

## ROMAN POETRY AND RHETORIC:

### A REMINDER OF THE AFFINITY BETWEEN THE TWO ARTS

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What especially delights me is a rhetorical poem and a poetical oration, in which you can see the poetry in the prose and the rhetorical expression in the poetry.

Erasmus (1513)<sup>1</sup>

This sentiment of the Dutch scholar surely would have struck a responsive chord with Roman audiences of the late republican and early imperial periods. As was the case during the Renaissance, the development and practice of poetry during these periods were closely aligned with rhetoric and oratory. Yet the tendency among some modern scholars - even recent critics like Williams (1978:266ff.) and Ogilvie (1980:168ff.) - has been to regard rhetoric as a form antithetical to the creation of pure poetry and to view rhetorical influence upon Roman (especially postclassical) poetry as destructive. This critical attitude would have been alien to the sensibilities of Romans, since they often asserted the interdependency and virtual identity of poetry and rhetoric. A general reminder of the affinity between the two arts seems warranted, given the lingering prejudice against rhetoric affecting recent criticism of Roman poetry.

Poetry and rhetoric were judged to have played an important civilising and civic role in classical antiquity (cf. Hor. *Ars. P.* 391-407, Cic. *De Inv.* 1.2.2-4, *Arch.* 6.13f.), and therefore both were generally accorded great prestige and respectability (cf. Cic. *Arch.* 6.12-7.15). That rhetorical study had established itself as the cornerstone of Roman education by the time of Cicero is manifest. Poetry had always been an important part of the Roman system of grammatical and rhetorical education, and the orator often turned to the poets for examples of style and content in his pursuit of eloquence. The importance assumed by poetry in the study of rhetoric is in part a natural consequence and reflexion of the close relationship that is bound to exist between two creative forms of linguistic expression intended for a large popular audience (cf. Quint. *Inst.* 10.2.22). *Rhetorica ad Herennium's* use of examples from Roman literature shows that its author was aware of the fundamental interrelationship of rhetoric and poetry, a connexion that would become even more evident in the 1st century AD.

In the tenth book of his *Institutio Oratoria*, Quintilian discusses the importance of reading as a means of acquiring a command of the Latin language (10.1-47). He describes a select course of reading best adapted to this end (10.47-131), including the poets and orators. There was much that the orator could gain from reading the poets. Quintilian and Cicero maintain that the reading of old Latin poets is valuable for the enrichment of the orator's *actio* ("delivery"), *elocutio* ("style") and *dictio* ("diction") (*Inst.* 1.11.12, Cic. *De Or.* 3.58.217 [*actio*]; *Inst.* 1.8.8f., 10.1.65, Cic. *De Or.* 3.10.39 [*elocutio* and *dictio*]); the former argues that while the style of the tragedians contains much *grauitas*, that of the comedians is full of *elegantia* (*Inst.* 1.8.8f.; cf. 8 praef. 25, Sen. *Ep.* 114.13). Quintilian felt that the orator could benefit particularly from studying the way in which the poet provided inspiration for subject matter and sublimity of language, aroused emotion in his audience, and treated character (*Inst.* 10.1.27). He would have been the first to claim that the orator's first obligation was to logic and rationality, but realised that his ability to appeal to the emotions was equally important;

<sup>1</sup> Letter to A. Ammonius, 21 December 1513. In Vickers 1968:289.

for this he knew that the study of poetry was invaluable (cf. Cic. *De Or.* 2.46.191-194). It was just as important for the orator to experience the emotions and feelings he wished to communicate to his audience as it was for the poet (cf. Hor. *Ars. P.* 101-103, Cic. *De Or.* 2.45.189). The need for the orator to borrow from the store of poetic materials and techniques in the creation of certain effects in his speeches emphasises the dependency of rhetoric upon poetry. Poetry was also valuable as a means of relaxation for the orator. While Pliny recommends the writing of poetry for entertainment (*Ep.* 7.9.9-14), Quintilian iterates Archias' statement in Cicero's *Pro Archia* that reading poetry helps make the daily grind of the orator more bearable for the relaxation it affords (*Inst.* 10.1.27, Cic. *Arch.* 6.12; cf. *Inst.* 1.1.36, Petron. *Sat.* 118).

