

# QUINTILIAN

THE ORATOR'S  
EDUCATION

BOOKS 11-12

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orationis mire tenuis causas decet, maioribus illud admirabile dicendi genus magis convenit. In utroque eminent Cicero: ex quibus alterum imperiti se posse consequi credent, neutrum qui intellegunt.

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- 1 Memoriam quidam naturae modo esse munus existimaverunt, estque in ea non dubie plurimum, sed ipsa excolendo sicut alia omnia augetur: et totus de quo diximus adhuc inanis est labor nisi ceterae partes hoc velut spiritu continentur. Nam et omnis disciplina memoria constat, frustra que docemur si quidquid audimus praeterfluat, et exemplorum, legum, responsorum, dictorum denique factorumque velut quasdam copias, quibus abundare quasque in promptu semper habere debet orator, eadem illa vis praesentat: neque inmerito thesaurus hic eloquentiae dicitur.
- 2 Sed non firme tantum continere verum etiam cito percipere multa acturos oportet, nec quae scripseris modo iterata lectione complecti, sed in cogitatis quoque rerum ac verborum contextum sequi, et quae sint ab adversa parte dicta meminisse, nec utique eo quo dicta sunt ordine refutare sed oportunis locis ponere. Quin extemporalis oratio non alio mihi videtur mentis vigore constare. Nam dum

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<sup>1</sup> Compare Plato, *Phaedrus* 276d3; Chrysippus, *SVF* 2.56 (*μνήμη θησαυρισμὸς οὐσα φαντασιῶν*, "memory being a treasury of impressions"); Cicero, *De oratore* 1.18 (*thesauro rerum omnium*, "a treasury of everything").

unaffected language suits cases of minor importance extremely well, whereas the style we all wonder at fits the more momentous ones better. Cicero excels in both. The inexperienced will think they can master one of them; the understanding know that they can do neither.

CHAPTER 2

*Memory*

Some have regarded Memory as simply a gift of Nature, and no doubt it does depend mostly on this. But like everything else, it is improved by cultivation. All the effort I have described up to now is futile unless the other parts are held together, as it were, by this animating principle. All learning depends on memory, and teaching is in vain if everything we hear slips away. It is this capacity too that makes available to us the reserves of examples, laws, rulings, sayings, and facts which the orator must possess in abundance and have always at his finger-tips. It is with good reason that it has been called the Treasury of Eloquence.<sup>1</sup>

But when you are going to plead you must not only hold many things firmly in mind, but apprehend them quickly. It is not enough to keep hold of what you have written by reading it over and over again; you must also follow the chain of facts and words contained in what you have thought out, remember everything that has been said by the other side, and refute it, not necessarily in the order in which it was said, but arranging it as is most advantageous. Even impromptu eloquence rests, it seems to me, on this same power of the mind. While we are saying one thing,

alia dicimus, quae dicturi sumus intuenda sunt: ita cum semper cogitatio ultra eat, id quod est longius quaerit, quidquid autem repperit quodam modo apud memoriam deponit, quod illa quasi media quaedam manus acceptum ab inventione tradit elocutioni.

- 4 Non arbitror autem mihi in hoc inmorandum, quid sit quod memoriam faciat, quamquam plerique inprimi quaedam vestigia animo, velut in ceris anulorum signa serventur, existimant. Neque ero tam credulus ut †quam abitu tardiolem firmiolemque memoriam fieri et actem quoque  
5 ad animum pertinere.†<sup>1</sup> Magis admirari naturam subit, tot res vetustas tanto ex intervallo repetitas reddere se et offerre, nec tantum requirentibus sed sponte interim, nec  
6 vigilantibus sed etiam quiete compositis: eo magis quod illa quoque animalia quae carere intellectu videntur meminerunt et agnoscunt et quamlibet longo itinere deducta ad adsuetas sibi sedes revertuntur. Quid? non haec varietas mira est, excidere proxima, vetera inhaerere, hesternorum  
7 inmemores acta pueritiae recordari? Quid quod quaedam requisita se occultant et eadem forte succurrunt, nec manet semper memoria, sed aliquando etiam redit? Nesciretur tamen quanta vis esset eius, quanta divi-

<sup>1</sup> No convincing reconstruction is available. See note on page 342

<sup>2</sup> Plato, *Theaetetus* 191c–195a. Cicero rejects this model in *Tusculanae Disputationes* 1.60–61, a passage Q. certainly had in mind here.

<sup>3</sup> See text note.

we have to be looking to what we are to say next, and so, as thought is always going on ahead, it is always seeking something further away, and whatever it finds it commits to the care of Memory, which thus acts as a sort of intermediary, and hands on to Elocution what it receives from Invention.

I do not think I need to dwell on the question of what produces Memory. Many hold, however, that certain traces are impressed upon the mind, in the way that the mark of a signet persists in the wax.<sup>2</sup> Nor shall I be so credulous as <to believe that> the memory which <I know> becomes slower and more secure as a result of habit . . . the mind also.<sup>3</sup> My inclination is rather to wonder at nature, that so many old facts, revived after so long, present themselves to us once again, not only when we call them up, but sometimes spontaneously, and not only when we are awake but also when we are quietly resting. And I marvel all the more because even those animals which seem to lack understanding nevertheless remember, recognize, and return to their accustomed homes, however far they have been taken from them. Again, is it not an extraordinary contrast that recent events slip out of our minds while older ones remain, and we forget what happened yesterday but remember events of our boyhood? Think too of the way in which some things hide themselves away when we try to recall them, and then come to mind quite by chance! Or the way in which Memory does not always remain with us, but sometimes goes and then comes back! Yet we should never have known how great is its power and its

