ABSTRACT

This dissertation describes and analyzes the cultural, historical, and religious context surrounding three Roman epideictic texts in an effort to make broader theoretical arguments about Roman rhetoric. Each of the three case studies concentrate upon a distinctly Roman form of discourse and this dissertation argues that the ceremonial and ritual traditions attendant to these genres reflect the unique cultural salience of these texts and reveal the ways in which Roman epideictic developed independently of the Greek tradition. An initial overview of classical rhetorical theory reveals that scholarly treatments of epideictic rhetoric tend to emphasize the role played by Greek epideictic texts and typically dismiss or ignore the Roman epideictic tradition. More importantly, when studies of Roman epideictic forms are undertaken, they most often assume that the Roman forms derived the bulk of their topical, structural, and stylistic elements from earlier Greek antecedents. In fact, a full appreciation for the Roman texts requires a consideration of their own political and cultural context. The first case study investigates an early Contio of Cicero and argues that the Contio’s religious principles enabled the primarily deliberative speech form to assume an epideictic form. The second case study analyzes Augustus’ monumental Res Gestae and argues that this text marked a shift in the discursive conduct of Rome following the institution of the Principate. This shift was accompanied by a stronger emphasis on the spaces and rituals that amplified the message of the rhetor. The final study considers a Post-Augustan epideictic speech, Pliny’s Actio Gratiarum, and argues that this text reveals both the attendant ceremonial conduct of discourse during the second Century (C.E.), revealing the new relationship between rhetoric and the sociopolitical planning as well as the general themes of guiding the design of public space. A concluding chapter argues that scholarship should place greater emphasis upon Roman epideictic texts and makes some preliminary arguments concerning the applicability of such an emphasis on the contemporary study of public discourse.

INDEX WORDS: epideictic, Roman Rhetoric, Contio, Res Gestae, Actio Gratiarum, Cicero, Pliny, Augustus
CEREMONIAL AND RELIGIOUS FUNCTIONS OF ROMAN EPIDEICTIC GENRES

by

MACEIO ILON LAUER

B.A., Oakland University, 1993
M.A. Indiana University, 1998

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By

MACEIO ILON LAUER

Major Professor: Thomas Lessl
Committee: Celeste Condit
            Ed Panetta
            Sarah Spence
            Thomas Conley

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
May 2007
DEDICATION

I dedicate this document to my wife Anne, whose enduring support allowed me to begin the process and to my son Henry, whose advent inspired me to complete it.
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Chapter One: Introduction

This dissertation contains a series of case studies that identify critical and distinguishing features of Roman ceremonial rhetoric in the late Republican and early Imperial periods. Such a project contributes to the study of classical rhetoric in two significant ways: (1) it identifies and elaborates Roman religious practices as a critical facet of Roman rhetoric and (2) its examination of Pre- and Post-Augustan texts and rhetorical artifacts highlights important cultural and historical features of epideictic rhetoric. Inquiry into the distinct setting of Roman epideictic corrects a critical flaw in the writing of rhetorical history--the assumption of rhetorical transparency and cultural uniformity between Greeks and Romans.

Problem Area

As revealed most clearly in the rhetorical events associated with the Roman Empire’s sacred spaces, epideictic practices coincided with a range of ceremonial activities. And given that the Roman laudation was often coordinated with a range of other corresponding ceremonial events, control over sacred space and ritual processes was a critical source of political power. An analysis of the spatial, temporal, and visual designs linking epideictic to civic life can clarify how coordination and planning augmented the force of rhetorical displays during festivals, ceremonies, and even public deliberations.

No single text or event can illustrate all of the dimensions of Rome’s ritually based rhetorical culture, but a collection of surviving rhetorical artifacts from the Pre- and Post-Augustan period
aid in rough approximations of its most salient features. Cicero’s (c. 106-42 B.C.E.) *Pro Lege Manilia*, an under-examined text suffused with elements of praise, signaled the pragmatic utility of using epideictic themes in an agonistic setting. This speech reveals Cicero’s understanding of epideictic’s practical uses and clarifies subsequent epideictic developments more clearly expressed in the rhetorical artifacts of the principate.

One notable text constructed in the early Imperial period is the *Res Gestae* of Augustus (63 B.C.E. – 13 C.E.), a monumental adaptation of epideictic techniques to an unprecedented political, cultural and rhetorical landscape. Augustus’ inscription discloses some of the connections linking epideictic rhetoric to Imperial political and religious ceremonies, and it signals the consolidation of religious power under the principate. In an effort to bolster the principate’s political agenda through religious ritual, the Augustan regime revived time-honored customs by “rediscovering” earlier ceremonies and by thematically framing imperial messages to maximize the effectiveness of the cultural knowledge created in these ceremonies. In addition to conveying an “official” interpretation of his principate and governing ideology, Augustus’ *Res Gestae* contains a record of officially formulated messages integrating political propaganda into ritual. The ceremonial emphasis in Augustus’ *Res Gestae* clarifies instances when subsequent Emperors—Trajan (53 C.E. – 117 C.E.) for instance—used civic and religious spaces to secure ritualized sources of power.

A final text, the *Actio Gratiarum* of Pliny (c. 62 C.E. – 115), generally known as the “Panegyric to the Emperor Trajan,” indicates that ceremonial rhetoric maintained its influence into the next century and highlights the use of space in creating and reinforcing the associations connecting ritualized activities to official Trajanic rhetoric. Rhetorically designed public spaces connected individuals’ civic ideologies to those of the state; Trajan’s architectural scheme
emphasized Augustan themes, blurring distinctions between civil, military, and religious space. Pliny’s *Actio* instantiated the religious features of imperial epideictic forms in which public displays of devotion conveyed and promulgated dominant political virtues.

Because rhetorical scholars studying epideictic texts from other eras might share some interest in the theoretical concerns of this project, namely, epideictic’s spatial, temporal, and ceremonial roles, this dissertation draws from the period’s important rhetorical artifacts but arrives at a set of generalizable theoretical conclusions. Roman rhetors faced unique rhetorical exigencies, but their rhetoric addressed a set of general themes that continue to influence rhetorical situations. To show that the conditions of Roman ceremonial events governed the production and reception of critical epideictic texts will require an elaboration of the rhetorical and cultural context surrounding epideictic occasions. These issues need to be examined in tandem even as a separate pair of prefatory explanations justifies the need for simultaneous coverage of these theoretical and historical issues.

**Justifying This Historical Inquiry**

This dissertation focuses on the indigenous specimens of rhetoric that also reflect the unique political, cultural, and religious context of Roman epideictic. As responses to the religious expectations governing Imperial rhetoric, these texts demonstrate different aspects of secular and religious authority in this period, and accordingly, a detailed study must also account for the rhetorical significance of religious practices. Epideictic scholarship revealing the coincidence of ceremonial and political forms expands the scholarly perspective on Roman rhetoric to account for the religious practices that influenced Roman public discourse.

Any investigation of the religious components of Roman epideictic must address a set of similar concerns faced by scholars working in other areas of ancient rhetoric; textual lacunae
disrupt linear patterns of arrangement that proceed along clearly marked dates of inception and termination. Although, primary texts can support tentative conclusions, other evidentiary sources are needed to produce a balanced narration of this rhetorical history. Textual sources can roughly trace the significant rhetorical periods, but cannot identify precisely where the points of inauguration and termination lie. The best conclusions arise from an approach that balances textual criticism with a broader study of the cultural practices of the time, and this is what will be undertaken here.

In light of this interplay between Roman rhetoric and its broader cultural milieu, the pervasiveness of religious topics is a noteworthy feature distinguishing Roman rhetoric. This religious orientation is particularly relevant to a study of its epideictic literature because laudations of virtue often emphasized piety and divine favor. An understanding of the religious symbolism underlying epideictic texts can generate readings more closely attuned to the unique religious influences upon Rome’s rhetorical practice.

An additional reason to investigate the epideictic artifacts of the late Republican and Imperial period is the fact that they communicated the terms and conditions of political rule, clarifying the power dynamics linking the religious and military leadership and unifying the specific religious, military, and family connections under a complex system of rule. The spatial, temporal and ritualistic trends initiated during the period covered in this study established a basic set of expectations subsequently inherited by later Roman and Byzantine rulers. Previous accounts of the Byzantine and later Roman empire’s blending of ceremonial, ritual, and governmental functions have demonstrated the ways in which ceremonies preserved power and negotiated power relations. For instance, guidelines for appropriate conduct in ceremonies occurring in the later Roman and Byzantine periods, as reflected in Menander (c. 4th Century
C.E.) and other later Greek theorists, document the respect given to such events. Menander’s text signaled an awareness of epideictic’s significance among rhetors on the edge of empire and catalogued the appropriate rhetorical messages to coincide with visits by foreign dignitaries, festivals and other similar events occasioning the presence of a heisiarch. These earlier Imperial events differ, to some extent, from the three primary ceremonies identified in the later Latin panegyrics, namely the adventus, the consecratio, and the accensio, but they operated in a similar manner, communicating and consolidating shifting power dynamics, conveying the new relationships of power and allowing for the symbolic negotiation of political power.

**Justification for the Theoretical Inquiry**

The shared narratives, ritual behaviors, and spaces attendant to epideictic events are as essential to the rhetorical process as are linguistic elements, and this full array should be analyzed in an effort to appreciate this genre. Advances in epideictic scholarship require an understanding of the pivotal role that the non-linguistic features of certain rhetorical events play in producing meaning. Inquiry into the ceremonial and epideictic forms of classical rhetoric would benefit from an exploration of theoretical ground lying at the symbolic intersection of word and deed.

In its entirety, the ceremony constructs figurative responses to the mundane world, temporarily unifying a range of actions and inspiring the participation of time-bound actors in rituals that occasionally transcend the bounds of time. The messages that are combined with ritualistic behaviors express mystic concepts that exceed the bound of meaning made possible by speech alone. Even so, they are likewise reducible to the idea of an event, a confined point in time when the ritual took place. This fusion of the transcendent and the particular produces a normative vision of reality, a constellation of social and symbolic relations that fosters group
cohesion and leaves a lasting imprint of the event’s meaning. Just as astronomical nebulae produce new stars, this constellation operates as a tropological incubator that conceives and nurtures the extra-linguistic processes that collectively amplify the ceremony’s discursive meaning. A study of the figurative aspects of performative events that addresses how the non-discursive activities of ritual help create the tropes that arise during a public performance, explains how knowledge and meaning are produced by a blend of linguistic and participative elements arising during ceremonial events.

The ritual activities and language of ceremonial events often combine to produce symbolic reflections of the ceremony, fusions of narrative and performance that give epideictic language greater significance. The linguistic remnants of these combinations often assume a tropological form in non-epideictic discourse, and render the ceremony a comment upon broader social and cultural concerns. The affective responses that may result from ceremonial experiences enable these tropes to enrich daily life by altering interpretative frames for understanding and interpreting mundane experience. The enduring memories of participation in ritual reorient lived experience when the tropes arising in a ceremony encourage individuals to identify with broader social and cultural groups. Such tropes connect participants to their social world and frame their lives, anchoring ordinary discourse to a mystic realm; for example ceremonial celebrations of *imperium* suggest that Rome’s *imperium* was seen as evidence of the Romans’ spiritual earnestness as well as divine approval for their foreign policy. Linguistic references to enacted rituals structure a conceptual framework for interpreting lived experiences in the social world, giving deeper meaning to the mundane experiences of daily life.