In Tacitus' *Dialogus de Oratoribus* Curiatius Maternus asserts that poetry was *eloquentiae primordia* ("the cradle of eloquence", 12.2); this was especially so in regard to rhetoric, for Homer was the pre-eminent source of all oratorical and writing skills, affording a model and inspiration for every department of eloquence (*Inst.* 10.1.46-52). Quintilian tells us that the two major areas of study in the grammar school evolved around *recte loquendi scientia* ("the skill of speaking correctly") and *poetarum enarratio* ("the interpretation of poets") (*Inst.* 1.4.2, 1.9.1; cf. 1.4-9 passim, esp. 1.8.13-21, Suet. *Gram.* 4, Cic. *Div.* 1.51.116); *poetarum recitatio* ("the recitation of poets") no doubt also served as a useful tool, particularly in cultivating *memoria*. Suetonius reports that it was the *grammaticus* Quintus Caecilius Epirota, correspondent of Cicero, who first began to cite Vergil and other contemporary Roman poets (*Gram.* 16), adding to the list of Greek poets such as Euripides and Menander whose works were used as exemplary models in the schools (cf. Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.67-70, Dio Chrys. *Or.* 18.7). Quintilian, in fact, was especially praiseworthy of Menander as a poet to be read by the orator *in statu pupillari* ("while a pupil"): *Menander, qui uel unus, meo quidem iudicio, diligenter lectus ad cuncta, quae praecipimus, effingenda sufficiat; ita omnem uitae imaginem expressit, tanta in eo inueniendi copia et eloquendi facultas, ita est omnibus rebus, personis, affectibus accommodatus* ("The close reading of Menander alone in my view would suffice to develop all those excellences to which I have made reference in my work: so well does he express every representation of life; so great is his means of invention and power of expression; so well does he accommodate himself to every situation, character and feeling", *Inst.* 10.1.69f.).

While Homer had always been read in the schools as *poeta oratorque eloquentissimus* ("the supremely eloquent poet and orator"), he was joined by Vergil (Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.86; cf. Tac. *Dial.* 12.5) and to a lesser extent Terence (cf. Cic. *De Inv.* 1.19.27, 1.23.33, *De Or.* 2.80.326-328). According to Servius, rhetoricians such as Calvus and Titianus selected and modelled all their themes for their declamations from the works of Vergil (*In Verg. Aen.* 10.18). The works of other poets such as Horace (cf. Juv. *Sat.* 7.225-227, Tac. *Dial.* 20.5f., Quint. *Inst.* 1.8.6, 10.1.94-96), Ovid (cf. Sen. *Controv.* 3.7, 9.5.17, 10.4.25), Lucan (cf. Suet. *Luc.*, Tac. *Dial.* 20.5f., Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.90) and Statius (cf. *Theb.* 12.815) became standard reading in the grammar schools of their own time. Quotations from Ennius, Accius, Pacuvius, Lucilius, Terence and Caecilius found their way in to the works of orators like Cicero and Asinius (Quint. *Inst.* 1.8.11).

Cicero quotes frequently in his rhetorical treatises from poets such as Pacuvius and Ennius on matters of style and invention (e.g. *De Or.* 1.44.199, 3.47.183). However, he generally avoids poetic citations in his speeches (except during the period just after he composed *De Oratore*), and certainly never quotes Greek poets. The reason is not hard to imagine. Romans were quick to borrow from the Greeks, but notoriously slow in acknowledging their debt. The situation would hardly have been different in the courts, where aristocratic Romans could easily be affronted by such a reference, or worse yet, not understand it. To put it simply, Cicero just could not afford to risk alienating the court by giving the impression that he was parading his learning before them. But for the declaimer in the public theatre the matter was

quite different, for the quotation of verse from the poets was a means of meeting the public demand for stylistic adornment. The indifferent citation of illustrative *exempla* from poetry and oratory by rhetoricians and the study of the poets in the new schools of rhetoric contributed to the confluence in declamatory style of rhetoric and poetry.