- 8 nitas illa, nisi [in]<sup>2</sup> hoc lumen orandi extulisset. Non enim rerum modo sed etiam verborum ordinem praestat, nec ea pauca contexit sed durat prope in infinitum, et in longissimis actionibus prius audiendi patientia quam memoriae
- 9 fides deficit. Quod et ipsum argumentum est subesse artem aliquam iuvarique ratione naturam, cum idem [indocti]<sup>3</sup> facere illud indocti inexercitati non possimus. Quamquam invenio apud Platonem obstare memoriae usum litterarum, videlicet quoniam illa quae scriptis reposuimus velut custodire desinimus et ipsa securitate dimitimus.
- 10 Nec dubium est quin plurimum in hac parte valeat mentis intentio et velut acies luminum a prospectu rerum quas intuetur non aversa; unde accidit ut quae per plures dies scribimus ediscenda sint, cogitatio res<sup>4</sup> ipsa contineat.
- 11 Artem autem memoriae primus ostendisse dicitur Simonides Cius.<sup>5</sup> Vulgata fabula est: cum pugili coronato carmen, quale componi victoribus solet, mercede pacta scripsisset, abnegatam ei pecuniae partem quod more poetis frequentissimo degressus in laudes Castoris ac Pollicis exierat: quapropter partem ab iis petere quorum fac-

<sup>2</sup> in *del. Obrecht*: orandi <vim> Regius ('brought the force of oratory forth into this light')

<sup>3</sup> *del. Winterbottom*: docti *recc.*

<sup>4</sup> cogitatio res *Gertz*: cogitaciones G      <sup>5</sup> *Gertz*: cuius G

<sup>4</sup> I.e. the divinity of memory is shown by her raising up the great light of eloquence for us: compare Lucretius 3.1, on the "divine" achievement of Epicurus: *tam clarum extollere lumen qui primus potuisti* ("you who were the first who could raise up so bright a light").      <sup>5</sup> *Phaedrus* 275A.

<sup>6</sup> See D. A. Campbell in *LCL Greek Lyric* III, pp. 373-378.

divinity, had it not raised the light of eloquence on high.<sup>4</sup> For it is Memory that ensures not only the order of our thoughts but that of our words too, nor does it simply string a few words together, but continues unimpaired almost infinitely; even in the longest pleadings the patience of the audience flags sooner than the speaker's trusty memory. This is itself an argument that there is some art underlying it, and that nature is assisted by reason, because we cannot do this without teaching and practice. I find in Plato,<sup>5</sup> however, that the use of letters is a hindrance to Memory, presumably because we cease to keep hold of what we have committed to writing, and allow it to escape since we feel so sure of it. There is no doubt that the most important factor in Memory is mental concentration, a sharp eye, as it were, never diverted from the object of its gaze. This is why what we spend several days writing out has to be learned by heart, whereas the process of mental preparation automatically retains its contents.

### *The "Art" of Memory*

The first person to have made public an Art of Memory is said to have been Simonides of Ceos.<sup>6</sup> The story is well known. He had composed a victory ode of the customary kind for a boxer who had won the crown. The price had been agreed, but part of it was withheld because Simonides, following the common poetical practice, had digressed into an encomium of Castor and Pollux.<sup>7</sup> He was told to ask for the balance of his fee from those whose

<sup>7</sup> A natural theme in the circumstances, given that Pollux (Polydeuces) was the great boxer.

ta celebrasset iuebatur. Et persolverunt, ut traditum est:  
 12 nam cum esset grande convivium in honorem eiusdem  
 victoriae atque adhibitus ei cenae Simonides, nuntio est  
 excitus, quod eum duo iuvenes equis advecti desiderare  
 maiorem in modum dicebantur. Et illos quidem non inve-  
 13 nit, fuisse tamen gratos erga se deos exitu comperit. Nam  
 vix eo ultra limen egresso triclinium illud supra convivas  
 corruit, atque ita confudit ut non ora modo oppressorum  
 sed membra etiam omnia requirentes ad sepulturam pro-  
 pinqui nulla nota possent discernere. Tum Simonides dici-  
 14 tur memor ordinis quo quisque discubuerat corpora suis  
 reddidisse. Est autem magna inter auctores dissensio,  
 Glaucone Carystio an Leocrati an Agatharcho an Scopae  
 scriptum sit id carmen, et Pharsali fuerit haec domus, ut  
 ipse quodam loco significare Simonides videtur utque  
 Apollodorus et Eratosthenes et Euphorion et Larissaeus  
 Eurypylus tradiderunt, an Crannone, ut Apollas <et> Cal-  
 15 limachus,<sup>6</sup> quem secutus Cicero hanc famam latius fudit.  
 Scopam nobilem Thessalum perisse in eo convivio con-  
 stat, adicitur sororis eius filius, putant et ortos plerosque

