

## Rousing and Calming the *Contio*

Despite the importance that rhetorical treatises from the Late Republic attribute to the role of emotions in persuasive speech, these works rarely engage in substantive discussion on the topic beyond the production of pity or indignation in the *conclusio* (Wisse 1989, Hall 2007). Even these treatments are limited to prescriptive comments on how to elicit such emotions and do not speak either to broader strategic concerns or how to utilize emotional speech in deliberative oratory. Close examination does reveal three intriguing exceptions, however, that provide theoretical clues applicable to a developed strategy governing deliberative oratory (*de Oratore* 2.216, 2.337, and *Orator* 131). This paper seeks to put these clues into context and subsequently examine these strategies in practice in Cicero's deliberative set pieces, *pro Lege Manilia* and *de Lege Agraria*.

The passages cited above can be summarized as follows. First, a speaker should counter any emotion produced by his opponent, perhaps sympathy for example, with its natural opposite, which in this case would be jealousy (*Or.* 2.216). Second, prosecutions should employ severe or distressing emotions while defenses should use milder ones (*Orat.* 131). Finally, the sole passage that speaks directly to deliberative oratory suggests that orators must both arouse and recall an audience to and from different emotional states within a single speech (*Or.* 2.337). I suggest that recent sociological work in emotions-studies can provide additional context and meaning to these passages that we can then apply to Cicero's speeches (Goodwin/Jasper 2006, Honneth 1995). The first two passages seem consistent with theories on activating and deactivating emotions, which classify feelings as either prompting or hindering action in an agent. The final passage appears concerned with managing emotional momentum over the

course of a lengthy oration, for certain emotions can only resonate effectively for limited durations (Fjelstad 2003).

Fortunately, the speeches under consideration here have different goals. The *pro Lege Manilia* intends to mobilize support for a positive vote (Pompey's command against Mithridates) while the *de Lege Agraria* hopes to diminish support and thereby thwart Rullus's proposed agrarian bill. Cicero therefore selects a rather different emotional package for each speech: in the former he utilizes activating emotions such as anger, pride, and trust while the latter deploys deactivating emotions like fear, suspicion, and despair. Each speech, moreover, displays a keen awareness of the need to control emotional momentum. In one speech, for instance, Cicero stresses the atrocities and formidableness of Mithridates to stoke anger, yet takes care not to depict so great a threat as to create fear (*Leg. Man.* 20). In the other, Cicero taps into Rome's fear of the *rex* throughout the entirety of his speech, yet abruptly proclaims in his conclusion that he is free of fear (*Leg. Agr.* 2.101-102). He shows what Rullus has offered and then what he offers, taking his audience from a state of anxiety and fear to one of confidence and peace of mind. These works take us beyond pity and indignation, and provide a solid foundation for examining emotional strategy beyond the court.

#### Bibliography

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