Because ceremonial events fuse language and ritual action, the language within ceremonies develops new associations with the mundane and extra-mundane realms. Ceremonies
align a functioning set of public, religious, and mythic grammars, a somewhat paradoxical process that has elastic and conservative effects. The most fundamental grammar of the ceremony is the religious grammar, the accepted myths and religious stories which connect the ceremony to other temporal dimensions. Religious knowledge based in certain local cults or accessible through local traditions and customs gives a rhetor access (within limits) to competing explanations of the way the world operates. This explanatory grammar operates alongside an official political grammar of the ruling elite, the officially produced histories adopted by an important family. Such secular histories, as pedagogical and profane social lore, bring their own grammar to such events, as evidenced for example, in the codes of the *curus honorum*, which were of critical import for conveying the virtues of Roman leaders. These grammars guide messages and influence the ways in which spaces, statues and events emphasize the importance of some relationships and deemphasize others. In sum, the elastic nature of the ceremony emerges from a fusion of religious, mythic, and historic elements, and this helps to produce symbolic meaning and to emphasize certain social and political relationships. In addition, by pairing ideas together to create associations and dissociations, the ceremony can add new significance to individuals’ lives and motivate them to take actions that align their behavior with the type of action included in the ceremony. This is because the participants in the ceremony enact a sacred commitment that has more depth and meaning than any mundane activity.

Artifactual media occupy an equally significant place alongside the symbolisms and permissible messages that constitute the grammar of ceremony. These media, statues, architecture, public art and other political and ritual artifacts, structure and process the different grammars in distinct ways as they physically attest to a ceremonial event’s meaning. A rite emphasizes a spiritual order for its participants. Just as a ceremony generates tropological
expressions for a broader set of messages, the various media that are present in such
performances connect these figurative formulations to each other and shed light on the ways such
messages operate outside of the ceremony’s confines.

Instead of emerging in isolation, the primary texts of this study share a common set of
epideictic antecedents, which directly and indirectly, established epideictic’s fundamental
features. Their unique historical circumstances and rhetorical elements justify these specific case
studies, and a review of the scholarship on epideictic will illuminate their broader and more
significant role in the history of rhetorical thought. This will require that we consult texts from
several academic fields, dividing them into a set of artificial yet meaningful categories and
covering the history of ancient epideictic speech preceding the Imperial period.

**Literature Review**

The idealization of Roman literary inquiry as aesthetic critique, a longstanding relic of
classical scholarship’s early ties to German romanticism, has blunted consideration of the non-
aesthetic features of Latin literature more germane to contemporary scholarship. In his trenchant
critique of this orientation, Denis Feeney assailed the critical practice of treating timeless literary
works in isolation, arguing it rendered context a peripheral concern. Classicist Thomas
Habinek’s advice that scholars to reflect upon the way this legacy has influenced the study of
Latin literature is equally pertinent to students of Roman rhetoric.8

A Greek bias pervades histories of rhetoric and casts Roman rhetoric as a simplified
version of its Greek ancestor. Historians often preface their narratives of Rome’s rhetorical
history with a review of Greece’s rhetorical developments. The opening chapter of M.L. Clarke’s
study, *Rhetoric at Rome*, the authoritative history of Roman rhetoric for approximately twenty
years, briefly reviewed rhetoric’s origin and early development in Greece and argued it
necessarily preceded the Roman assimilation of rhetorical precepts. Clarke’s abridged synopsis
of Greek rhetorical history related the standard originary myth (the tale of Corax and Tisias),
rehashed the battle between the Sophists and the philosophers (Isocrates, Plato, and Aristotle),
and concluded with an elaboration of the refined principles which were translated by a
progressive cadre of Roman acolytes during the Hellenistic period. Contemporary students of
ancient rhetoric might dispute Clarke’s simplification of Greek rhetorical history, but his
historical account of Rome’s assimilation is most troublesome. Clarke depicted Rome’s
assimilation of Greek rhetorical doctrine as a commercial transaction undertaken with “clever
Greeks, who had reduced the art of speaking to a system [and who] foresaw that in this active
and powerful republic there would be a market for their wares.”9 In Clarke’s narrative, the newly
conquered Greeks actually “conquer[ed] here as elsewhere, and Roman rhetoric was to become
little more than an adaptation of Greek rhetoric.”10 Clarke’s characterization of Roman rhetoric
as a simple adaptation of Greek rhetorical thought might seem dated, but few would object to his
basic premise—a review of rhetoric’s Greek origins is a suitable starting point for any history of
Roman rhetoric, including a treatment of Roman epideictic.

The foundational narrative underpins most histories of rhetoric. Even George Kennedy’s
Art of Rhetoric in the Roman World, the most authoritative and comprehensive analysis of
Roman rhetoric to date described Roman rhetoric as an imitative form:

The rhetoric seen in Latin literature is largely Greek. Romans first became
conscious of methods of persuasion in the late third or early second centuries B.C.
when their city had become not only the most powerful state of the Italian
peninsula, but the greatest power in the Mediterranean, and they found themselves
the object of every subtlety Greek rhetoricians could devise. Soon they began to
imitate the technique themselves.11

Despite these comments, Kennedy recognized that some form of Roman persuasive practice
must have preceded their absorption of Greek rhetorical principles and his own studies have
documented many of Rome’s innovative practices. Nevertheless, his most recent synopsis of classical rhetoric, which distinguishes between Greek and Roman forms to greater length, held a similar regard for Roman epideictic as Dionysus, the ancient Greek literary theorist: “Epideictic oratory of the Greek sort was largely nonexistent in Rome. The only native epideictic form was the funeral eulogy (laudatio funebris) for members of noble families.”\(^{12}\) Whether or not Kennedy’s linear narrative facilitated his dismissal of Rome’s epideictic innovation, the linear approach invariably frames Roman rhetoric as a derivative practice.

Greece’s epideictic traditions elucidate some aspects of Roman conduct, but exaggerations of their importance facilitate a simplistic view of Roman discourse. To view Roman rhetorical practice as an extension of Greek rhetorical principles equivocates Greece’s rhetorical theory and classical rhetorical theory. Study of Roman rhetoric would benefit from more skepticism regarding Greece’s influence upon Rome’s rhetorical culture. Rendering Roman rhetoric relevant to contemporary rhetorical inquiry depends upon an appreciation for the local cultural conditions that fostered Roman rhetoric.

One helpful place to begin might be with the scholarship addressing the connection between Roman and Greek religion. Such scholarship has not ignored the obvious influence of Greek religion upon Roman behavior, but has reevaluated its significance and recognized the fundamentally independent character of Roman religious practice. As an analogy, Denis Feeney compared the relationship between Greek and Roman religious practices to the relation between Judaism and Christianity; Christianity’s textual origins lie in Judaic texts, but an equivocation of Christian with Jewish faith is simplistic and misguided. Likewise, replication of Greek cult rituals in Rome does not reflect an analogous practice, since the location and socio-cultural relationships between these religious practices is markedly different.\(^{13}\) As Feeney points out, the
relationship between the religious practices of Greece and Rome had been intertwined for
centuries before the establishment of “modern” Republican practices, but the Romans had long
clarified their understanding of their relationship to the Greek religious practices. The
scholarship of classicists specializing in the study of Roman religion and literature repudiates the
view that Roman cultural practices were “derived” and “secondary” and reveals how Roman
religion influenced discursive conduct.

In the case of rhetoric, it is not necessary to dismiss evidence documenting the Roman
reception of Greek teachings, but it is important to recognize that even Rome’s seemingly
imitative rhetorical practices were suited for the localized traditions of Roman discourse. Cicero
clearly honed his craft through the study of Greek rhetorical texts, which facilitated his training
in invention, arrangement, etc. But this concession neither denies the importance of in situ
inquiry in the least, nor does it repudiate a reading of Roman epideictic that spends little time
addressing potential Greek antecedents, since it is doubtful that Rome’s audiences shared the
elite’s Hellenizing spirit and the study of rhetorical culture is primarily beneficial when it
addresses audiences and their preconceptions. Communication scholars have long emphasized
the significance of understanding and appreciating audience assumptions when evaluating
oratory to the extent that many endorse the audience perceptions of the text over the original
ideas that generated the basic textual layout. But in histories of classical rhetoric treatments of
Roman rhetoric concentrated on the textual and pedagogic lineage (i.e. Greek antecedents) and
pass over the connection between Roman rhetoric and the living culture. Consequently, apparent
similarities, which might only exist because Greece and Rome occupy similar cognitive space,
become exaggerated features, and the primary setting of Rome’s rhetoric is largely passed over.

Few would argue that Sir Samuel’s Romilly’s speech concerning Habeas Corpus Suspension Bill
(1817) influenced anti-patriot act deliberation even though U.S. legislators must have designed their habeas corpus laws with an English model in mind. But Romilly’s rhetoric was in the same language and one hundred years closer to Senator Feingold than Demosthenes was to Cicero. In other words, few scholars would endorse a comparative framework that identifies American public address as a replication of its English antecedent, but this practice remains an acceptable approach to Roman rhetorical texts.

Roman epideictic theory and practice was a complex indigenous tradition, informed by Greek antecedents (in part) but distinctly constituted in its own respect. A survey of Greek epideictic texts and forms highlights the limited applicability of Greek epideictic and secondary scholarship to a Roman epideictic setting. This section reviews the relevant literary developments (theoretical and practical) in epideictic rhetoric and their contemporary interpretations and conforms to the standard division of Greek rhetorical periods into its Pre-Aristotelian, Hellenic and Hellenistic forms, but it takes a cautious stance concerning the relevance of these texts to Rome’s rhetorical tradition. Hellenistic and Republican ceremonial literatures contain intellectual and historical antecedents that clarify where the derivative and innovative features of Imperial epideictic lie.

**Pre-Aristotelian Conceptions of Epideictic**

The lack of scholarship concerning Roman ceremonial rhetoric presents a formidable obstacle to understanding this rhetorical practice. The bulk of scholarship concerning ancient epideictic centers around the fundamental texts and critical themes of Greek epideictic. Theodore Burgess’s handbook of epideictic literature, the most comprehensive English language study, categorizes the theoretical principles and generic forms that guided Greek epideictic, but hardly addresses the Latin epideictic tradition. Nicole Louraux’s treatment of the blend of
religious, linguistic, and political features that accompanied public and private expressions of
grief was confined to the Athenian funeral oration. The epideictic rhetoric of the sophists,
perhaps the most examined area of Pre-Aristotelian rhetoric, reveal intriguing relationships
between language and Greek culture, but they were presented in a context that hardly resembles
Rome’s. Even inquiries into the practical uses of epideictic address, such as those emphasizing
Isocrates’ rhetorical activities contain a secular vision of epideictic. The secondary literature
depicts the epideictic tradition as a largely Greek one and, while these studies do establish some
of the complex linkages between Greek epideictic theory and practice, little mention is made of
Rome’s epideictic traditions.

The scholarship inquiring into Greek epideictic rhetoric is quite extensive but a
considerable portion of Greek epideictic texts and their attendant secondary scholarship fail to
correspond to Roman epideictic settings. For the most part, they clarify the theoretical setting of
Greek epideictic more than they convey a specific textual tradition that influenced Roman
Rhetoric. The epideictic texts of Greek antiquity were typically performance-oriented works
designed to showcase rhetorical talent or place-based ceremonies strongly tied to locale and
culture. Examples of this verbal virtuosity include the playful exercises and the serious though
primitive philosophical speculations deployed by the sophists and other early Greek thinkers.

The earliest Greek epideictic assumed three primary forms (*epitaphios*, *hymnos*, and
*paradoxos*). The *epitaphios*, or the funeral oration, was closely tied to the ideals of the state, the
*hymnos* or festival speech containing religious associations developed into the later *panegyricos*
or festival speech, and finally, the *paradoxos* was a sophistic exercise which evolved into a more
formalized philosophical discourse. These three forms share many overlapping concerns and
forms, and their collective categorization affected the way in which these speeches were theorized.