<sup>6</sup> <et> Callimachus Bentley: Callimachus Schneider

<sup>8</sup> Cicero, *De oratore* 2.351–353. Q. here gives an unusual display of grammatical learning. Glaucus of Carystus was a Euboean victor (Demosthenes, *On the Crown* 319). Leocrates may be the fifth-century Athenian general who dedicated a statue to Hermes (*Anthologia Palatina* 6.144, a poem said to be by Simonides). Agatharchus was an Olympic victor in 536. The Scopadae were the ruling family of Crannon. Apollodorus of Athens (*FrGrHist* 244 F 67), Eratosthenes of Cyrene (*FrGrHist* 241 F 34) and Euphorion of Chalcis (see 10.1.56) are great figures of Alexan-

deeds he had celebrated. And, according to the story, they did indeed pay. A great banquet was held to honour the victory and Simonides was invited, but he was called out of the room by a message that two young men on horseback were said to be asking for him urgently. There were no young men to be found, but he realized from what happened next that the gods were grateful to him. For scarcely had he left the building, when the dining hall collapsed on to the heads of the diners, and so crushed them that the relatives who looked for the bodies for burial could not identify their faces or even their limbs by any marks. Then, it is said, Simonides, who remembered the order in which they had all been sitting, restored the bodies to their respective families. There is however great disagreement among our authorities whether the poem was written for Glaucus of Carystus, Leocrates, Agatharchus, or Scopas, and whether the house was at Pharsalus (as Simonides himself seems to indicate in one passage, and as Apollodorus, Eratosthenes, Euphorion, and Eurypylus of Larissa all say) or at Crannon, as according to Apollas <and> Callimachus, whom Cicero followed when he popularized the story.<sup>8</sup> It is agreed that the Thessalian nobleman Scopas perished at the banquet, his sister's son is also mentioned, and (it is thought) several descendants of an

drian scholarship. Eurypylus of Larissa is unknown. It is Q. who tells us that Simonides' poem set the scene at Crannon (see D. L. Page, *Poetae Melici Graeci* 509–510). The reference to Callimachus is to *Aitia* fr. 64 Pfeiffer (but note that D. A. Campbell, loc. cit., prefers the reading *Callimachus*, making Apollas a "Callimachean"). Apollas or Apelles of Pontus (*FrGrHist* 226 F 6) wrote on Delphi, and apparently on other antiquarian topics.

- 16 ab alio Scopas qui maior aetate fuerit. Quamquam mihi totum de Tyndaridis fabulosum videtur, neque omnino huius rei meminit umquam poeta ipse, profecto non taciturus de tanta sua gloria.
- 17 Ex hoc Simonidis facto notatum videtur iuvari memoriam signatis animo sedibus, idque credet suo quisque experimento. Nam cum in loca aliqua post tempus reversi sumus, non ipsa agnoscimus tantum sed etiam quae in iis fecerimus reminiscimur, personaeque subeunt, nonnumquam tacitae quoque cogitationes in mentem revertuntur.
- 18 Nata est igitur, ut in plerisque, ars ab experimento. Loca discunt<sup>7</sup> quam maxime spatiosa, multa varietate signata, domum forte magnam et in multos diductam recessus. In ea quidquid notabile est animo diligenter adfigunt, ut sine cunctatione ac mora partis eius omnis cogitatio possit percurrere. Et primus hic labor est, non haerere in occursu: plus enim quam firma debet esse memoria quae aliam memoriam adiuvet. Tum quae scripserunt vel cogitatione complectuntur aliquo signo quo moneantur notant, quod esse vel ex re tota potest, ut de navigatione, militia, vel ex verbo aliquo: nam etiam excidentes unius admonitione verbi in memoriam reponuntur.
- 19 Sit autem signum navigationis ut ancora, militiae ut aliquid ex armis. Haec ita digerunt: primum sensum vestibulo quasi adsignant, secundum (puta) atrio, tum inpluvia circumeunt, nec cubiculis modo aut exhedris, sed status etiam similibusque per ordinem committunt. Hoc facto,
- 20

<sup>7</sup> ediscunt *Murgia*: deligunt *Spalding*

<sup>9</sup> Compare Aristotle, *Metaphysics* A1, 981a1-12.

elder Scopas. However, I regard the whole episode of the Tyndarids as mythical, and the poet himself nowhere mentions it, though he would surely not have kept silent on an affair so glorious to himself.

This exploit of Simonides seems to have led to the observation that memory can be assisted if localities are impressed upon the mind. Everyone will believe this from his own experience. When we return to a certain place after an interval, we not only recognize it but remember what we did there, persons are recalled, and sometimes even unspoken thoughts come back to mind. So, as usual, Art was born of Experience.<sup>9</sup> Students learn Sites (*loca*) which are as extensive as possible and are marked by a variety of objects, perhaps a large house divided into many separate areas. They carefully fix in their mind everything there which is notable, so that their thoughts can run over all the parts of it without any hesitation or delay. The first task is to make sure that it all comes to mind without any hold-up, because a memory which is to help another memory has to be something more than secure. The next stage is to mark what they have written or are mentally preparing with some sign which will jog their memory. This may be based on the subject as a whole (on navigation or warfare, for example) or on a word, because even people who lose the thread of what they are saying can have their memory put back on track by the cue of a single word.

Let us suppose a symbol of navigation, such as an anchor, or of warfare, such as a weapon. Then this is how they arrange it. They place the first idea, as it were, in the vestibule, the second, let us say, in the atrium, and then they go round the open areas, assigning ideas systematically not only to bedrooms and bays, but to statues and the like. This

cum est repetenda memoria, incipiunt ab initio loca haec recensere, et quod cuique crediderunt repossunt, ut eorum imagine admonentur. Ita, quamlibet multa sint quorum meminisse oporteat, fiunt singula †necaeta quodam coria onerant†<sup>8</sup> coniungentes prioribus consequentia solo ediscendi labore.

21 Quod de domo dixi, et in operibus publicis et in itinere longo et urbium ambitu et picturis fieri potest. Etiam fingere sibi has regiones<sup>9</sup> licet.