The elder Seneca and Quintilian cite poetic *exempla* frequently in their rhetorical writings; their favourite poet is Vergil (e.g. *Aen.* 8.26ff. [Sen. *Controv.* 7.1.27], *Georg.* 1.427ff. [Sen. *Suas.* 3.4f.], *Aen.* 1.335 [Quint. *Inst.* 11.3.70], *Aen.* 3.56 [Inst. 9.2.10], *Georg.* 4 [Quint. *Decl.* 13]). According to Quintilian, the orator should have a ready supply of new and old *exempla* from poetry and history; those from the great poets bear merit either for their antiquity (particularly Homer) or the lessons they teach the world (*Inst.* 12.5.2). Quintilian predicates that the quotation of poets by the orator in the court or assembly could serve to show the measure of the orator's learning, provide relief from the harshness of judicial eloquence, help the orator's case by adducing evidence from other sources (*Inst.* 1.8.11f.), and generally aid in making a favourable impression on the judges (4.1.48f.). He was especially cognizant of the importance of humour in oratory and devotes much space to its discussion in the sixth book in his *Institutio Oratoria* (6.3.78-6.3.112), citing many poetic *exempla* useful for winning the audience over. Quintilian and the author of *Rhetorica ad Herennium* mention poetic citation as one of many devices for provoking laughter from a broad audience (*Inst.* 4.1.48f., *Rhet. Her.* 1.6.10). So the value of such quotations was essentially twofold: to sway the audience toward a particular point of view by the authority of their weight and to move it spontaneously by the pleasant effect produced.<sup>2</sup> The quotation of verse was used not only by orators and poets as *exempla eloquentia* but *exempla horribilia* (e.g. *Rhet. Her.* 1.9.14, 2.22.34f., Sen. *Controv.* 3.7, 9.5.17, 10.4.25, *Suas.* 3.4.7). Quintilian mentions that Ovid even wrote a book against poetasters consisting of epigrams from the poet Macer. The orator notes that the lines of poets could be quoted fully or slightly changed; the poet could also compose verses resembling original lines (*Inst.* 6.3.96f.). He cites an example of an altered line from a lost work designed to effect humour and wit. A senator, who previously had always been looked upon as a fool, inherited an estate and not much later was asked to speak on a motion, *hereditas est, quam uocant sapientiam* ("What men call wisdom is inheritance"), where *hereditas* ("inheritance") replaces the original *facilitas* ("faculty").

Rhetoric to the Romans meant no less than the system of presenting ideas and facts in a lucid, convincing and polished manner to produce the desired effect of pleasing or persuading, judging by the definitions of Quintilian and Cicero.<sup>3</sup> Quintilian's definition of rhetoric is designed to encompass rhetoric and poetry, for *bene dicendi scientia* ("the skill of speaking well", *Inst.* 11.1.11) is equally important in both arts; if poetry is regarded as the art which can marshal its words with the greatest effect and the highest degree of expressiveness, then this definition is even more important to the poet than to the rhetorician, since the practitioner of poetry becomes potentially the best kind of rhetorician. While Cicero maintains that the primary function of oratory is to persuade (*De Inv.* 1.5.6; cf. *De Or.* 1.31.138; contra Quint.

<sup>2</sup> For a general discussion of humour in classical rhetoric, see Grant (1924).

<sup>3</sup> The following are but a small sample of the many discussions by classicists on the use of the word rhetoric: Lewis (1957:134) notes the damage done to postclassical literature by the frequent use of the label; Kenney (1963:706) defines rhetoric as "the systematic employment of linguistic resources to produce a desired effect on a hearer or reader"; and Vessey (1982:497) asserts that rhetoric "is nothing other than the art of effective speaking and writing"; see also Fränkel (1945:167-169, n.3), who presents a detailed discussion of the term, and Mendell (1967:10-14). Rhetoric in the ancient sense refers to the rules and techniques of composition and is not per se a derogatory term; cf. Vessey (1982:497), who observes that the Greeks and Romans "would have found it hard to understand a critical terminology that equates the rhetorical with the artificial and insincere". As Henry and Walker (1966:224) rightly point out, to "call a work of the Imperial period 'rhetorical' is to say nothing of its merit or individual quality".