Laurent Pernot likens the earliest epideictic speeches to public lectures, performative displays addressing topics of contemporary concern. These early speeches were concerned with identifying and describing a body of knowledge in a detailed way. The earliest forms of the epideictic that we have textual records of, in their Pre-theoretical state, lacked any identifiable and definite content or formal structure. The speeches contained noteworthy instances of style and reflect some concerns about the nature of the speaker—the speaker assumed an air of authority when addressing the audience, and though it was less personal and speaker centered, the form still dictated that the speaker’s delivery was paramount. In addition to being known for their poetic qualities, such speeches were designed to demonstrate a way of thinking, to engage a quasi-academic subject and methodically analyze its ties to contemporary thinking or understanding (epistemology and doxa) belief and knowledge. Pernot identifies some of the speeches in the Hippocratic corpus as examples of epideictic presentations of specialized knowledge and speaker’s expertise.17

Few genres document the connection between institutional power and epideictic rhetoric as well as the funeral oration, officially recording what one scholar termed a “struggle” between “conflicting ideologies…competing for social control.”18 The surviving funeral orations constitute an eclectic group of texts, that collectively illustrate how this form augmented institutional power. Most of these texts explicitly or implicitly allude to the Periclean funeral oration and they exhibit a common formal movement from praise to lament to consolation.19. Pericles’ (495-425 B.C.E.) well known eulogy (430 BCE) for the Athenian soldiers who died during the Peloponnesian war, recorded in an abridged form in Thucydides’ (c. 460-400 B.C.E.)
History of the Peloponnesian War, is less frequently studied by rhetorical scholars because it was transmitted second hand. The significance of Thucydides’ account for this study lies in his documentation of the ritual context of the speech and its depiction of the complex set of customs and speech acts that bolstered the nascent Athenian empire’s imperial ambitions.

The rhetorical handbook, the Rhetorica Ad Alexandrum traditionally attributed to Anaxamines, confirms that the earliest rhetorical theorists understood the rhetorical significance of ritual. Anaxamines’ text, a text probably matching the type of rhetorical handbook sophists might have used during this period, recognized the elasticity of the religious ceremony and the need to adapt it to political purposes. Anaximenes’ text lacks any explicit theory of ceremony and rite, but it does reflect the belief that concern for ritual deserves consideration in other fora, especially in breaking down the topics pursued during political deliberation, which included advice for arguing about religious ritual (1423a). Its recommendations for strategic approaches to deliberation about ritual and ceremonies reflect the instrumentality of ceremony.

The text argues that political participation in public rites enhances those connections between people and the gods that make religious celebrations noteworthy. The author offers up a range of arguments to extol the gods including amplifying appeals, appeals to divine honors, and appeals to piety. These topical suggestions for deliberating sacred matters reflected the belief that political and religious affairs were strongly intertwined and that associations with religious affairs were needed to bolster political deliberations.

Time and space prevent a full consideration of Anaximenes text along side Aristotle’s, Rhetoric, but some consideration may be helpful. Aristotle’s reflections upon language use and the force of epideictic rhetoric seem to be augmented by Anaximenes’ focus on the significance of public ritual. Anaximenes argued that the conduct and content of ceremony were of
tremendous political importance, deserving of weight during deliberation and capable of
constructing indelible political meaning. Anaxamines’ text likewise illustrates the extent to
which discussions of religious ritual were a regular part of the fabric of Greek civic life—the
meaning of the ceremonial was subject to political debate and their usefulness noted by
politicians. It also demonstrates why ceremonies can and should be described as tropes—that the
structure of the ceremony constructs meaning that endures after the completion of the specific
event.

**Greek Rhetoric**

An extensive tradition of epideictic practice guided the formulation and
institutionalization of rhetorical technique in Aristotle’s *Lectures on Rhetoric*. This influence led
the author to prefer examples from epideictic texts to excerpts culled from famous trials and
public deliberations.\(^{22}\) Despite the extensive scholarship connecting Aristotle’s rhetoric to the
oratory that preceded his text, the ambiguous relationship between the two continues to prompt
differing scholarly conclusions.\(^{23}\) It comes as no surprise to find narratives addressing
epideictic’s origins struggling to mediate between an evaluation of Aristotle’s rhetoric based in
an analysis of the Pre-Aristotelian texts, and a tendency to invoke Aristotle’s conception of
epideictic as a basis for evaluating Greek epideictic texts. Some interpret the incorporation of
epideictic into the tripartite categorization scheme as Aristotle’s ill-fitting attempt to integrate
sophistic rhetorical theory into his more pragmatic scheme.\(^{24}\) Others discount the significance of
Aristotle’s analysis of earlier texts and instead emphasize the effect of his formulations in
guiding subsequent discussion of epideictic rhetoric.\(^{25}\)

Given this relationship between Aristotle’s handbook and earlier rhetoric, the importance
assigned to his treatise may be due to the rhetorical perspectives it reflects as much as to its
subsequent influence upon Greek rhetoric. Disputes regarding the nature of audience, the role of time and Aristotle’s appreciation for epideictic’s pragmatic applicability will continue to perplex theorists and multiply their conceptualizations of epideictic rhetoric. Presently, this debate appears to be irresolvable and more importantly an analysis of Aristotle’s influence detracts from the aim of this dissertation. But even though an understanding of Aristotle’s contribution to epideictic theory is not entirely relevant, his ideas bolster the conceptualization of epideictic’s core features.

Even if scholars never reach a consensus regarding the level of theoretical authority to be given to Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, they will always recognize the definitional importance of the ideas contained within his treatise. Aristotle conceptualized epideictic primarily as a written genre (3.12) delivered before an audience of spectators (1.3), which praises or blames a subject (1.3), relates this topic to the present time (1.9) and achieves its rhetorical force (*dynamis*) through ethos (1.9), amplification (3.17), and narrative (3.16). These sections, along with other passages relevant to the study of epideictic, have already received various levels of scrutiny and still initiate contemporary theorization about the genre.

Aristotle’s identification of the topic (praise/blame) temporal nature (present) and audience (observers) of an epideictic speech constitute the fundamental elements for the genre. J. Richard Chase, the most ardent defender of a basic categorization of the genre as a speech of praise or blame argued that attention to this content is a necessary precondition to any analysis of the display of oratory. Christine Oravec has highlighted the observational role played by the genre’s audiences, but she also identifies the audience’s need to judge and evaluate the text instead of simply observing and perceiving it in a passive manner. She has emphasized the significance of the audience’s role, even citing it as the reason that Aristotle deliberately declined
to list of the specific occasions for epideictic speech.  

Audience participation links ceremonial rituals to epideictic rhetoric. Exclusively literal readings privilege the written word and assume a common experience for all who read the speech. This view neglects to address the role that rhetorical circumstances play in determining the type of praise and the function of praise and blame in the speech.  

Gerard Hauser has also concentrated on epideictic’s role in the construction of civic virtue, suggesting that Aristotle offers a helpful starting point for appreciating epideictic’s “unique place in celebrating the deeds of exemplars who set the tone for civic community,” and for understanding how “the encomiast serves an equally unique role as a teacher of civic virtue.” Hauser recenters the role of epideictic and argues that it was the source for recognizing the way in which proper conduct took place. Such attention to the connections between demonstration and deliberation, recognizes the engaged process of epideictic rhetoric, a relationship summed up best in Aristotle’s statement: “if you desire to praise, look what you would suggest; if you desire to suggest, look what you would praise.” (I.ix.37) This noteworthy passage identifies right action as a standard for values and the common values as the basis for determining appropriate actions.

Collectively, the reconceptualization of epideictic’s civic function has revised the earlier distinction between functional oratory (pragmatikon) and the oratory of display (epideiktikon), a distinction that prioritized the study of the deliberative rhetoric that took place in Athens. Chase’s essay, now almost fifty years old, looked at definitions establishing the epideictic oration as a speech of praise or blame. It took exception to scholarly formulations of epideictic
that emphasized its deliberative function or that avoided Aristotle, and instead sought “evidence in many panegyrics or funeral orations to support any definition of epideictic…” 33 While conceding that speeches like the panegyric and encomium emerged long before Aristotle wrote the *Rhetoric*, Chase believed that their usefulness for understanding the function of epideictic was limited. Chase’s essay anticipated the subsequent formulations of rhetorical theory based firmly in the theoretical treatises alone, an approach dependent upon Aristotle’s authority which limited definitions of epideictic almost to the point of excluding real expressions of the rhetorical form. Overall, his dedication to being a “literal Aristotelian,” begs the question: What is the use of a strictly Aristotelian categorization scheme that has little applicability to the rhetoric of its time and is even less appropriate for the study of Roman epideictic, a distinct tradition emerging from a different culture and expressed in a different language? In fact, the Romans were particularly adamant to insist that the language of praise was pragmatic. Rigid Aristotelianism offers little to the contemporary study of epideictic other than to motivate scholars to read Aristotle’s theoretical discussion anew and identify theoretical concepts that have broader applicability.

Expanded conceptualizations of epideictic rhetoric emerging from Aristotle’s identification of epideictic as the rhetorical form most suited to a written style have implications for the study of style and its role in the public construction of morality. 34 Ned O’Gorman’s elaboration upon epideictic’s lexical qualities centered around the interaction between the written form and the process of showing or displaying, suggesting potential ways to inquire into the physical force of the text and the participatory role of the speech’s observers. 35 He detailed a matrix of visual signifiers, adjectives, and processes melding the reality of the spectators’ conception of the world to the speaker through linguistic constructions. Arguing that the mental
conceptions arising from such visual productions establish the grounds for later deliberations, O’Gorman clarifies the discussion of lexis found in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* and *De Anima*: “The phantasmatic character of lexis may make rhetorical judgment, too, reliant on images, as images activated through lexis are brought before the mind’s eyes of auditors and form the basis for the mental deliberations that underlie rhetorical *krisis*.” The audience does more than simply judge or evaluate the extent to which an epideictic speech reflects virtue and vice. The speech itself actively constructs a vision of virtue and vice because epideictic designs the mental categories, communal position and deliberative themes that are critical for agonistic rhetorical forms. This is because epideictic is the only genre that actively displays “nobility at the level of praxis.” In other words, encomia encourage the direction of action because they “provide concrete guidance on how to live in harmony with noble ideals.”

Initial theoretical analyses of the form recognized that methods of informal argumentation addressed to an adversary or judge about the correctness of a position had only superficial similarity to epideictic efforts to gain audience assent. Instead of the emphasis on agonistic concerns such as argument, proof, and questions of ethos, reflection upon epideictic circumstances by rhetorical theorists such as Aristotle, have wandered among abstract topics such as audience communion and various relationships among time, the rhythms, ideas, and situations of a speech. These concerns, though somewhat identifiable in Aristotle’s rhetoric, are more prominent in later theoretical texts of the early Greek Empire. As far as epideictic goes at this time, the work of Demetrius (c. 3rd Century B.C.E.) on style continues the idea of epideictic as a third branch of rhetoric, but as Kennedy suggests, this branch was expanded quite a bit to the category *enteuktikos*—which Kennedy notes is “perhaps the beginning of the movement to extend epideictic to include a greater variety of genres, even some not specifically oratorical.”
This broadening of epideictic expanded its associations with various philosophical and ceremonial activities and it can be seen in the developments occurring during the Hellenistic period.