Opus est ergo locis quae vel finguntur vel sumuntur, et imaginibus vel simulacris, quae utique fingenda sunt. Imagines voco quibus ea quae ediscenda sunt notamus, ut, quo modo Cicero dicit, locis pro cera, simulacris pro litteris  
22 utamur. Illud quoque ad verbum ponere optimum fuerit: 'locis est utendum multis, inlustribus, explicatis, modicis intervallis: imaginibus autem agentibus, acribus, insignitis, quae occurrere celeriterque percutere animum possint.' Quo magis miror quo modo Metrodorus in XII signis per quae sol meat trecenos et sexagenos invenerit locos. Vanitas nimirum fuit atque iactatio circa memoriam suam potius arte quam natura gloriantis.

<sup>8</sup> *An unsolved corruption: I have translated conexa (recc.) quodam corio (choro recc., edd.), ne errent (recc.: nec errant Bonnell, nec onerant Winterbottom, i.e. 'and are not a burden to those who try to connect . . .')* <sup>9</sup> *Winterbottom: imagines G*

<sup>10</sup> See text note. I take *corio* to mean something like a shell or outer skin (*OLD* s.v. 3); but reconstruction is very uncertain, and editors usually prefer the other emendation *choro*, which makes the things to be remembered partners in a dance; 9.4.129 is adduced for comparison, but not helpfully. The image remains obscure.

done, when they have to revive the memory, they begin to go over these Sites from the beginning, calling in whatever they deposited with each of them, as the images remind them. Thus, however many things have to be remembered, they become a single item, held together as it were by a sort of outer shell,<sup>10</sup> so that speakers do not make mistakes (?) by trying to connect what follows with what goes before by the sole effort of learning by heart.

What I said about a house can be done also with public buildings, a long road, a town perambulation, or pictures. One can even invent these settings for oneself.

So one needs (1) Sites, which may be invented or taken from reality, (2) Images or Symbols, which we must of course invent. By Images I mean the aids we use to mark what we have to learn by heart; as Cicero says,<sup>11</sup> we use the Sites as our wax tablet, the Symbols as our letters. It may be best to quote him verbatim: "The Sites we adopt should be numerous, well lit, clearly defined, and at moderate intervals; the Images effective, sharp, distinctive, and such as can come to mind and make a quick impression." This makes me wonder all the more how Metrodorus<sup>12</sup> found 360 Sites in the twelve Signs of the Zodiac. No doubt this was vanity and ostentation in a man who, where memory was concerned, took more pride in his art than in his natural powers.

<sup>11</sup> *De oratore* 2.358.

<sup>12</sup> Of Sceptis, Academic philosopher (Cicero, *op. cit.* 360; also *Tusculanae Disputationes* 1.59). His system involved memorizing 30 places in each of the 12 signs of the Zodiac, i.e. one for each degree.

23 Equidem haec ad quaedam prodesse non negaverim, ut si rerum nomina multa per ordinem audita reddenda sint. Namque in iis quae didicerunt locis ponunt res illas: mensam, ut hoc utar, in vestibulo et pulpitem<sup>10</sup> in atrio et  
 24 sic cetera, deinde relegentes inveniunt ubi posuerunt. Et forsitan hoc sunt adiuti qui auctione dimissa quid cuique vendidissent testibus argentariorum tabulis reddiderunt; quod praestitisse Q. Hortensium dicunt. Minus idem proderit in ediscendis quae orationis perpetuae erunt: nam et sensus non eandem imaginem quam res habent, cum alterum fingendum sit; et horum tamen utcumque commonet locus, sicut sermonis alicuius habiti: verborum contextus  
 25 eadem arte quo modo comprehendetur? Mitto quod quaedam nullis simulacris significari possunt, ut certe coniunctiones. Habemus enim sane, ut qui notis scribunt, certas imagines omnium et loca scilicet infinita, per quae verba quot sunt in quinque contra Verrem secundae actionis libris explicentur, meminerimus etiam omnium quasi depositorum: nonne impediri quoque dicendi cursum necesse  
 26 est duplici memoriae cura? Nam quo modo poterunt copulata fluere si propter singula verba ad singulas formas respiciendum erit? Qua re et Charmadas et Sceptus de quo modo dixi Metrodorus, quos Cicero dicit usos hac exercitatione, sibi habeant sua: nos simpliciora tradamus.

<sup>10</sup> *Bonnell*: populum G

<sup>13</sup> Compare Seneca, *Controversiae* 1 *praef.* 19. Hortensius' memory was famous (Cicero, *Brutus* 301).

<sup>14</sup> See 11.2.22; *De oratore* 2.360, 1.84-93, *Tusculanae Disputationes* 1.59; Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* 7.89 also regards Charmadas as one specially gifted with natural memory.

I do not wish to deny that these processes are useful for some purposes, for example if we have to recall many names of things in the same order as we have heard them. Our experts then set them in the Sites they have learned: a table (for example) in the vestibule, a platform in the atrium, and so on; then, retracing their steps, they find them where they have put them. This may well have been an aid to those who, at the end of a sale, repeated what they had sold to each buyer, precisely as the cashiers' records testified. Quintus Hortensius is said to have performed this feat.<sup>13</sup> But the technique will be less useful for learning by heart what is to be a continuous speech. For on the one hand, *ideas* do not have the same images as objects, since we always have to invent a separate sign for them, but a Site may none the less somehow remind us of them, as it may of a conversation held there; on the other hand, how can a *verbal structure* be grasped by this art? I say nothing of the fact that there are some words which cannot be represented by any Symbols, for example Conjunctions. For suppose that, like shorthand writers, we have definite Images for all these things and (of course) infinite Sites for them—enough to have room for all the words in the five books of the second pleading against Verres!—and suppose we remember them all, as if they were safe in the bank: will not the run of our speech actually be held up by this double effort of memorizing? How can we produce a continuous flow of words if we have to refer to a distinct Symbol for every individual word? So Charmadas<sup>14</sup> and Metrodorus of Sceptis, whom I mentioned just now, both of whom Cicero tells us made use of this sort of training, may be left to their own devices. Let our business be to give some simpler advice.