*Inst.* 11.1.11), the suasorial element of poetry is evident in its various forms of didactic, moralising and patriotic verse (cf. *Arch.* 6.12-7.15) and genres of epic and lyric. The epideictic function of poetry, as shown, for example, in the occasional poems of Statius, also overlaps with that of oratory. From these points it is apparent that poetry and rhetoric possess many of the same artistic and functional qualities. Cicero, following Marcus Antonius, describes *eloquens uir* ("the eloquent man") as *is qui in foro causisque ciuilibus ita dicet, ut probet, ut delectet, ut flectat* ("one who will speak in court and in civil cases so as to prove, to please, to delight, to influence", *Orat.* 21.69). In his other rhetorical treatises the aim of rhetoric is threefold: *docere* ("to instruct"), *delectare* ("to delight") and *mouere* ("to delight"). Pithily stated in *Brutus* (49.185, 80.276) and *De Oratore* (2.27.115), these aims are explained in *De Optimo Genere Oratorum*: *optimus est enim orator qui dicendo animos audientium et docet et delectat et permouet. docere debitum est, delectare honorarium, permouere necessarium* ["For the supreme orator is one who instructs, delights and moves the minds of his audience with his speech. The orator is under obligation to instruct; to delight is done out of regard for the audience; to move is indispensable", 1.3f.]. These statements could apply equally to oratory and poetry alike, as could Horace's assertion that poets strive *aut prodesse ... aut delectare ... / aut simul et iucunda et idonea dicere uitae* ("either to do good ... or to delight ... or to speak words at once both pleasant and appropriate to life", *Ars P.* 333f.; cf. 99-119, 341-346). In fact Horace's treatment of poetry in the *Ars Poetica* is given in terms reminiscent of the various discussions of rhetoric, just as Quintilian's discussion of poetry in the tenth book of the *Institutio Oratoria* is concerned with those qualities he deems are rhetorical. The concern with principles of rhetoric in these discussions of poetry suggests that each art possesses resources of language common to the other, the main difference being in their application.

In the view of Cicero, native genius, intense application and technical skill are indispensable to the orator, just as Horace argues these qualities are necessary to the poet (*Ars P.* 408-411). Cicero maintains that oratory and poetry are closely related in more important ways: *est enim finitimus oratori poeta, numeris astrictior paulo, uerborum autem licentia liberior, multis uero ornandi generibus socius, ac paene par* ("In truth the poet is closely related to the orator: a little more restricted in regard to measure, but with greater licence in use of words; and he is his ally - and almost his counterpart - in all manner of embellishment", *De Or.* 1.16.70; cf. 3.7.27: [*poetis*] *est proxima cognatio cum oratoribus* ["Poets are the most closely related to orators"].). Whereas Cicero is suggesting that poetry and oratory differ essentially in their manipulation and organisation of their material and language, the selection and arrangement of words and *sententiae* appropriate to the subject matter at hand and the successful interrelation of the various sections of the poem or speech in fact were essential to the practice of both arts (cf. *De Or.* 3.7.27, 3.31.125, *Orat.* 20.68, 59.201, *Hor. Ars P.* 309-311); furthermore, the supply of words available to the orator was based mainly on the vocabulary of the poet, as were the rhythmical and metrical qualities of oratorical prose (cf. *Cic. Orat.* 19.66, 55.183, 56.188). In the matter of characterisation it was necessary for both the poet and orator to represent his characters in a realistic manner consistent with the known facts, although it was permissible to enhance some characteristics and play down others in order to portray individuals in a particular light appropriate to the purpose at hand. Well-regulated language, serious subject matter, and the realistic presentation of character were desirable elements in the formation of poetic and oratorical brilliance. It was difficult to separate poetry and oratory on the basis of differences in style (e.g. plain, grandiose), subject matter (e.g. commonplace, bizarre) and characterisation (e.g. dynamic, static), since the effective practice of each art demanded varied treatment in these areas. Ancient commentators occasionally warn against (what they perceive to be) the immoderate tendencies of Ovid in rhetoric and poetry (e.g. *Sen. Controv.* 9.5.17, *Inst.* 10.1.98), but they generally agree with Ovid's view of the close working relationship between the two arts (*Pont.* 2.5.59-72). Not only are they derived from the same sources (65f.), but as poetry receives vigour from the eloquence of oratory, so poetry imparts brilliance to rhetorical diction (cf. 69f.).