**Hellenistic Epideictic**

Even though Aristotle was the first to describe many of epideictic’s fundamental features, the Hellenistic period’s proximity to the Roman Empire makes it just as important to any study of Roman epideictic. Historians of rhetoric generally use the term “Hellenistic rhetoric” to designate the primarily Greek rhetorical ideas circulating during the period between Aristotle and Cicero. This designation is employed in the work of Latinists, in George Kennedy’s authoritative histories of rhetoric, and in other significant descriptions of rhetorical practice during this time. Instead of a unitary vision of rhetoric epitomizing the Hellenistic period, the rhetoric taught in various Roman schools reflects the philosophical precepts of individual teachers. Because few complete texts remain from this period, it is often studied, as Kennedy has noted, from the point of view of various rhetoricians who look back upon the authors preceding them. Cicero here stands as one such authoritative interpreter of this Greek rhetorical tradition. His references to many of these texts often provide the best knowledge we now have of them, and they give us our sense of how Hellenistic rhetoric translated to the rhetoric of Rome.

Uncertainties continue to distort our understanding of Hellenistic epideictic, but Theocritus’ (fl. 3rd Century B.C.E.) *Encomium to Ptolemy Philadelphus* and two theoretical handbooks from this time reveal that it played a significant role in building and maintaining political communities. Recent inquiry into these texts has weakened Burgess’ exaggerated claim that “no extant treatise of importance” was produced from “the time of Aristotle (350 B.C.) to
Dionysius of Halicarnassus, late in the first century B.C. \(^{42}\) One contemporary scholar of classical rhetoric, Laurent Pernot, has revised this assessment, arguing that the two Hellenistic texts, Demetrius’ *On Style* and Philodemus’ handbook on rhetoric, show noteworthy changes in emphasis on appropriate delivery, topic choice and language use.\(^ {43}\)

In characterizing the overall epideictic climate, the textual record suggests a growing split between the practical tradition that recognized the risks associated with epideictic praise and its connection to power and a philosophic concern with epideictic as a pure display of wisdom for its own sake and capable of challenging citizens to reflect upon their circumstances. These trends, though not completely obvious, are roughly sketched out and characterize a climate existing prior to the Roman Republic as various schools of philosophy distanced themselves from praise-giving practices, but the active handbooks encouraged a cautious acceptance of basic epideictic principles. They reminded rhetors that praise always risked being perceived as flattery and that advice-giving risked being perceived as criticism. This cautious approach is evident in the one surviving text from this time, the *Encomium to Ptolemy Philadelphus*. The concern with propriety and the recognition of epideictic’s risks can be noted in the conservative approaches cautioning appropriate stylistic usage and careful advice giving.

The Hellenistic handbook *On Style*, attributed to an unknown author, Demetrius and most likely written in the second or third Century (B.C.E.), advances a stylistic theory strongly indebted to the ideas circulated by the peripatetic school.\(^ {44}\) Its approach to figurative language foreshadows the growing stylistic sophistication that flourished under the Roman Empire.\(^ {45}\) In addition to its peripatetic orientation, the author culled examples from Isocrates, citing his *Panegyricus* for its exemplary use of assonance (25-6) and antithesis (29) to elevate the grandeur of speech.\(^ {46}\) Often dismissed for its lack of originality, the treatise’s conservative approach to
expression discloses the general stylistic assumptions epideictic speakers faced. It juxtaposes two supplementary approaches to style, the forceful and the elegant, upon a basic schematic consisting of two fundamental stylistic categories, the plain and the grand. *On Style* directs writers to assume one of these primary forms of style and layer it with a secondary stylistic approach.

This handbook’s discussion of two specific figures—innuendo and antithesis contains an implicit expectation of grand language’s appropriateness for the eulogy and also has suggestions for giving cautious advice. The assumption that eulogies use a lofty style using forceful figures of thought to emphasize important topical ideas is presented in the defense of Polycrates (fl. 4th Century B.C.E.). This belief that propriety strongly governed style led Demetrius to forgive the Athenian rhetorician Polycratus’ ostensibly crass eulogy of a trivial topic—Polycratus’ crass comparison to “Agamemnon with antithesis,” elevated its topic through the use of “metaphor, and every artifice of eulogy.”\(^{47}\) (120) Demetrius defends Polycrates’ playful approach, justifying play as legitimate as long as writers “otherwise preserve propriety, whatever the subject; or in other words, use the relevant style…”\(^{48}\) (120) Under these conditions, the rhetorical circumstance informed the rhetor about their options for appropriate language and the eulogy called for the loftiest language, even when the speech addressed its subject in an ironic fashion. The handbook’s lesson of propriety also used Plato’s *Menexenus*, reflecting a broadly held appreciation for the way the *Menexenus*, ironic or not, could edify writers about the proper ways to deploy forceful language.\(^{49}\)

Besides its emphasis on the rhetorical setting’s role in determining appropriate language usage, the text also took a conservative stance regarding advice giving, recommending innuendo as a method for blaming in a soothing and inoffensive fashion. In other words, innuendo allowed
individuals to advise actions without offending the person being advised.\textsuperscript{50} Such an approach might have been necessary for Theocritus, the author of \textit{The Encomium of Ptolemy Philadelphus}, a Hellenistic encomium that first praises a living monarch as a divinity.\textsuperscript{51} The most recent editor and translator of Theocritus’ \textit{Encomium} has suggested that it is typical, at least in its topical choices, of the Hellenistic encomia and paeans, and argues that its poetic form should not obscure its epideictic qualities.\textsuperscript{52} In fact, this text serves as data for arguing that the practice of the encomia and the funeral speech should not be perceived as wholly separate traditions, but that scholars should more closely investigate their similarities.\textsuperscript{53}

Even as a conservative impulse influenced the tradition of epideictic practice during the Hellenistic period, epideictic was subject to a more radical critique. Pernot has observed that the Hellenistic period was marked by attempts by the philosophers to integrate rhetorical ideas into their philosophic systems and worldviews.\textsuperscript{54} The influential schools of philosophy operating at this time taught a rhetorical doctrine in the final stages of a student’s education, a doctrine grounded in the school’s philosophical practices.\textsuperscript{55} These efforts to promote a philosophical rhetoric must have generated some debate about the merits of rhetoric as a philosophical practice. An example of such debate has been imparted by the reconstruction and translation of Philodemus’ \textit{On Rhetoric}. Because Philodemus’ (110-35 BCE) \textit{On Rhetoric} appears to address the critique of epideictic advanced by the Epicurean school, it sheds light on the philosophical regard for epideictic during the Hellenistic period.\textsuperscript{56}

According to Kennedy, Philodemus viewed epideictic rhetoric favorably, as a form most suitable for oral delivery; at the same time he “showed that sophistic is an art of composing speeches and making epideictic orations but that there is no art of judicial or deliberative oratory. Epideictic alone is based on knowledge of rules; judicial and deliberative are solely the result of
practice.” Kennedy’s interpretation of Philodemus reflects an attempt to reconcile the prevailing critique of epideictic with the conservative impulses illustrated in the reading of Demetrius. Kennedy has demonstrated how Philodemus’ perspective critiqued certain portions of rhetorical activity but allocated a space for philosophers to influence public morals and avoid the ethically suspect practice of deliberating public policy or arguing court cases:

Philodemus defines sophistic…as an art concerned with *epideixis* and the arrangement of speeches. His examples indicate that by *epideixis* he means the kind of oratory practiced by Isocrates, including the *Panegyricus*, the *Panathenaicus*, the *Bursiris*, the *Helen*, and the *Peace*, …all of which he thinks of as purely rhetorical documents lacking practical political significance….After this discussion in book two, Philodemus ignores sophistic oratory and attacks the claims of the rhetoricians that their subject is an art and capable of training a statesmen.

Gaines also reads Philodemus as an innovator who rejected the Epicurean critique of epideictic. As Gaines explains, the basic principles of the critique held that epideictic speech was more strongly associated with skill in demonstrations of praise or blame than with interest in the subject being of praised or blamed, and it offered a philosopher no way to influence the public because the speaker was either forced to comply with popular opinion or to assume the role of dangerous speech and take on the risks associated with presenting a truly epideictic speech:

For, as Philodemus makes clear, praising and blaming in public requires that the speaker follows either popular opinion, which would repel the wise man, or philosophical knowledge, which might arouse offense and prove dangerous to him. Given this dilemma, it seems hardly surprising that the Epicurean school would have admonished the wise man to avoid public panegyric altogether.

But that admonishment, attributed to the writings of Epicurus, was not reproduced carte blanche in Philodemus, and thus we can see a shift toward tolerance of epideictic speaking by this follower of the Epicurean school.

Overall, the Epicurean school rejected panegyric speaking, but this rejection concerned those orations most closely associated with festival competitions. Some of the ambiguity in the
text reflects that point. Gaines’ efforts to reconstruct an Epicurean conception of epideictic, based in his reading of Philodemus have led him to conclude that the Epicureans maintained a general hostility to epideictic, which motivated the puzzling revision of this perspective by Philodemus. In other words, Philodemus’ reassessment of epideictic suggests a challenge to a long held philosophic critique and signals a nuanced and sympathetic attitude.

Epideictic theories in the Hellenistic period adhered to a rigid interpretation of appropriate language that limited the ways orators could express certain ideas. Even though contemporary scholars of epideictic emphasize the peripatetic doctrine of Aristotle and the influence of Plato’s academy, it is likely that the Epicurean and Stoic schools had more direct influence upon Roman practices: Rhetorical doctrines were insinuated into the major philosophical academies of the Mediterranean region and subsequently diffused into active principles for speaking and statecraft.

**Roman Rhetorical Tradition**

When Dionysus of Halicanarsus (fl. 60 – 7 B.C.E.), a Greek writer keenly attuned to the rhetoric of the Roman Republic and principe, averred that the *laudatio funebris* imitated the form of the Athenian funeral oration, he underestimated the depth of Rome’s own epideictic traditions. Attitudes similar to Dionysus’ have dampened appreciation for the uniqueness of Roman rhetoric and continue to guide historical narratives that portray Roman rhetors as imitators of a thoroughly Greek techne. The most comprehensive survey of ancient epideictic theory and practice, Theodore Burgess’ unparalleled masterpiece, limited its Roman inquiry to a scant review of Pliny’s *actio gratiarum* and passed over the speeches of Cicero and Augustus’ *Res Gestae*. Unfortunately, studies of Roman epideictic have not sufficiently analyzed the indigenous ceremonial customs that distinguish it from Greek literary models.
Many of Rome’s rhetorical practices followed normative standards before Greek rhetorical theory was introduced. While not an entirely insulated tradition, Roman epideictic texts address themes that could only have emerged out of the Latin culture. In addition to shaping the conceptual domain of Roman epideictic, Rome’s social, political, and religious traditions regulated the reception and assimilation of Greek rhetorical thought. The Greeks and Romans shared some conceptions of epideictic, but they differed in many more respects and the critical differences between the two traditions demonstrate the need to elaborate the Roman epideictic context more fully.

The essential points of contrast between Roman and Greek epideictic were produced by their distinct cultural traditions. Cicero’s theoretical writings, for all their ambivalence and early identification of epideictic as a pursuit unworthy of the noble orator, were attuned to the connection between Roman cultural values and Roman epideictic practice. The arguments advanced by Antonius in Cicero’s *Dialogue on Oratory* conveyed his recognition that Greek epideictic principles were inexact guides for understanding Rome’s epideictic traditions and practices. Convinced that genuine aristocrats embodied the elaborate and “non-rhetorical” socio-political knowledge reflected in Roman ceremonial ritual, Antonius dismissed the study of epideictic rules as a redundant or useless task by proffering a disjunctive argument; if Roman virtue is understood, it does not need to be taught and people who require virtue are unworthy of its lessons.