27 Si longior complectenda memoria fuerit oratio, pro-  
 derit per partes ediscere (laborat enim maxime onere);  
 sed hae partes non sint perexiguæ, alioqui rursus multae  
 erunt et eam dstringent atque concident. Nec utique cer-  
 tum imperaverim modum, sed maxime ut quisque finietur  
 locus, ni forte tam numerosus ut ipse quoque dividi de-  
 28 beat. Dandi sunt certi quidam termini, ut contextum ver-  
 borum, qui est difficillimus, continua et crebra meditatio,  
 partis deinceps ipsas repetitus ordo coniungat. Non est  
 inutile iis quae difficiliter haereant aliquas adponere notas,  
 quarum recordatio commoneat et quasi excitet memo-  
 29 riam: nemo enim erit<sup>11</sup> tam infelix ut quod cuique loco  
 signum destinaverit nesciat. At si erit tardus ad hoc, eo  
 quoque adhuc remedio utatur, ut ipsae notae (hoc enim est  
 ex illa arte non inutile) aptentur ad eos qui excidunt sensus,  
 ancora, ut supra proposui, si de nave dicendum est, spicu-  
 lum si de proelio. Multum enim signa faciunt, et ex alia  
 30 memoria venit alia, ut cum tralatus anulus vel alligatus  
 commoneat nos cur id fecerimus. Haec magis adhuc ad-  
 stringunt qui memoriam ab aliquo simili transferunt ad id  
 quod continendum est: ut in nominibus, si Fabius forte sit  
 tenendus, referamus ad illum Cunctatorem, qui excidere  
 non potest, aut ad aliquem amicum qui idem vocetur.

<sup>11</sup> *D.A.R. after Kiderlin: fere G*

<sup>15</sup> The Punic War general who checked Hannibal and saved Rome by "delaying."

*Practical advice*

If a longish speech has to be held in the memory, it will be best to learn it section by section (memory suffers most by being overburdened), but these sections should not be too small, or there will be a lot of them, and they will distract and fragment the memory. I do not want to lay down a definite length, but, if possible, the sections should coincide with the ends of topics, unless a topic is so complex that it needs to be subdivided. Some well-defined stopping points should be established, so that the sequence of the words (which is the most difficult thing) is assured by continuous and frequent revision, and the sequence of the parts by the repeated recall of the order. If some things do not stick easily in the mind, it is quite useful to attach some marks to them, the recall of which will warn and jog the memory. No one surely will be so ill-endowed as not to remember what Symbol he has assigned to any given passage. But if a student is slow at this, let him use the further device (which is quite a useful contribution of the Art of Memory!) of suiting his marks to the ideas which he is liable to forget—an anchor, as I suggested, if he has to speak about a ship, or a javelin if it is about a battle. Symbols are very effective, and one memory leads to another—just as a ring put on a different finger or tied with a thread reminds us why we did these things. These Symbols acquire even more binding force when people transfer memory from some similar object to the item which has to be remembered. Take names for example: if we have to remember the name Fabius, let us think of the famous Cunctator,<sup>15</sup> whom we cannot possibly forget, or of some personal friend of the same name. This is easier with names like

- 31 Quod est facilius in Apris et in Ursis et Nasone aut Crispo, ut id memoriae adfigatur unde sunt nomina. Origo quoque aliquando declinatorum tenendi magis causa est, ut in Cicerone, Verrio, Aurelio. Sed hoc miserim.<sup>12</sup>
- 32 Illud neminem non iuvabit, isdem quibus scripserit ceris ediscere. Sequitur enim vestigiis quibusdam memoriam et velut oculis intuetur non paginas modo sed versus prope ipsos, estque cum dicit similis legenti. Iam vero si litura aut adiectio aliqua atque mutatio interveniat, signa sunt quaedam quae intuentes deerrare non possumus.
- 33 Haec<sup>13</sup> ratio, ut est illi de qua primum locutus sum arti non dissimilis, ita, si quid me experimenta docuerunt, et expeditior et potentior.
- Ediscere tacite (nam id quoque est quaesitum) erat optimum si non subirent velut otiosum animum plerumque aliae cogitationes, propter quas excitandus est voce, ut duplici motu iuветur memoria dicendi et audiendi. Sed haec vox sit modica et magis murmur.
- 34 Qui autem legente alio ediscit in parte tardatur, quod acrior est oculorum quam aurium sensus, in parte iuvari potest, quod, cum semel aut bis audierit, continuo illi memoriam suam experiri licet et cum legente contendere. Nam et alioqui id maxime faciendum est, ut nos subinde

<sup>12</sup> *Halm*: misceri *G*: miseri *F* (i.e. such puns (haec Zumpt for hoc) are characteristic of a poor mind. Cf. 8 proem. 28, 9.4.112)

<sup>13</sup> *Gallaeus*: est *G*

<sup>16</sup> Boar, Bear, Nosy, Curly.

