

CICERO

Pro Archia Poeta Oratio

3rd edition



Teacher's Guide

by

Linda A. Fabrizio



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General Editor: Gaby Huebner

Contributing Editors: Aaron Baker, Laurie Haight Keenan, Bridget Dean,
Laurel Draper

Cover Design: Adam Phillip Velez

Cover Illustrations: This denarius, minted in Rome ca. 66 BCE by Q. Pomponius Musa, is one of a series of nine types, each depicting on its reverse one of the nine muses. Shown here is Calliope, the Muse of epic poetry, playing the lyre while resting it on a column. (Photograph courtesy of the American Numismatic Society); Background illustration of Modern-day Arpinum © 2006 Patricia Lynn Miller

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CONTENTS

Preface to the Third Edition	ix
Preface	xi
Large Size Text of the Oration	1
Translation of the Oration	21
Translation of Quintilian Text (Appendix III).	35
Sample Assessment Questions	39
Answers to Sample Assessment Questions.	83
Select Bibliography	151

EXORDIUM

(1–41)

1 Si quid est in me ingeni, iudices, quod sentio
quam sit exiguum, aut si qua exercitatio dicendi, in qua
me non infitior mediocriter esse versatum, aut si huiusce
rei ratio aliqua ab optimarum artium studiis ac disciplina
5 profecta, a qua ego nullum confiteor aetatis meae tempus
abhorruisse, earum rerum omnium vel in primis hic A. Li-
cinius fructum a me repetere prope suo iure debet. Nam
quoad longissime potest mens mea respicere spatium
praeteriti temporis et pueritiae memoriam recordari
10 ultimam, inde usque repetens hunc video mihi principem
et ad suscipiendam et ad ingrediendam rationem horum
studiorum exstitisse. Quod si haec vox huius hortatu
praeceptisque conformata non nullis aliquando saluti fuit,
a quo id accepimus quo ceteris opitulari et alios servare
15 possemus, huic profecto ipsi, quantum est situm in nobis,
et opem et salutem ferre debemus. 2 Ac ne quis a nobis hoc
ita dici forte miretur, quod alia quaedam in hoc facultas
sit ingeni neque haec dicendi ratio aut disciplina, ne nos
quidem huic uni studio penitus umquam dediti fuimus.
20 Etenim omnes artes quae ad humanitatem pertinent habent
quoddam commune vinculum et quasi cognatione qua-
dam inter se continentur. 3 Sed ne cui vestrum mirum esse
videatur, me in quaestione legitima et in iudicio publico,

cum res agatur apud praetorem populi Romani, lectissimum
25 virum, et apud severissimos iudices, tanto conventu hominum ac frequentia, hoc uti genere dicendi, quod non modo a consuetudine iudiciorum, verum etiam a forensi sermone abhorreat, quaeso a vobis ut in hac causa mihi detis hanc veniam accommodatam huic reo, vobis,
30 quemadmodum spero, non molestam, ut me pro summo poeta atque eruditissimo homine dicentem hoc concursu hominum litteratissimorum, hac vestra humanitate, hoc denique praetore exercente iudicium, patiamini de studiis humanitatis ac litterarum paulo loqui liberius, et in eius
35 modi persona quae propter otium ac studium minime in iudiciis periculisque tractata est uti prope novo quodam et inusitato genere dicendi. 4 Quod si mihi a vobis tribui concedique sentiam, perficiam profecto ut hunc A. Licinium non modo non segregandum, cum sit civis, a
404 numero civium verum etiam, si non esset, putetis asciscendum fuisse.

TRANSLATION OF THE ORATION

EXORDIUM

(1–41)

1 If there is anything of talent in me, jury, which I realize how slight it is, or if there is any practice of speaking, in which I do not deny that I have been moderately engaged, or if there is some strategy of this case before us derived from the pursuits and training of the best liberal arts, to which I confess that no time of my life has been adverse, here Aulus Licinius especially ought, by a right nearly his own, to seek in return from me a benefit of all these things. For as far as possible as my mind is able to look back at an interval of a previous time and is able to recall a memory of childhood, searching from that point on, I see that for me this man stood out as foremost for the purpose of undertaking and of embarking on a course of these studies. But if this voice (of mine), trained by the encouragement and teaching of this man, has been a source of safety for any, surely I ought, as much as is in my power, to bring both aid and safety to this very man from whom I have received that by which I can give help to some and to save others. 2 And lest anyone by chance wonder that this is being spoken in this way by me, because there is another certain skill of a natural talent in this man and not this system of or training in speaking, (let me mention that) not even I have ever been thoroughly devoted to this one pursuit. Indeed, all the liberal studies which relate to civilization have a certain common bond and are held together among themselves by, as it were, a certain kinship. 3 But lest it seem to be strange to any of you that, in a legal investigation and in a public trial, (since the matter is being handled in the presence of the praetor of the Roman people, a very well chosen man and before most serious jurors), in so great an assembly and crowd of men, I use this type of speaking which not only is averse to the practice of legal proceedings but also to a style of speaking connected with the Forum, I seek from all of you that in this trial you grant me this indulgence, appropriate for this defendant and, as I hope it is not bothersome for you, that you allow me, speaking on behalf of a very esteemed poet and most educated man in this assembly of very learned men, because of your culture, finally with this praetor presiding, to speak a little more freely