In Cicero’s *Dialogue De Oratore*, Antonius recognized the political significance of virtue, but argued that the study of epideictic principles only imparts a superficial approximation of Roman culture. He defended the necessity of aristocratic sensitivity to appropriate virtues in outstanding individuals and he identified Crassus’ funeral oration for his mother as evidence of
this prerequisite. By citing Crassus’ somewhat anomalous laudation, ostensibly the first funeral oration given for a woman and remembered for its moving qualities, Antonius compelled Crassus to acknowledge that theoretical rules supplied him with little guidance for invention and that he relied upon his innate sensibilities to compose his highly acclaimed speech.

Cicero’s dialogue *De Oratore* was thematically consistent with Aristotle’s theory, signaling the continued authority of the Greek handbook tradition, but its open speculation concerning the Greek principles of epideictic reflected a potentially selective regard for these principles. As John Dugan argued, its prevailing arguments assimilated Aristotelian views of rhetoric and epideictic into a distinctly Roman vision that emphasized cultural practices. Additionally, Dugan has noted specific passages within this dialogue that demonstrated a high level of cultural ambivalence regarding epideictic.64 He has suggested that Cicero’s underdeveloped conception of epideictic, which generally “subordinate[d] the discussion of its genus to its use within forensic and deliberative speeches.” was due to the fact that “Rome lacked a longstanding tradition of ceremonial oratory like Greece’s.”65 Crassus and Antonius’ perspectives were not mutually exclusive, but they reflected distinct intellectual traditions that foster different modes of action and being. When aggregated, their attitudes defined the conceptual domain in which Roman orators contemplated the Roman and Greek qualities of epideictic.

In addition to idealizing virtues which valorized aristocratic mores, Antonius’ comments acknowledged that other behaviors could also exemplify praiseworthy virtue. He coined the phrase “favors of fortune,” *bona fortunae*, a pairing of words denoting nobility of character (*bona*) and connoting the manifestation of virtue (*fortunae*). This pairing distinguished between innate character and revealed attributes, and clarified Antonius’ expanded range of laudatory
topics suited for praise and the speech’s occasion. This offered the speaker a balanced approach; as a conservative principle, the phrase “favors of fortune” emphasized noble birth and upbringing, but Antonius’ remarks regarding illustrations of virtue, by stressing the nobility manifested by deeds, allocated space for more “ordinary” heroes. The surprisingly complex phrase assimilated the external signs that customarily revealed virtuous attributes and praiseworthy activities that prove the validity of these signs. The assumption that such signs were embodied in manner and gesture was based in the belief that one’s actions could reflect a virtuous character. More significantly, Antonius’ noteworthy argument gave some evidence of the recognition that Roman epideictic could become a flexible rhetorical form, capable of reorienting the basis of Roman values and supplying a new watermark to preserve the integrity of subsequent rhetorical transactions.

While Cicero’s theoretical works have established some of the conceptual boundaries faced by Roman rhetors, studies of Roman rhetorical texts have identified other constraints and topics that are critical to an appreciation of epideictic. Similar to geometric proofs that can determine the measurement of the third angle in a triangle, provided the first two angles are known, discussions of topography and speaking sites can define the parameters of Roman epideictic, the angle missing from the triangulated system of event, speech, and locale. Accordingly, a pair of recent studies have elaborated critical aspects of place and event, which help frame the rhetorical context accompanying Roman epideictic.

The significance of place as an inventional and stylistic device has been firmly established by Ann Vasaly. Her reading of Cicero’s elaborations of the immediate Roman scenery attested to a strategic use of the various speaking sites and elucidated the rhetorical transformation completed under the principate. Operating as a visually based enhancement of
ethos, references to the statues and temples amplified a speaker’s historical, cultural, and religious allusions. Vasaly’s contribution to the study of Roman rhetorical theory warrants greater appreciation of the powerful connotations carried in seemingly innocuous utterances about place. Her interpretation of memory’s role holds that associations of place with memory also could evoke imagery that amplified the message of the speech and even provided evidentiary proof. 67 Vasaly’s study of the symbiotic connection between the Capitoline’s sacred places and the sites of the Republic’s great speeches have helped emphasize the importance of undertaking some level of topographic analysis since narratives of imperial rhetoric are not entirely accessible through textual evidence. Cicero’s references to the surrounding statues, temples, and monuments that stood before his audiences on the Capitoline hill, which was the Republic’s political center, functioned as evidence of the present’s connection to the past. 68

Cicero’s first Catilinerian, delivered before the temple to Jupiter Strator, gained momentum every time it hinted that the deity was guiding his speech, thoughts, and deeds. 69 Continuous invocation of Jupiter and references to Jupiter’s protection of his faithful followers helped Cicero paint his own persona as a servant of divine retribution. This has lead Vasaly to argue that the structures of Cateline I and II “were not just supported by the ambiance of each speech but were determined by it.” 70 The critical influence of setting upon Roman rhetorical texts demands that reformulated narratives of Roman epideictic strive to account for the topographical setting of the rhetoric.

Additionally, the audience’s reaction to their physical setting was also influenced by their religious views, which were subject to dramatic transformation following the demise of the Republic. In fact, the religious transformation accompanying the establishment of the principate became a dominant feature in Post-Augustan rhetoric. The religious context of Roman oratory
has been clarified by Itai Gradel’s study of the link between politics and religion, which responded to a previous over-reliance upon textual support by bringing the data of archeological research to this endeavor. Itai Gradel explains that the sacred and political aspects of this rhetoric can be differentiated only in degrees, since there are no words that clearly distinguish between worship and honors. Gradel makes a critical distinction between worship of the emperor which was a private function, and public worship of the emperor’s genius. Some have argued that temples to the genius of Augustus existed during his lifetime, but no inscription exists proving such ritual practice actually existed.71 The distinction lies not in any differentiation between worship of the Emperor in and out of Rome, but in a lack of evidence that this was a public and state-sponsored function.72 In addressing the relationship between public and private imperial worship, he dismisses arguments supporting the existence of a formal public cult but also notes that private emperor worship was unexceptional and probably more pervasive than suggested in earlier notable studies (e.g. Taylor). Exacting distinctions between religious words that describe an individual’s spiritual qualities, (eg. numen, lares, genius, divus and deus), reveal that certain aspects of an individual’s spiritual force could be subject to both private and public worship, but features which more strongly correlate with the worship of a living divinity were absent. In fact, they suggest that the nuances that characterize these shades of divinity worship undermine contemporary discussions, which have presumed that persons either were or were not gods. Gradel attributes such presumption to monotheistic religious conceptions, which place excessive emphasis on contradictions, vagaries, changes, and contingencies that were not problematic in pagan religious practice. Gradel resolves this by explaining that the status of the Emperors fell along a continuum, but one not clearly graduated, between object of worship and objects of honor.73 The controversial contention that emperor worship constituted a state cult lacks concrete
evidence proving that Emperors were objects of public worship while alive, but worship of the living emperor became a common and frequent activity. It is critical to consciously recognize these religious practices while reading Post-Augustan epideictic texts because this understanding facilitates interpretations of the increasingly prevalent religious themes appearing in later Roman epideictic.

**Revisiting Roman Epideictic Texts**

Broader changes in the religious habits and practices of the Romans associated with the centralization of cult practices and with the development of the empire’s religious culture necessarily affected the discourse of the Roman empire. Epideictic rhetoric assumed more cultural autonomy following Augustus’ principate and the political importance attached to epideictic has not been appreciated. Accordingly, my critique of epideictic literature in the Pre- and Post-Augustan periods highlights their religious operations. I suggest that we look to ceremonies as sites of discursive practices that have been ignored in the past and explain how these ceremonies shaped and were shaped by rhetorical needs at the time. I argue for a clearer distinction between Greek and Roman epideictic and will demonstrate the strong influence Roman culture and speaking traditions had on the development of epideictic.

The first chapter analyzes Cicero’s *Pro Lege Manilia* as an example of hybrid rhetoric, an uncertain blend of agonistic and ceremonial rhetoric. Without over-generalizing from his civil religious blending of epideictic and deliberative codes, it is noteworthy that his own epideictic practice in his speech *Pro Lege Manilia* anticipated the subsequent design of religious spaces to advance political agendas. This chapter sets the tone for subsequent reinvestigations of the ceremonial rhetoric under the early empire. Cicero’s oration establishes a suitable enough
context for Roman epideictic to appreciate some of the innovative developments initiated under Augustus.

The second chapter interprets the *Res Gestae* as an attempt to reconfigure rhetoric, and it will address the alterations in the relationship between space and rhetorical delivery that coincided with the production of this inscription. The twin artifacts considered here will be the physical inscription as rhetoric and also the text of the *Res Gestae* itself as an enactment of the new theory of rhetoric and space marking the ubiquity of the emperor. Cicero’s idealized trope linking the orator to the ordered republic in his speeches and dialogues anticipated the expanded rhetorical role political virtue would eventually assume under the *principate*. I will argue that the civil religious ceremonies of the early empire gave a certain measure of elasticity to the ruling powers to reformulate power relations and adapt epideictic events in response to changing political conditions.

Pliny’s text provides the final study. I will analyze how this speech addresses the nature of ritual and reveals an altered rhetorical climate, one in which highly stylized rhetoric based in ceremonial methods comes to predominate. The oration delivered by the Senator Pliny remains a little studied artifact, one which has aroused little attention from rhetoricians, as with the entire family of Imperial panegyric. As an imperial speech, but one delivered by an orator from Cicero’s generation more than Constantine’s, this text stands as a bridge between the late Republic and the entire imperial period. I will analyze Pliny’s use of sacred imagery to structure and define the overlapping regions of politics and ceremony during early Imperial period. Given ritualized rhetoric’s radically new role in consecrating Imperial Roman power, a study of the rhetorical aspects of civic-religious rituals during the Roman Empire should enhance our understanding of Roman rhetorical theory. Finally, I make some concluding remarks about the
significance of these artifacts and their implications for future studies of Roman epideictic rhetoric.
Chapter Two: Cicero’s Pro Lege Manilia

Following the victory of the famous Roman general Gaius Pompeius (106-48 B.C.E.) over Rome’s longstanding adversary Mithridates VI (132 – 63 BCE), better known as Mithridates Eupator, the triumphant leader undertook the construction of an innovative theater-temple which he ultimately dedicated to Venus in 55 B.C.E. Unlike earlier theater structures, which were temporarily erected, Pompey’s innovative building was designed to permanently support theatrical displays and religious ceremonies.¹ The edifice incorporated a temple to his primary patron, Venus Victrix and fused political and religious imagery to produce what has been described as a “political victory monument.”² Gaius Suetonius Tranquillus (fl. 69 – 135 CE), a later writer, reported the presence of four small personal shrines to honos, virtus, felicitas, and victoria, near the base of the theater.³ These four personal deities closely corresponded to the quartet of virtues emphasized later in a brief history (res gestae) recorded by Plutarch and earlier in Cicero’s oration Pro Lege Manilia, also referred to as De Imperio Pompeio.⁴

Pro Lege Manilia, one of the first speeches Cicero delivered outside of a forensic setting, elaborated scientia, virtus, auctoritas, and felicitas as four distinct virtues intimating Pompey’s divine favor. (Imp. Pom. 28.1) Not only do two virtues (virtus and felicitas) directly comport with two of the deities, the correspondences between honor and authority (auctoritas/honos) and between victory and military wisdom (victoria/scientia rem militaris) strongly support the view that Pompey actively cultivated these features of his persona in his public and private life.
Cicero’s invocation of these four virtues incorporated laudatory praise for Pompey into a deliberative argument favoring the designation of the general as the sole commander of the eastern forces. His deliberative strategy was bolstered by epideictic passages which lauded Pompey’s public persona and resonated with the panegyric propaganda of earlier Roman generals and Hellenistic monarchs. This use of heroic biography in deliberative argument shifted the presumption toward the divinely favored Pompey and trumped any counter-arguments that might be based upon traditional military concerns. Cicero’s championing of Gaius Pompey’s imperial command, in other words, cast the contio’s sacred attributes into the foreground by emphasizing Pompey’s religious qualifications as an aspect of military excellence.