<sup>17</sup> *Cicer*, "chickpea"; *verres*, "boar"; Aurelius from *auris*, "ear" (?) (the only known ancient etymology (Maltby 1990, 67) however relates the name, in the form *Auselius*, to *sol*, "sun").

Aper, Ursus, Naso, or Crispus,<sup>16</sup> where we can fix in our memory the origin of the name. Origin is also sometimes a means of remembering derived names better, such as Cicero, Verrius, or Aurelius.<sup>17</sup> But I prefer to pass over this.

Something that every student will find useful is to learn by heart from the same tablets on which he wrote the speech. He thus pursues his memory along a trail, as it were, and sees in his mind's eye not only the pages but almost the actual lines: and so, when he speaks, he is almost in the position of a person reading aloud. And if we come to an erasure or some addition and alteration, these are a sort of signal, the sight of which prevents us from going wrong. This system, while it bears some resemblance to the Art which I began by describing, is, if my experience has taught me anything, both quicker and more effective.

Learning by heart silently—this again is something which has been discussed—would be ideal, were it not that other thoughts often invade the unoccupied mind, which therefore needs to be kept on the alert by the voice, so that memory can be assisted by the double activity of speaking and listening. But the voice should be subdued, more of a mumble.

Learning by heart from someone else reading aloud is in part a slower process, because the eyes are quicker than the ears, and in part possibly easier, because, when we have heard a passage once or twice, we can test our memory instantly and compete with the reader. It is important in any case to test ourselves from time to time, because

35 temptemus, quia continua lectio et quae magis et quae minus haerent aequaliter transit. In experiendo teneasne et maior intentio est et nihil supervacui temporis perit quo etiam quae tenemus repeti solent: ita sola quae exciderunt retractantur, ut crebra iteratione firmentur, quamquam solent hoc ipso maxime haerere, quod exciderunt. Illud ediscendo scribendoque commune est, utrique plurimum conferre bonam valetudinem, digestum cibum, animum cogitationibus aliis liberum.

36 Verum et in iis quae scripsimus complectendis multum valent et in iis quae cogitamus continendis prope solae, excepta quae potentissima est exercitatione, divisio et compositio. Nam qui recte diviserit, numquam poterit in  
37 rerum ordine errare: certa sunt enim non solum in digerendis quaestionibus sed etiam in exequendis, si modo recte dicimus, prima ac secunda et deinceps, cohaeretque omnis rerum copulatio, ut ei nihil neque subtrahi sine manifesto intellectu neque inseri possit. An vero Scaevola in  
38 lusu duodecim scriptorum, cum prior calculum promississet essetque victus, dum rus tendit repetito totius certaminis ordine, quo dato errasset recordatus, rediit ad eum quocum luserat, isque ita factum esse confessus est: minus idem ordo valebit in oratione, praesertim totus nostro arbitrio constitutus, cum tantum ille valeat alternus?

<sup>18</sup> A game with dice and pieces to be moved, at which Scaevola was adept (Cicero, *De oratore* 1.217). See R. G. Austin, *Greece and Rome* 4 (1934) 24–34, 76–82; *RE* XIII. 1979–1985; R. P. M. Green, *Works of Ausonius* (1991) 332 (on *Professores* 1.25).

continuous reading passes at the same speed over passages which stick in the mind and those which do not. In testing whether you retain something, you employ greater concentration without wasting the extra time usually spent on going over also what is already known. On this method, only the forgotten parts are revised, with a view to fixing them by frequent repetition—though the mere fact that we forgot them often makes them stick particularly well. Learning by heart and writing have in common that both are greatly assisted by good health, good digestion, and a mind free of other distractions.

But it is Division and Composition which are important factors in memorizing what we have written, and almost uniquely important factors (apart of course from practice, which is the most potent of all) in helping to retain what we compose mentally. The man who has got his Division right will never be able to make mistakes in the order of his ideas. This is because what comes first, second, and so on, not only in the original layout of the Questions but in their development, provides fixed points (if, of course, our speech follows the straightforward order), and the entire structure thus hangs together so that nothing can be removed or inserted without this becoming obvious. Scaevola, who had been playing Twelve Rows,<sup>18</sup> and had been beaten despite having made the first move, went over the whole course of the game on his way to his country estate, remembered where he had gone wrong, and returned to his opponent, who admitted that that was what had happened! How then can order be any less important in a speech, where it is wholly determined by our own decision, when it is so important in a game where you only make one decision in two?

- 39 Etiam quae bene composita erunt memoriam serie sua ducent: nam sicut facilius versus ediscimus quam prorsam orationem, ita prorsae vincta quam dissoluta. Sic contingit ut etiam quae ex tempore videbantur effusa ad verbum repetita reddantur. Quod meae quoque memoriae mediocritatem sequebatur, si quando interventus aliquorum qui hunc honorem mererentur iterare declamationis partem coegisset. Nec est mendacio locus, salvis qui interfuerunt.
- 40 Si quis tamen unam maximamque a me artem memoriae quaerat, exercitatio est et labor: multa ediscere, multa cogitare, et si fieri potest cotidie, potentissimum est: nihil aequae vel augetur cura vel negligentia intercidit.
- 41 Quare et pueri statim, ut praecepi, quam plurima ediscant, et quaecumque aetas operam iuvandae studio memoriae dabit devoret initio taedium illud et scripta et lecta saepius revolvendi et quasi eundem cibum remandendi. Quod ipsum hoc fieri potest levius si pauca primum et quae odium non adferant coeperimus ediscere, tum cotidie adicere singulos versus, quorum accessio labori sensum incrementi non adferat, in summam ad infinitum usque perveniat, et poetica prius, tum oratorum, novissime etiam solutiora numeris et magis ab usu dicendi remota, qualia sunt iuris
- 42 consultorum. Difficiliora enim debent esse quae exercent

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<sup>19</sup> 1.1.36, 2.7.1.

