty of speaking, just as to hold from overflowing the river banks.**

Handout 5

Brut. 330: nos autem, Brute, quoniam post Hortensi clarissimi oratoris mortem orbae eloquentiae quasi tutores relictis sumus, domi teneamus eam saeptam liberali custodia, et hos ignotos atque impudentes procos repudiemus tueamurque ut adultam virginem caste et ab amatorum impetu quantum possumus prohibeamus.

Since we however, Brutus, are left as the guardians of orphaned *Eloquentia* after the death of Hortensius, the most distinguished orator, let us keep her at home enclosed with a protection befitting her free birth, and let us reject these vulgar and shameless suitors, and let us care for her as a virgin grown up chastely, and let us keep her away from the onset of lovers as much as we can.

Handout 6

Brut. 26: testis est Graecia, quae cum eloquentiae studio sit incensa iamdiuque excellat in ea praestetque ceteris...in quam cum intueor, maxime mihi occurrunt, Attice, et quasi lucent Athenae tuae, qua in urbe primum se orator extulit primumque etiam monumentis et litteris oratio est coepta mandari.

The witness is Greece, which was kindled by a passion for eloquence, and for a long time it excels and surpasses other states in it...When I look into Greece, Atticus, your Athens appear to me to shine. In that city orator first carried themselves forth and oratory first began to be committed in monuments and written words.

Handout 7

Fin. 5.1: cum audissem Antiochum, Brute, ut solebam, cum M. Pisone in eo gymnasio quod Ptolemaeum vocatur, unaque nobiscum Q. frater et T. Pomponius Luciusque Cicero, frater noster cognatione patruelis, amore germanus, consituimus inter nos ut ambulationem postmeridianam conficeremus in Academia, maxime quod is locus ab omni turba id temporis vacuus esset.

After attending Antiochus' lecture, Brutus, as I was accustomed to, with Marcus Piso in that gymnasium which is called the School of Ptolemy, together with my brother Quintus, Atticus, and Lucius Cicero, my first cousin (son of my paternal uncle) whom I loved as a brother, we decided to talk an afternoon walk in the Academy, mainly because that location was empty from all the crowds at that time of the day.

Handout 8

Fin. 5.36: animi autem et eius animi partis quae princeps est quaeque mens nominatur plures sunt virtutes, sed **duo prima genera**, unum earum quae ingenerantur suapte natura appellanturque **non voluntariae**, alterum earum quae **in voluntate positae** magis proprio nomine appellari solent...prioris generis est **docilitas, memoria**; quae fere omnia appellantur uno **ingeni** nomine... alterum autem genus est magnarum verarumque virtutum quas appellamus voluntarias, ut **prudentiam, temperantiam, fortitudinem, iustitiam** et reliquas generis eiusdem.

(Piso speaking) Mind (*animus*), and that principle part of mind which is called intellect (*mens*) have more virtues, but there are **two main types**, one of them is implanted by nature and is called **non-volitional**, the other type of virtues depend on **free will** and they are called virtues in the more particular sense...the first type includes **aptness of being taught, memory**, almost all of which are called by the...one name of **talent**...and the other type includes great and real virtues which we call volitional, such as **prudence, temperance, courage, justice** and all the others of the same kind.

Handout 9

Fin. 5.38: animique virtutes non voluntarias vincant virtutes voluntariae, quae quidem proprie virtutes appellantur multumque excellunt, propterea quod ex ratione gignuntur qua nihil est in homine divinius.

(Piso speaking) **Volitional virtues will surpass non-volitional virtues of mind.** Non-volitional virtues are also called virtues properly and excel by a great degree, because they arise from reason and nothing in human is more divine than reason.

Handout 10

Fin. 5.67: ut fortitudo in laboribus periculisque cernatur, temperantia in praetermittendis voluptatibus, prudentia in delectu bonorum et malorum, iustitia in suo cuique tribuendo.

(Piso speaking) **Courage is seen in toils and dangers,** temperance in overlooking pleasure, prudence in the selection of the good and bad, justice in distributing what everyone is due.

Handout 11

Brut. 236: M. Piso quidquid habuit, habuit ex disciplina maximeque ex omnibus qui ante fuerunt Graecis doctrinis eruditus fuit...is laborem quasi cursum forensem diutius non tulit, quod et corpore erat infirmo et hominum ineptias ac stultitias, quae devorandae nobis sunt, non ferebat.

Whatever Marcus Piso had, he had from his learning and he was most erudite in Greek learning among all his predecessors...He did not endure for long the forensic labor, similar to running a race, because he had a weak body and because he did not endure human ineptitude and stupidity, which must be swallowed by us.

Handout 12

Brut. 313-14: erat eo tempore in nobis summa gracilitas et infirmitas corporis, procerum et tenue collum, qui habitus et quae figura non procul abesse putatur a vitae periculo, si accedit labor et laterum magna contentio...itaque cum me et amici et medici hortarentur ut causas agere desisterem, quodvis potius periculum mihi adeundum quam a sperata dicendi gloria discendum putavi. sed cum censerem remissione et moderatione vocis et commutato genere dicendi me et periculum vitare posse et temperatius dicere, ut consuetudinem dicendi mutarem, ea causa mihi in Asiam proficisendi fuit.

At that time my body is very slender and weak, my neck is long and slim, that condition and physique are thought as life-endangering if toil and great effort is exerted to lung...when my

friends and physicians urged me to stop pleading cases, I thought of facing the danger rather than giving up the glory of speaking I desired. However, since I thought that I can avoid the danger with a relaxation and moderation of voice and a changed way of speaking and I thought of speaking more moderately, in order to change my habit of speaking, I left for Asia.

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