As rhetorical instruction was the basis of education for the orator and poet, the boundaries between rhetoric and poetry could never be defined clearly. That is not to say that the orator or poet professed that he was incognizant of such a distinction in the first instance (cf. *Pont.* 2.5.60 where Ovid remarks that each art follows the conventions of its own pursuit), but as declamation and recitation grew in popularity and the practice of rhetoric in the public arena increasingly became its *raison d'être*, the division between the two arts narrowed (cf. Tac. *Dial.* 19.5 where Aper observes that the traditional divisions between orators, rhetoricians and philosophers had broken down: *peruulgatis iam omnibus*, "now that everything has become public domain"). *Eloquentia* became a general term of excellence applied to poetry and rhetoric and based on the same materials, principles and techniques taught in the schools. Rhetorical percepts and terminology were freely drawn upon from the handbooks by both orators and poets. Ovid, for instance, freely acknowledges his debt to rhetoric in the composition of his verse (*meis numera tua dat facundia neruos*, "Your eloquence gives strength to my measures", *Pont.* 2.5.69).

Like the rhetoricians in the late republic (e.g. *Rhet. Her.* 1.10.17, Cic. *De Inv.* 1.49.92), the imperial declaimers used the mythical topics of the poets for their *inuentio* (Sen. *Suas.* 3, Quint. *Inst.* 2.10.5, 3.8.53, Suet. *Rhet.* 25) and looked to the poets for cultivating rhythm in their declamations. The paraphrase of poetry into prose in fact was one of the *progymnasmata* in the grammar schools (Quint. *Inst.* 1.9.2). Quintilian argues that *sublimis spiritus* ("the lofty spirit") of verse is valuable for elevating the orator's style, provided that *ipsis sententiis adiicere licet oratorium robur et ommissa supplere, effusa substringere* ("one can add the vigour of oratory to the thoughts of the poet, make complete his omissions, and curb his diffuseness", *Inst.* 10.5.4f.). But Quintilian's implicit admonition that the use of *uerba poetica libertate audaciora* ("poetic language with its freer licence", 10.5.4) can render unnatural the effect of prose went unheeded by many declaimers. Some presentations with their rhythmic quality produced an effect not traditionally suited for the courtroom or assembly hall (cf. *Dial.* 20.3, 34.1-6, Petron. *Sat.* 2, 4f.), but entirely in accordance with the expectation of the audience in a hall of declamation (cf. Petron. *Sat.* 3, Pers. *Sat.* 1.83-87). The Aristotelian conception of poetics had involved the presentation of ideas in an imaginative and emotional manner. There were a number of factors that afforded the audience a spectacle at times not greatly different from what it would have expected at a poetry reading: the orator's use of poetic *color*, his adornment in the *declamationes* with the verses of Horace, Vergil and Lucan (cf. Tac. *Dial.* 20.5f.), the fantastic and romantic themes of some of the exercises, their fictitious or antiquated laws, the striving for novel and imaginative effects, the frequent use of figures of speech such as the *sententia* and hyperbole, and a concomitant decrease in emphasis placed on the importance of logic in argument.

During the latter half of the 1st century AD the laetificant function of oratory and poetry assumed considerable importance. In the *Dialogus* Aper makes reference to the orator's purpose of affording pleasure to his listeners (18-23 *passim*), and he mentions the qualities required of successful oratory as *nitor* ("brilliance", e.g. 20.2, 21.9), *decor* ("grace", e.g. 20.5, 23.6), *cultus* ("refinement", e.g. 20.2, 20.5), *pulchritudo* ("beauty", e.g. 20.3; cf. 21.8) and *laetitia* ("richness", e.g. 20.3, 21.9). These were the same qualities required of the successful *recitatio*. When Quintilian warns against the repercussions of rhetorical influence on poetic composition and of poetry upon the writing of speeches (*Inst.* 10.2.21f.), he is objecting to (what he regards as) the injudicious use of one art form by the other that leads to poor style (8 *praef.* 25f., 10.2.21f., 12.10.73; cf. Petron. *Sat.* 1ff., Pers. *Sat.* 1 *passim*). Some of the qualities of poetry that Quintilian warns against in oratory are uncurbed diction and excessive use of figures; however, these elements were the means of pleasing the contemporary audience with a taste for the incredible and the ingenious rather than the credible and the ingenuous (cf. *Inst.* 10.1.28). And so the golden armour of the *declamatio* became potentially *imbellis* ("unwarlike") and *periculosus* ("perilous") to the orator even while it proved a positive delight to his listeners (cf. 10.1.30 for the metaphor of the orator's