Furthermore, good Composition will guide Memory by means of its own patterns. As it is easier to learn verse by heart than prose, so it is easier to learn rhythmical prose than non-rhythmical. This has made it possible even for passages which seemed to be the outpourings of improvisation to be repeated verbatim. Even my own limited powers of memory could achieve this, if I was ever forced to repeat part of a declamation by the late arrival of persons who had a claim to this courtesy. (There is no room for me to lie about this, because some of those who were present are still living.)

However, if I am asked what is the one great art of Memory, the answer is "practice and effort": the most important thing is to learn a lot by heart and think a lot out without writing, if possible every day. No other faculty is so much developed by practice or so much impaired by neglect. And so not only should children (as I recommended)<sup>19</sup> learn as much as possible by heart from the beginning, but students of any age who are concerned to improve their memory by study should be willing to swallow the initially wearisome business of repeating over and over again what they have written or read, and as it were chewing over the same old food. This can be less burdensome if we start by learning a few things at a time, those which do not bore us, and then put the amount up by a line a day, an addition which will not produce any sense of increased work, but will ultimately lead to powers of memory that know no limits. Poetry should be learned first, then oratory, and finally passages which are without rhythmical structure and more remote from oratorical speech, such as the prose of the lawyers. The tasks set for exercise need to be more difficult, so as to make the final object of the exer-

quo sit levius ipsum illud in quod exercent, ut athletae ponderibus plumbeis adsuefaciunt manus, quibus vacuis et nudis in certamine utendum est.

Non omittam etiam, quod cotidianis experimentis deprenditur, minime fidelem esse paulo tardioribus ingeniis recentem memoriam.

43 Mirum dictu est, nec in promptu ratio, quantum nox interposita adferat firmitatis, sive requiescit labor ille, cuius sibi ipsa fatigatio obstabat, sive maturatur atque concoquitur, quae firmissima eius pars est, recordatio; quae statim referri non poterant, contexuntur postera die, confirmatque memoriam idem illud tempus quod esse in causa solet oblivionis. Etiam illa praevelox fere cito effluit, et, velut praesenti officio functa nihil in posterum debeat, tamquam dimissa discedit. Nec est mirum magis haerere animo quae diutius adfixa sint.

44 Ex hac ingeniorum diversitate nata dubitatio est, ad verbum sit ediscendum dicturis, an vim modo rerum atque ordinem complecti satis sit: de quo sine dubio non potest  
45 in universum pronuntiari. Nam si memoria suffragatur, tempus non defuit,<sup>14</sup> nulla me velim syllaba effugiat (alioqui etiam scribere sit supervacuum): idque praecipue a pueris optinendum atque in hanc consuetudinem memoria exercitatione redigenda, ne nobis discamus ignoscere. Ideoque et admoneri et ad libellum respicere vitiosum,

<sup>14</sup> deficit or defuerit M.W.

<sup>20</sup> Weights (*ἀλτήρες*, lit. "jumpers") were used both to help jumping and more generally in exercises to strengthen arms and hands; Philostratus, *Gymnasticus* 55.

cise easier—on the same principle that athletes accustom their hands to leaden weights, though they will be bare and empty when they come to use them in the actual contest.<sup>20</sup>

I must not omit the fact, revealed by our daily experience, that slower minds have a less reliable memory for recent events.

It is amazing to see—and there is no ready explanation for this—how a single intervening night can firm up the memory, either because the actual effort of remembering, the fatigue of which was self-defeating, is now removed, or because recollection (which is the most enduring part of memory) matures and ripens. Anyway, things which could not at first be recalled fall into place the following day, and the hours which are generally responsible for our forgetting in this case strengthen memory. Again, your very quick memory soon melts away; present duty done, as it were, and with no future obligations, it takes its leave and is off. It is not surprising, of course, that things which took longer to fix themselves in the mind have more chance of sticking.

This diversity of natural ability has given rise to a doubt whether, before making a speech, one should learn it by heart word for word, or whether it is enough simply to grasp the essentials of the facts and their order. Of course, no universal rule can be laid down. If Memory supports me, and time has not been lacking, I should prefer not to let a single syllable escape me (on any other view, writing would be superfluous too). This accuracy must particularly be insisted on from childhood, and the memory disciplined then by exercise to get accustomed to it, so that we do not learn to find excuses for ourselves. This is why to be prompted or to look at the book is a fault, because it autho-

46 quod libertatem neglegentiae facit; nec quisquam se parum tenere iudicat quod ne sibi excidat non timet. Inde interruptus actionis impetus et resistens ac salebrosa oratio: et qui dicit ediscenti similis etiam omnem bene scriptorum gratiam perdit, vel hoc ipso quod scripsisse se confitetur.

47 Memoria autem facit etiam prompti ingeni famam, ut illa quae dicimus non domo attulisse sed ibi protinus sumpsisse videamur, quod et oratori et ipsi causae plurimum confert: nam et magis miratur et minus timet iudex quae non putat adversus se praeparata.

Idque in actionibus inter praecipua servandum est, ut quaedam etiam quae optime vinximus velut soluta enuntiemus, et cogitantibus nonnumquam et dubitantibus similes quaerere videamur quae attulimus.