The contio, which was a primary form of public address throughout the Republican period, was a distinctly Roman genre of speech that fulfilled an agonistic function by addressing pending legislation, but it was one that also advanced forensic and epideictic ends. Usually, the presentation of a series of contiones defending and opposing a piece of legislation followed its proposal. Depending upon the contentiousness of the legislation, the presentation of these speeches could span nearly a month, during which time a written display of the legislative proposal remained in the Forum. The power to invoke or summon people for a public series of contiones became the very basis of magisterial power, a power first held by kings which later became a symbol of the magistrates. Since these speeches aimed either to manifest existing support or to manufacture the appearance of support, Robert Morstein-Marx has analogized the contio to political advertising. His comprehensive study of contiones in the late Republic has called attention to their “centrality in the political experience of the Roman community,” and their rhetorical significance as the “major instrument of ideological production in the Republic.”
Despite the clear connection between this rhetorical genre and political activity in the Roman Republic, the *contio* has only received passing mention in most histories of rhetoric. This tendency mirrors its neglect in the field of ancient history, and has led the historian Francisco Pina Polo to criticize the lack of appreciation for the *contio*’s influence upon the political decision-making process.\(^\text{10}\) Morstein-Marx’s lengthy treatment of this rhetorical tradition represents the genre’s most comprehensive reassessment to date, but this study hardly addressed the capacity of its subtle religiosity to translate epideictic values into a public and agonistic vernacular. *Contiones* fulfilled an agonistic function by deliberating the legislative proposals occasioning the speeches, but the customary initiation of all *contio* with a prayer subjected every such oration, and by implication the legislation attending it, to the approval or opposition of heavenly forces.

The strongest evidence of this religious dimension in the *contiones* lies in their spatial and temporal settings. presentations of *contiones* were not limited to specified holy days, but their temporal advent required prayer. Undertaking a *contio* did not require the pursuit of auspices, which would have called for sacrifices, but it did depend upon the marking of time with prayer and its delivery in a proper place.\(^\text{11}\) The imagined *contio* of the consul Postumius Albinus (fl. 2\(^{\text{nd}}\) Century B.C.E), found in Livy’s account of the Senate’s suppression of the Bacchic rituals, recited an invocatory prayer which it justified as a vital reminder of the *Res Publica*’s religious underpinnings.\(^\text{12}\) It is doubtful that Livy’s account shows complete fidelity to Postumius’ speech, but the narrative strongly points to the regular presence of prayer initiating *contiones*. Furthermore, the later rhetorical commentator Maurus Servius Honoratus (fl. Late 4\(^{\text{th}}\) Century C.E.), most famous for his notes on Vergil’s *Aeneid*, recalled his own reading of “traditional” invocatory prayers in the *contiones* of Cato and Tiberius Gracchus.\(^\text{13}\) The tradition
of temporally marking the openings of a series of contiones with an invocation of prayer was amplified by the custom of delivering the contio in a sacred space. This custom followed from the broader religious dictate that political activity be undertaken in inaugurated temploa, and the rostra, an inaugurated templum, most often fulfilled this requirement of the contiones. The rostra is particularly noteworthy because its physical location placed the speaker above the audience, a positioning distinctly different from the Greek custom of locating the speaker that possibly reflected a different cultural attitude regarding the relationship between speaker and audience.

The complex features of this Roman conception of rhetoric are evident in Cicero’s speech. Cicero’s public deference toward the religiously sanctified rostra, and by metonymy the surrounding civic space, communicated his dedication to those ideals of the Republic that regulated rhetorical conduct by determining topics and structuring the speaker’s relation to them. As a senatorial envoy obliged to endorse the ideals of popular deliberation, Cicero showed deference to the Rostra by identifying the authority of the Res Publica (auctoritas) with the physical space itself. Even though the rostra marked a space for speaking ad dicendum, not for conducting legislation ad agendum, Pro Lege Manilia confirmed the contio’s power as the symbolic mediator between popular will and Senatorial authority. Morstein-Marx interpreted Cicero’s expressions of respect for the public interest as an effort to “reconcile his persona of acute concern for the People’s interest with the fact that only now, as praetor, was he making his debut on the Rostra.” Cicero’s ability to address the people in contio was a privilege given by the magistrate and Cicero’s deference to rank, the rostra, and nearby vicinity reflected his attentiveness to the ideological norms of the occasion and to public sentiment. This linguistic sleight of hand portrayed the site of deliberation as an all powerful and threatened space, a
discursive reflection of the broader anxiety that Rome’s political leaders shared concerning the
manageability of democratic procedure in the face of an expanded, unpredictable, and sometimes
violent polity.

The Pro Lege Manilia was tailored to the ideological demands of the contional setting; Cicero emphasized the Rostra as a critical deliberative site even as he depicted it as a place in need of divine intercession because it was threatened by the conduct of the war and by his own rhetorical limitations. The speech’s narration of Mithridates’ threat conveyed the potential to harm Rome’s deliberative space and to amplify this threat Cicero distinguished this space from the deliberative process. This narrative rearticulated the deliberative space as a vulnerable and threatened setting in need of the heroic protagonist, Pompey. Cicero deliberately exaggerated Mithridates’ power and incorporated epideictic themes to unite Romans amidst the potentially divisive transfer of military command. Ursula Heibges noted how his appeal to Pompey as a divinely sent savior reconfigured the criteria under deliberation and elevated divine approval for Pompey above the mundane consideration of a joint command. In celebrating the divine qualities of Pompey’s military virtues, Cicero envisioned the passage of the Manilian proposal. This simultaneous use of praise to advance the solution engaged the audience members as both active participants in a public deliberation and as passive recipients of Pompey’s protection. At the same time, Cicero promoted the majesty of popular will and demoted his own rhetorical worth, citing his lack of deliberative ability and openly doubting the suitability of his forensic background for this unfamiliar speaking situation (hac insolita). The more Cicero diminished his position vis-à-vis the audience, the less direct his address became; his corresponding narrative redefined the site as a threatened place in need of a defender possessing the singular and exceptional virtue of Pompey. (Imp. Pomp. 10)
The Pro Lege Manilia illustrates the difficulties that arise when scholars try to interpret uniquely Roman discursive settings in light of rhetorical categories initially formulated to classify Greek speaking situations. The rhetorical categories of the Greek tradition were not entirely suited to Roman discourse, where praise for noble political behavior influenced conceptions of virtue as much as the emphasis upon exemplary individuals influenced political deliberation. This inexact correlation between Greek rhetorical forms and Roman rhetorical conduct evidently concerned its elite citizens of the late Republic, since this anxiety is reflected in the disparagement of the epideictic genre and dismissal of it as an elementary technique that is found in Cicero’s subsequent theoretical treatises. Cicero’s dialogue, De Oratore, a fusion of Aristotelian theory with Isocratean idealism, used the character Antonius to consciously and explicitly distinguish Roman epideictic processes from Greek tradition. In this way, the dialogue recognized Greek authority, but emphasized its limited applicability to distinctly Roman traditions. As hastily as Antonius recited the technical guidelines for laudatory speech, he vigorously dismissed their utility, noting the redundancy of teaching epideictic to distinguished speakers, who invariably embodied Rome’s aristocratic mores. He asserted that the properly groomed aristocrat inevitably recognized and extolled a subject’s praises in an appropriate manner since such manners were a natural extension of the speaker’s self, a socialized gesture. Antonius refused to recognize any Greek antecedent to the Roman practice of blending of epideictic elements into a wide range of discursive traditions and denied that Greek epideictic mirrored Greek values in the same way that Roman epideictic reflected Roman culture. Antonius’ comments idealized epideictic as a quintessential expression of Roman virtue, a defining moment for distinguished speakers to convey their embodiment of Aristocratic manners in enduring literary expressions.
In Antonius’ rhetorical question, “is there any man who would not know the good points of a human being?,” Dugan has sensed the “deep seated cultural anxieties which may have contributed to the later-republican Roman rhetoricians’ general reticence about the genus.”

Antonius’ comments reproduce the fundamental guidelines for eulogistic speech, but they also confine any practical acumen to a distinguished speaker’s natural abilities to perceive moral excellence:

Those are the advantages of race, wealth, connexions, friendships, power, good health, beauty, vigour, talent, and the rest of the attributes that are either physical or externally imposed: it must be explained that the person commended made a right use of these benefits if he possessed them, managed sensibly without them, if they were denied to him, and bore the loss with resignation, if they were taken away from him; and after that the speaker will marshal instances of conduct, either active or passive, on the part of the subject of his praises; whereby he manifested wisdom, generosity, valour, righteousness, greatness of soul, sense of duty, gratitude, kindliness, or in short, any moral excellence you please. These and similar indications of character the would-be panegyrist will readily discern, and he who seeks to disparage will as readily find evidence in rebuttal. (II-46)

This passage structured the arrangement of praise into a section addressing the natural gifts of the subject of praise and one elaborating either how the character’s actions employed their gifts, or overcame a lack of natural talent. Antonius’ bifurcation of specific gifts and their application showed how talented speakers could influence deliberative and epideictic conduct. At the same time that a speech’s narrative demonstrated the virtues manifested by a person’s deeds, it also reinforced and redefined these virtues, rendering the character’s action an exemplification of that noble character. This process potentially influenced the inventive conduct of subsequent speeches as well, rendering a well constructed laudation the new standard for depiction and comparison in subsequent epideictic speech. Narrating virtuous behavior also influenced the conduct of political deliberation when a skillful speaker amplified the praise in a manner that made the basis of a character’s actions relevant to subsequent political behavior.
Cicero’s epideictic practice has been studied by a few scholars interested in his use of this rhetorical technique to elaborate his own political and cultural status. John Dugan, who analyzed Cicero’s epideictic features in two orations, *Pro Archia* and *In Pisonem*, cites Cicero’s “use of the epideictic mode…as an exemplary case of how a literary form could interact with Roman political reality to reveal the potentialities and limitations of attempts to shape politics through cultural means.” Cicero’s use of epideictic in political speech, in Dugan’s words, signaled a “bold innovation that can best be understood in the context of Roman rhetoric’s problematic reception of this Greek rhetorical type.” Such attention to Cicero’s literary stylizations and use of vituperation illuminates the orator’s personal ambition, but it does not recognize the strategic aspects of epideictic mannerisms that are most clearly discernable in *Pro Lege Manilia* when it depicts Pompey’s past military achievements as a portents of his future service to Rome. This oration illustrated the deliberative advantages of epideictic mannerisms; the celebration of Pompey’s military success as evidence of divine favor cast the gods as concerned spectators willing favor upon the Republic should it endorse his command.