armour). But Quintilian's tastes in matters of style and diction reflected those of the Ciceronian age rather than those of his own time, and in an age marked by passion for declamation, were often out of place with contemporary sensibilities. Since the degree of approbation that orators and poets received in the public theatres was contingent on the extent to which they emotionally aroused their listeners, the generation of emotion was requisite in their speeches and poetry readings (cf. *Pont.* 2.5.68 where Ovid acknowledges that both orator and poet need passion). The preoccupation of postclassical poets with emotional appeal was in part a natural consequence of the great interest in declamation that prevailed at the time. So eager was the orator to please the judges and his audience instead of merely convince them that his style of presentation and language employed increasingly assumed a poetic complexion. In Tacitus' *Dialogus* Valerius Messala asserts that this spectacle gave rise to the saying, *oratores nostri tenere dicere, histriones diserte saltare* ("Our orators speak enchantingly; our actors dance eloquently", 26.3).

The elder Seneca claims that the *rhetor* Asinius Pollio was the first to recite his writings in front of an audience (*Controv.* 4 praef. 2); if Seneca were right, this probably would not have taken place until sometime in the early 30's BC when Pollio retired from politics and devoted himself to literary pursuits. But recitation almost certainly became a popular pastime before this period (Dalzel 1955:20-28). Eventually the demand for recitations of poetry in the theatres rivalled the popularity of public declamations (cf. *Juv. Sat.* 7.36-47, *Pliny Ep.* 7.9). The most obvious long-term effect of this practice was to promote the rhetorical elements of the poetry so that its reading resembled a declamation, especially in the profusion of epigrams and the soliciting of applause. Under the limitative conditions of the declamation hall reading, the poet could recite only a small portion of his composition and naturally would elaborate it on such a grand scale so that often it became, like the public declamation, an end in itself. Reflected in Polydamas' paired reference (in Persius' first *Satire*) to the composition of declamatory poetry and oratory (*scribimus inclusi, numeros ille, hic pede liber / grande aliquid*, "We shut ourselves up and compose something grand: one in verse, one in prose", 13) and Quintilian's belief that Lucan was a better model for orators than poets (*Inst.* 10.1.90), this interpenetration of poetry and rhetoric needed little more to become complete.

Despite the criticism of leading orators such as Quintilian and Fronto concerning the misapplication of rhetorical principles to poetic composition (e.g. *Inst.* 10.2.21f., *Ad Anton. de Orat.* 3, 5; cf. *Sen. Controv.* 3.7), the study of rhetoric continued to assume an increasing importance in the education of the poet during the late republic and early empire, although verse composition was by no means neglected in the schools. Neither poetry nor rhetoric could exclusively claim the qualities of eloquence,<sup>4</sup> because each had much to learn from and commend to the other. The practice of each art was heavily dependent on and informed the other, particularly as regards to subject matter and style. Just as the orator might be encouraged by his study of poetry to dabble in its composition and in the process could not fail to divorce himself from his background in rhetoric and declamation, so the poet could be expected to call upon all of his resources in his composition of verse; in so doing, the poet no doubt would find it equally difficult to escape the formative influences of his strict rhetorical training.

Poetry and rhetoric's symbiotic relationship during the late republican and early imperial periods not only resembled that which existed between Greek epideictic oratory and poetry during the First Sophistic but also anticipated the Second Sophistic that developed in the late 1st century AD. The failure of some modern scholars to appreciate the close link between the two arts occasionally has led to superficial judgements of Roman poets such as Vergil and Statius. Some schools of thought early this century tended toward an excessive rhetorical

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<sup>4</sup> For eloquence as a quality common to other domains, see Tac. *Dial* 10, Cic. *De Or.* 2.13.15, Quint. *Inst.* 10.1.1, 10.2.22, Plin. *Ep.* 5.8.

analysis of Vergil (Norden 1915; Billmeyer 1932), and Statius was described as an orator rather than a poet (Schanz 1913:536). Readers today might be less uneasy over the virtual merger of Roman poetry and rhetoric, but critical uncertainty persists. While Vergil's reputation remains unchallenged despite his acknowledged use of rhetoric, the standing of Statius among Roman poets has been defended recently by minimising the effects of rhetorical influence in his poetry (Newmyer 1979:44). Such confused and contradictory attitudes to the Roman poets tend to obscure the ancient conception of the affinity between poetry and rhetoric and reinforce the modern prejudice of their antitheticalness. In order for a more consistent and balanced view of the artistic qualities of Roman poets to emerge, any notion of rhetoric as an obtrusive force upon their poetry must be entirely cast aside.

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