48 Ergo quid sit optimum neminem fugit. Si vero aut memoria natura durior erit aut non suffragabitur tempus, etiam inutile erit ad omnia se verba alligare, cum oblivio unius eorum cuiuslibet aut deformem haesitationem aut etiam silentium inducat,<sup>15</sup> tutiusque multo comprehensis animo rebus ipsis libertatem sibi eloquendi relinquere.

49 Nam et invitus perdit quisque id quod elegerat verbum, nec facile reponit aliud dum id quod scripserat quaerit. Sed ne hoc quidem infirmae memoriae remedium est nisi in iis qui sibi facultatem aliquam dicendi ex tempore paraverunt. Quod si cui utrumque defuerit, huic omittere omnino totum actionum laborem, ac si quid in litteris valet ad

<sup>15</sup> *recc.*: indicat B

rizes carelessness; everyone thinks he has mastered something thoroughly if he has no fear of forgetting it. The consequence of these bad habits is an interruption in the swing of the delivery, and a halting and jerky style. A man who speaks as though he has learnt his speech by heart loses also all the charm of good writing, because he confesses by his manner that he has written it.

On the other hand, Memory also gives a reputation for quickness of wit, so that we are believed to have made the speech up on the spot, instead of bringing it ready made from home; and this impression is very valuable both to the orator and to the Cause, because the judge admires more, and fears less, things which he does not suspect of having been prepared in advance to outwit him.

Another very important point to observe in pleadings is to deliver even some of our best rhythmical passages as though they were non-rhythmical, and sometimes to give the impression of searching for phrases which in fact we had ready, as though we were thinking things out and hesitating.

So everyone can see what the ideal is. If however your memory is naturally dull, or if time is not available, it will be useless to tie yourself down to every word, since forgetting just one word will bring on shameful hesitation or even reduce you to silence. It is much safer to get a good grasp of the bare facts and then leave yourself freedom in expressing them. Everyone is reluctant to waste a word he had chosen, and finds it difficult to put another in its place while he is hunting for what he had written. Yet even this remedy for a weak memory is available only to people who have acquired some facility for extempore speaking. For anyone who lacks both of these powers, my advice will be

scribendum potius suadebo convertere: sed haec rara infelicitas erit.

- 50 Ceterum quantum natura studioque valeat memoria vel Themistocles testis, quem unum intra annum optime locutum esse Persice constat, vel Mithridates, cui duas et viginti linguas, quot nationibus imperabat, traditur notas fuisse, vel Crassus ille dives, qui cum Asiae praeesset quinque Graeci sermonis differentias sic tenuit ut qua quisque apud eum lingua postulasset eadem ius sibi redditum ferret, vel Cyrus, quem omnium militum tenuisse creditum
- 51 est nomina: quin semel auditos quamlibet multos versus protinus dicitur reddidisse Theodectes. Dicebantur etiam nunc esse qui facerent, sed mihi numquam ut ipse interesset contigit: habenda tamen fides est vel in hoc, ut qui crediderit et speret.

3

- 1 Pronuntiatio a plerisque actio dicitur, sed prius nomen a voce, sequens a gestu videtur accipere. Namque actionem Cicero alias 'quasi sermonem,' alias 'eloquentiam quandam corporis' dicit. Idem tamen duas eius partis facit,

<sup>21</sup> See Thucydides 1.138.1; Nepos, *Themistocles* 2.10; Plutarch, *Themistocles* 29.5; Valerius Maximus 8.7 ext. 15. These accounts vary a good deal.

<sup>22</sup> Compare, e.g., Aulus Gellius 17.17, Valerius Maximus 8.7 ext. 16. Cleopatra is also said to have needed no interpreters (Plutarch, *Antony* 27.3-4). It is interesting that Q. regards these linguistic achievements as a function of memory.

<sup>23</sup> Compare Valerius Maximus 8.7.6. The five dialects will be Attic, Ionic, Doric, Aeolic, and the "common dialect" (κοινή).

to give up pleading altogether, and, if he has any literary talent, turn it to writing. But this poverty of talent will be uncommon.

How much aptitude and application can do for memory is proved by Themistocles, who is known to have spoken excellent Persian within one year;<sup>21</sup> by Mithridates<sup>22</sup> who is said to have known twenty-two languages, as many as the nations over whom he ruled; by Crassus the Rich, who, as governor of Asia, had such mastery of the five dialects of Greek that he would give judgement in whatever language the case had been put forward,<sup>23</sup> and by Cyrus, who is believed to have known the names of all his soldiers.<sup>24</sup> Theodectes<sup>25</sup> too is said to have repeated off the cuff any number of verses which he had heard once. There were said to be people in our own time who could do this, but I never had the good fortune to witness it. We ought to believe it, however, simply because believing it gives us hope.

CHAPTER 3

*Delivery*

*Pronuntiatio* is called *actio* by many people. It seems to have acquired the first name from its voice-element, the second from its element of gesture. Cicero<sup>1</sup> in one passage calls *actio* a "sort of language," and in another "a kind of el-

<sup>24</sup> Valerius Maximus 8.7 ext. 16. Xenophon's Cyrus also makes a point of addressing subordinates by name: e.g. *Cyropaedia* 2.2.28, 4.1.3. <sup>25</sup> See on 2.15.10, and compare Cicero, *Tusculanae Disputationes* 1.59. Theodectes may well have been an innovator in *memoria technica*: Blum (1969) 88-91.

<sup>1</sup> *De oratore* 3.222, *Orator* 55.