A few brief comments regarding the political and rhetorical trends of this period illustrate why Cicero chose a hybridized rhetorical presentation. To begin with, the potential for violence and division in deliberative politics had contributed to anxiety about the democratic processes. This anxiety had motivated the political leaders to enact modes of deliberation that included the public, but that curbed the threatening potential of their participation. Accordingly, the use of epideictic rhetoric offered a way to sidestep deliberative issues or to redefine them in a way that avoided the pitfalls associated with political deliberation at this time.
Contional Politics

A combination of political, cultural, and demographic factors invited the incorporation of spatial setting into rhetorical invention during the late Republic. Competing political agendas, prompted by perpetual military expansion and the corresponding need to integrate an expanding colonial economy into the Empire, placed Rome’s Senate and popular generals in constant opposition. Propagandistic messages were designed to coalesce a perpetually unstable polity. Demographic changes expanded the population in and around Rome and boosted contentiousness between political rivals competing for the approval of citizens who could more readily vote by virtue of their proximity to the Forum. Culturally, competition among speakers to secure a critical mass of supporters also involved efforts to control the physical and visual domain where speeches occurred. Because hostile responses threatened the viability of any political message, securing control over public space with supporters and impeding any rival supporters from accessing the same space became a precondition to political success.

Scholars of the late Republic have documented ever increasing violence coinciding with contional events and stemming from competition between Pompey and Caesar, a trend that motivated the expanded use of epideictic messages in contional speeches as an adaptive mechanism. Many of the trends portending the struggle between Julius Caesar and Gaius Pompey that accelerated the demise of the Republic were likewise evident in earlier rhetorical conduct. As the demographic changes in Rome and throughout its empire rendered impossible more traditional methods of political coordination, the polity required new forms of political transaction that preserved the sentiment and ideals of governance.28

During the late Republican period, roughly the first half of the first century B.C.E., the Roman aristocracy responded to the difficulties arising from mass political participation by
incorporating more symbolic performances into a wide range of political activities. Traditional channels of political expression became increasingly hazardous and subject to political strife, and political leaders availed themselves of an array of public symbols that could mitigate these dangers. Even as they undertook genuine deliberation in the Forum, senators used public events to address broader citizen concerns. Public policies were still subject to popular approval in the contio, which functioned in a non-binding manner roughly analogous to a deliberative plebiscite. In this fashion, as Geoffrey Sumi summarizes “the two principles of Roman politics—the aristocratic ethos and the ideal of popular sovereignty—intersected.” Ceremonial displays of power characterized a mode of public discourse in the late republic that preserved an ideology of popular rule. This aspect, as argued by Sumi, reflects another contradictory dynamic of ceremonial politics: “The venues where the Roman people expressed their collective will were also where the aristocrats exercised power. This suggests that in the Roman Republic power and ceremony were closely intertwined, their relationship almost symbiotic in the sense that one could not really exist without the other.” Public events preserved a participatory dimension of Roman politics, but relocated the traditional sources of political power, requiring the Roman elites to seek public approval and win acclaim for their policies.

Pro Lege: Analysis

Cicero’s contio was presumably one in a series of speeches addressing Manilius’ legislative proposal to transfer the eastern command from Lucullus to Pompey who would be designated as sole commander of that force. Even though the previous commander Lucullus enjoyed military victories that even the famous general Sulla had failed to achieve, his success in forcing Mithridates to withdraw had also deprived him of the politically decisive trophy, namely Mithridates himself. The central issue under debate, whether Pompey should receive an
exceptional command, reflected a political trend in the late Republic which Ronald Ridley identified as “one of the factors in the fall of that form of government.” One scholar, Peter Rose noted that the “precedent-violating character of the proposed command” compelled Cicero to “elaborate a defense of breaking precedents…” In presenting his case, Cicero balanced a standard deliberative argument promoting an escalation of the military conflict with a quasi-panegyric celebration of Pompey’s military leadership. His narrative of the Pontean war, as an unfinished epic, underscored the need to sustain the conflict, and his ultimate characterization of a perfect leader’s attributes foreshadowed Pompey’s successful vindication of the decision to appoint him to the same command.

Cicero’s discourse of praise was designed to transcend political division between the Senate and Roman people by appealing to unifying sentiments. The proeimeum simultaneously sets forth both the epideictic theme of praise for Pompey and a deliberative argument in support of his command, within a problem solution structure suitable for deliberation. Cicero acknowledges this panegyric element from the very beginning, emphasizing his trepidations about departing from his customary forensic activity and approaching such a difficult topic of praise hoc aditu laudis (Imp. Pomp. 1.1), which calls for speaking most ornately (ornatissimus) and giving praise only to the very best (optimo maxime).

Outside of a few brief rebuttals specifically addressing the objections of the prominent Senators, Quintus Hortensius (114 – 50 B.C.E.) and Quintus Catullus (120 – 61 B.C.E.), the oration follows an elegant three part argument. It begins with background detailing the nature of the conflict. The second section analyzes the potentially devastating consequences that will befall Rome should it fail to contain it. And the final section celebrates four specific virtues of Pompey, his military excellence, his authority, his honesty, and his divine favor. A summation of
the speech, an extended peroration, related each of these four virtues to aspects of the conflict to explain how Pompey would accomplish the Senate’s goals.

The deliberative portion of the speech defined and amplified Mithridates’ threat by arguing that his adventurism threatened both Rome’s colonial economy and the imperium. Cicero connected the defense of the eastern frontier to the economic well being of the Roman colonists, merchants, and tax farmers, thereby forging a link between the colonists’ physical safety and Rome’s economic health. (Imp. Pomp. 19) He urged the Roman citizenry to “defend the commonwealth” and to understand that the threat to the provinces could disrupt the economic conduct that bolstered the forum itself since “the loss of one inevitably undermines the other and causes its collapse.”

Neither the Romans nor Ponteans could have anticipated that their initial hostilities would span three wars and approximately thirty years.

Cicero succinctly reviewed Pompey’s successful conclusion of the recent slave and pirate wars, leaving out just enough detail to avoid drawing attention to Pompey’s habitual assumption of commands in areas where the bulk of the work had already been completed. Cumulatively, the narrative’s syncopated sequence and deliberate omissions assured the crowd of Pompey’s success. Cicero’s recitation of Pompey’s successive commands revealingly pointed to Pompey’s savvy consolidation of previous gains through the institution of an efficient bureaucracy governing the controlled provinces. The eastern campaign against Mithridates was in its final stages and Pompey’s pursuit of an exceptional command over a largely secured area in the East, reflected his opportunistic tendencies. The new command held considerably less risk than Cicero implied and successful completion of the quarter-century conflict offered the potential for a triumph, which Pompey ultimately did enjoy. Ultimately his assumption of command under the
Manilian law would signal the consolidation of military authority in coincidence with a massive extension of prestige and standing for the Roman imperium.\textsuperscript{39}  

The epideictic section occupied the middle third of the oration (\textit{Imp. Pomp.} 10-19) and augmented the argument for accepting Pompey’s protection by elaborating four specific virtues (military success, authority, honesty, and divine grace) that present him as the sole military figure able to obtain divine approval for his political and military pursuits. Cicero’s arrangement of his praise for Pompey around these four attributes, strategically connected his biography to a broader narrative encompassing Rome’s wars against Mithridates while avoiding direct comparison to any rival military commander.\textsuperscript{40}  Cicero’s praise for Pompey’s military success began with a review of Pompey’s military history, his knowledge of warfare, and successful engagements in the most noteworthy conflict in public memory, taking up approximately twenty quasi-annalistic lines, a negligible portion of the speech, (\textit{Imp. Pomp.} 28 occupied one section, or 1/24\textsuperscript{th} of the speech). After first addressing Pompey’s military capability, the core issue, Cicero explored Pompey’s knowledge of military affairs, supernatural luck, and political authority.  

The imperative “watch” supplied the transition to the epideictic part of the oration and summoned the audience to act appropriately. (\textit{Imp. Pomp.} 12 \& 13) The first summoning of his audience (\textit{videte}) exhorted his audience to observe the demeanor for contemplating the dignity and glory of the people’s empire. The second summoning shifted the act of observing into an active role, rendering it as a way to avoid the most shameful result, namely, of not being able to watch over and protect the glorious empire which the people had accepted as their legacy.  Taking this more prophetic stance in the epideictic section of the speech, Cicero characterized Pompey as the only hero capable of avenging Rome and fulfilling divine dictates. This stance brought the subject of the oration into play with the symbolism of the forum. Since this was
Rome’s traditional site of commemoration, it was the one place where citizens could appropriately celebrate Pompey’s heroic nature. This alteration placed the audience’s support for the Manilian proposal in a position supplemental to their epideictic role as observers validating Pompey’s greatness and his manifestation of divine will.

As Cicero urged the audience to act in accordance with the legacy that was being invoked in this epideictic turn, he was also defining the present conflict in similar terms--as a continuation of the glorious wars waged by Rome’s ancestors. In this way the public act of honoring the empire’s legacy that he was inviting his audience to perform became a synecdochic act standing in for the guardianship of the empire and the preservation of honor (Imp. Pomp. 12). It semantically connected what was becoming in the speech an act of collectively witnessing Rome’s legacy with the policy of expanding the empire. This figurative move aestheticized the empire itself, defining it as the most beautiful inheritance of Rome’s ancestors (pulcherrimum). Their civic responsibility to “watch” and “protect” Rome as obligated them to accept Pompey’s manifestation of divine signs. But locating imperial glory in the people’s efforts to guard and protect the empire, ostensibly a move to empower his audience to accept a heavenly mandate, also rendered political debate superfluous.41 This move to cast traditional methods of praise as unworthy of a leader of Pompey’s caliber ultimately identified the decision to grant him the eastern command as the only praise appropriate to his efforts.

The concluding advocacy of Pompey’s agenda in Pro Lege Manilia naturally flowed from Cicero’s initial emphasis upon the general’s exceptional character, a strategic emphasis upon virtue as the basis for new political action. The laudation in the second half of the speech conveyed gratitude for Pompey’s assumption of command, but it redefined deliberative agency as an acceptance of praise for Pompey’s virtuous attributes, a process that changed the Rostra
from a site of action into the object to be defended. Cicero anticipated Roman gratitude for Pompey following the successful conclusion of the war, but deprived the Rostra of its deliberative capacity. *Pro Lege Manilia* links the epideictic gesture to the deliberative process through the polysemic invocation of place (*loqui*). At different points in Cicero’s speech, the term *loqui* referred to its immediate topic while also alluding to the surrounding space. Thus it figuratively integrated deliberation over the suitability of Pompey’s military command with an oblique defense of laudation as the most appropriate form of rhetorical conduct in sacred space.

Cicero’s appeals to immediate imagery and his emphasis on the Senate’s vision mediated between the deliberative setting of the *contio* and a cluster of military, political, and religious themes casting Pompey as a blessed warrior. To emphasize the difficulties in honoring Pompey’s ability, *virtute*, Cicero argued that Pompey had already achieved all known distinction. Instead of addressing a new and previously unheard topic, *inauditum*, Cicero placed an ironic emphasis upon the impossibility of such a process, a *recusatio* that took its inventive cues from the question: “What tribute can anyone pay other than what would be unworthy of him, stale to you and familiar to everybody?”\(^{42}\) (*Imp. Pomp.* 41) Cicero characterized his audience as fervent supporters of Pompey, and he called upon them to witness the general’s military successes. Using the anaphoric phrase *testes est* “is a witness,” he likewise invoked Pompey’s universal regard in Sicily, Africa, Gaul, Spain, Italy, and all other nations, races, and seas. In addition to the traditional recitations of the honors achieved during a distinguished career, *cursus honorum*, Cicero elaborated Pompey’s military successes and invoked the entire Republic as witness: “Italy is my witness, which, as the great conqueror, Lucius Sulla himself admitted, was set free by the able co-operation of Pompeius.”\(^{43}\) (*Imp. Pomp.* 30) In defining Pompey as a blessed warrior, Cicero asserted the general’s superiority to all other commanders, declaring him the “perfect
general” *summo imperatore*, a leader who mastered the art of war, cultivated a corresponding set of military skills, earned universal acclamation, and enjoyed supernatural favor.

