

# THE VIRTUES OF THE ORATOR CATO

## GRAMMAR ASSUMED:

Comparison of Adjectives;

Declension of Comparatives; Ablative of Comparison

## WHEELOCK: CHAPTER 26

In this excerpt from the *Brutus* Cicero laments that the orators of his day show no interest in studying the "old-fashioned" works of Cato, a Roman orator from the preceding century, yet are eager to imitate the style of Greek orators from even earlier centuries.

Catōnem vērō quis nostrōrum ōrātōrum, quī nunc sunt, legit? aut quis eum nōvit? At quem virum, dī bonī! Mittō cīvem aut senātōrem aut imperātōrem; ōrātōrem enim hōc locō quaerimus; quis in laudandō est gravior illō? acerbior in vituperandō? in sententiis sapientior? in cōfirmātiōne subtilior? Omnēs ōrātōriae virtūtēs in clārissimīs ōrātiōnibus eius invenientur. Iam vērō quem flōrem aut quem lūcem ēloquentiae *Orīginēs* eius nōn habent?

Cūr igitur Lysiās et Hyperidēs amantur dum ignōrātur Catō? Antīquior est huius sermō et quaedam horridiōra verba. Itā enim tum loquēbantur. Sciō hunc ōrātōrem nōndum esse satis politum et aliquid perfectius quaerendum esse. Nihil enim est simul et inventum et perfectum. Sed ea in nostris īncītia est, quod hī ipsi quī in litteris Graecis antīquitāte dēlectantur, hanc in Catōne nē nōvērunt quidem. Hyperīdae volunt esse et Lysiāe; eōs laudō, sed cūr nōlunt Catōnēs (esse)?

—adapted from Cicero, *Brutus* 65–70

<sup>1</sup> et...et = "both...and" <sup>2</sup> translate as "to recognize"

<sup>3</sup> gen. of hic "they were speaking" in such a manner referring to Roman orators  
<sup>7</sup> "like Hyperides... like Lysias" "like Cato"

## VOCABULARY:

**Catō, -ōnis, m.:** famous Roman orator & statesman, lived 234–149 B.C.

**vērō (adverb):** in truth, indeed

**nōscō, -ere, nōvī, nōtus:** to become acquainted with; (in perfect tense) know

**quem virum:** accusative of exclamation

**mittō:** I omit, pass over, do not mention

**senātor, -tōris, m.:** senator

**in laudandō:** in praising (**laudandō** is a gerund)

**vituperō (1):** to blame, censure; **in vituperandō = in blaming (vituperandō** is a gerund) 5

**cōfirmātiō, -ōnis, f.:** a verifying of facts, an adducing of proofs

**subtilis, -e:** fine, thin, precise

**ōrātōrius, -a, -um:** oratorical

**ōrātiō, -ōnis, f.:** speech

**iam vērō:** furthermore

**flōs, flōris, m.:** flower, blossom

**Orīginēs:** *Origins*, title of a history of Rome written by Cato

**Lysiās (pl. = Lysiāe), Hyperidēs (pl. = Hyperīdae):** famous Athenian orators from the 5th & 4th centuries B.C., respectively

**ignōrō (1):** to ignore, not know, not acknowledge

**sermō, -ōnis, m.:** conversation, talk 10

**horridus, -a, -um:** shaggy, rough, unpolished

**ita (adverb):** in such a way, thus, so

**loquor, loquī, locūtus sum (deponent verb):** to speak (translate actively even though it is passive in form)

**nōndum (adverb):** not yet

**politus, -a, -um:** polished, refined

**simul (adverb):** at the same time

**nostris = nostris ōrātōribus**

**īncītia, -ae, f.:** ignorance

**quod:** the fact that (**quod** clause explains **ea ... īncītia**)

**antīquitās, -tātis, f.:** ancientness, primitive simplicity 15

**nē ... quidem:** not even

**volō, velle, voluī:** to want, wish

**nōlō, nōlle, nōluī:** to not want, not wish, refuse