Cicero’s description of military ability as a sign of spiritual favor introduced an alternative set of standards to evaluate Rome’s military needs that collectively challenged the prudence of a joint command. The peroration directly addressed this point by relating the epideictic passages to the issue under deliberation—the selection of a leader immune to the corruptions and seductions of military spoil.\(^44\) *(Imp. Pomp. 66)* An expanded conception of military competence, instantiated by Pompey’s deeds, emphasized character as a critical topic of deliberation. Following the insinuation of epideictic issues into deliberative concerns two further attributes bolstered this position: his praise for Pompey as *felix*, an adjective previously used to describe Sulla, preordained the surmounting of Mithridates and his praise for Pompey’s political authority emphasized his capacity to legitimate Senatorial and Roman power throughout the colonies. Cicero’s use of this cognomen had far reaching ramifications because the epithet marked Pompey’s military dominance as a divinely ordained attribute, signaling a belief that honoring militarism was a form of piety. Such allusions to Sulla also enhanced Cicero’s narration of Pompey’s exploits because they foreshadowed the ultimate glory Pompey was destined to achieve and cast his command as inevitably successful—inevitable because it was divinely ordained. Together, the strategic presentation of these three attributes as necessary for conducting the eastern campaign indicted Pompey’s rivals and introduced the risks inherent to a joint command *(Imp. Pomp. 64).*\(^45\)

The virtue *felix*, translated by Hodge as “luck,” but perhaps more accurately translated as “divinely favored” adopted the epithet celebrated by the famous general Sulla and conveyed Pompey’s divine fortunes as a sign directing citizens to conform their opinion to the gods “for
the sake of…commonwealth and…empire.”\textsuperscript{46} (Imp. Pomp. 48) Such an allusion encapsulated Pompey’s greatness by favorably comparing him to Sulla and, in the process, claiming that Sulla’s best feature was simply one of Pompey’s admirable traits. This process subordinated Sulla’s epithet \textit{Sulla Felix} to Pompey’s epithet, \textit{Magnus}, thereby elevating Pompey’s stature while also bringing the virtues of the past into the present. A range of meanings associated with Sulla were now found to be present within Pompey’s populist virtues. Edwin Ramage, who has studied remnants of Sulla’s reflexive statements concerning just and proper action, characterized Sulla’s emphasis upon \textit{felicitas} as a sustained effort to mold epideictic tradition to propagandistic needs.\textsuperscript{47} Cicero attributed Pompey’s “heaven sent” successes to divine intervention, a “prerogative of the gods,” but elaborated this declaration no further, as if cautiously avoiding any arrogant affront to the gods.\textsuperscript{48} Politically, this refusal to elaborate Pompey’s piety shielded his assertion from public response, even as it thematically resonated Sullan propaganda.\textsuperscript{49}

Using histories and commentaries to demonstrate how his deeds exemplified traditional Roman values, Sulla had emphasized his role at the vanguard of Roman virtue using vituperative and laudatory themes and emphasizing the implications of his adopted epithet \textit{felix}. His assumption of the highly suggestive epithet \textit{felix}, a particularly novel feature of his propaganda, implied the presence of divine approval for his military victories and celebrated the wisdom and fortune derived from “his special relationship to the gods.”\textsuperscript{50} The title, awarded following his military triumph achieved its semantic force by conveying supernatural approval for his exploits. The epithet \textit{Felix} cleverly expanded upon the passive but traditional epideictic \textit{topos} praising a figure’s divine descent, rendering it a symbol for the gods’ active support for Sulla’s political and military exploits. Sulla in his program had tried to signal his role in inaugurating a new golden age, a theme that arose again in Augustus’ propaganda and more importantly his overall
benefits use of shrines to connect the benefits of his exploits to the rewards in Rome. Sulla’s work to restore the great structures of the past indicated his reverence for Roman custom, a reintegration of old into the new that helped him to redefine his political and military activities as an extension of the religious practices and customs of the past.

Auctoritas, the fourth and final category of virtue, also introduced criteria for deliberation from a source located outside the realm of deliberation. Early on, the speech recognized the significance of the role of auctoritas as bestowed by the senate body (Imp. Pomp. 1.2)—stressed twice, as an honor entrusted by the senate (vos honoribus mandandis esse voluistis) and as an honor given to Cicero (qui eam mihi dederunt). But this authority to speak did not mark the ultimate authority to decide, and Cicero located that decision in the domain of the people. For instance, Peter Rose explains Cicero’s transfer of auctoritas from the senate to the people as a way to access popular will in a contional setting. This conflict in the source of authority, according to Rose, demonstrated the tension between the Roman democracy and imperial expansion. Cicero’s advocacy of the power of liberty and of the people at the expense of the Senate’s power aligned him with a military figure whose ultimate actions contributed to the destabilization of the Republic.

Cicero’s broadened conception of military power identified honesty and restraint as the two vital sources of a general’s success. Cicero elaborated honesty as a necessary instrument of imperial pacification and advocated a colonial administration guided by traditional Roman ideals. (Imp. Pomp. 41) Because the display of honesty, honestas, coalesced the political support of conquered peoples, it served as the cornerstone of a well-run empire and it contrasted with the avarice that caused military insecurity. (Imp. Pomp. 65) Likewise, he elaborated moderation, temperantia as the self control anchoring Pompey’s successful actions and
contrasted it to the avaricious looting that had damaged the imperial reputation. The harmonious picture of Pompey avoiding despotism during his tenure as the governor of other Greek speaking provinces fostered a presumption against the other commanders.\(^56\) (Imp. Pomp. 40) Only Pompey’s troops had a proven history of appropriate conduct, and Pompey’s governance alone had earned Rome’s trust.\(^57\) (Imp. Pomp. 68) Rome’s virtuous ideals offered a way to bind subjects to a governor and sustain Rome’s military victories, *bona fide*.

**Conclusion**

Given Cicero’s stature as an orator, theorist, and politician who mediated Greek and Roman rhetorical traditions during the late-Republican period, his rhetoric is the logical starting point for a study of Roman epideictic and its connection to language, culture, and power. As a rhetorical theorist, Cicero’s erudite works situated Roman rhetorical practice against a Greek backdrop and as a practicing orator, Cicero’s own work emphasized a fidelity to Rome’s own rhetorical tradition. This is because, as Jan Swearingen has pointed out, Cicero was a unifier of earlier traditions, whose idealized vision of rhetoric fused “the voices who speak in his rhetorical works [to] convey a burgeoning pluralism of views.”\(^58\)

The historical significance of the *Pro Lege Manilia* lay in the fact that it portended the political direction Rome would follow in the late Republican period and anticipated the discursive conduct of this later time. The speech accelerated Cicero’s own political ascent, and it embodied the contradictory urge to expand military force to maintain internal peace, as well as a host of other contradictions.\(^59\) As an instance in which a popular leader used propaganda to manipulate the people with mass-oriented messages in context of civil strife, this speech is critical to understanding the late Republican period.\(^60\) The themes of Roman militarism that justified the award of unprecedented power to Pompey endured for centuries, and so the *Lege*
Manilia as Cicero’s integration of epideictic and religious themes into Rome’s political discourse may be regarded as their blueprint. This speech’s hybridized form enveloped the deliberative space with an epideictic fabric.

The ultimate force of this hybrid use was summoned in Cicero’s concluding argument that Pompey would protect Rome and advance the state’s interests with a heaven-sent blessing:

Wherefore, since this war is both of such importance that it cannot be neglected and of such magnitude that it must be conducted with the utmost care; and since you have it in your power to put in command of it one who possesses remarkable knowledge of warfare, exceptional capacity, brilliant prestige, and unusual good fortune, do you hesitate, gentlemen to employ for the protection and advancement of the State this great blessing which Heaven has bestowed and conferred upon you? (49)

This passage established the link between the deliberative process and the epideictic topics most clearly. Cicero redefined the appointment of Pompey as a decision that would extend the glory and dignity of the empire, imperii dignitate atque gloria, a decision that extended empire by linking Pompey’s leadership with the unlimited capacity of Roman expansion. Cicero’s shifting alliances led him to regret his support for Pompey in his later years, but he continued to view his speech as a masterful work and he defended the speech as an exemplification of the middle style.

The admiration scholars customarily express for Cicero’s oratory seldom applies to his epideictic practice, despite his own self-reflection regarding the writing of the Pro Lege Manilia in Orator. In this treatise, following his discussion of the conduct of the perfect orator, Cicero suggested that his own matching of epideictic content to the mood of an occasion reflected his achievement of oratorical perfection. His particular legalistic statements associating his speech with a defense of the popular cause, by implication cast Pompey’s assumption of an extraordinary command as an effort to defend the people and heroically restore justice and peace.61
Chapter Three: Ritual and Power in Imperial Roman Rhetoric

During the Augustan Age, newly developed connections between oratory and buildings, both civic and religious structures, allowed sacred space to promote and reinforce a rapidly mutating imperial ideology in several novel ways. One example, lying beneath a layer of literary symbolism, emerges from Ode 1.10 of the imperial poet Horace (65 B.C.E.-8 B.C.E.), in which he elaborates on an earlier characterization of the emperor Augustus (63 B.C.E.-14 C.E.) as Mercury (Ode 1.2). Horace hails Mercury as the “glib grandson of Atlantis who, shrewd with voice and with the technique of the famed palaestra, established the fierce race of recent men (contemporary Romans).”¹ The appellation Mercuri Facunde (glib Mercury) and the further marking of the deity as catus (shrewd), identify him as a skilled wit, capable of controlling the unruly mob in conformity to Roman ideals of rhetoric. The last phrase, “with the technique of famed palaestra,” however, intimates a departure from Republican ideology.

Horace’s oblique linkage of Mercury and the palaestra, literally, the more of the palaestra (a wrestling area for school boys), is not commonly noted. A glimpse of its significance is revealed by Cicero’s earlier dismissal, in Orator (46 B.C.E), of the palaestra’s importance that analogizes it to epideictic speech and other lesser forms of oratory. For Cicero, epideictic is a “showy” approximation of speech that, at best, helps students to learn and prepare for the “real” rhetorical battles that occur in the courtroom and the forum. Cicero dismisses epideictic as the “sweet, fluent and copious,” speech of the “sophists” and relegates it to discrete
places, explaining that it “is fitter for the parade than for the battle; set apart for the gymnasium
and the palaestra, it is spurned and rejected in the forum.” This negation of epideictic
emphasizes the superiority of agonistic discourse in the well-ordered republic of Cicero’s day.
Could Horace’s association of Augustus with Mercury and the palaestra signal a reversal of
epideictic’s fortunes in the early imperial period?

To answer such a question, this essay interprets the distinctive reformulation of epideictic
discourse that occurred during the Augustan Age as a dramatic new development in Roman
rhetorical history. Together, physical and textual evidence suggest a broadened political use of
epideictic address coinciding with efforts to secure greater control over spaces in which
epideictic events took place. Temples and the surrounding environs increasingly became sites of
political discourse, centers of religious ceremonies that called popular attention to imperial
messages without the distractions of contentious speech. The conveyance of political messages
from religious spaces augmented the Augustan ideology by presenting a specially tailored set of
values that fashioned the emperor’s auctoritas, a highly personalized form of rhetorical power.
The epideictic emphasis on locale and ceremony distinguishes the highly individuated rhetorical
qualities of Augustan auctoritas from the more broadly conceived notion of Ciceronian ethos
and best illustrates the shift from the more flexible rhetorical practices of the Republic to the
Augustan emphasis on power and stability.

In addition to generating valuable new insights into imperial rhetoric, an area of study
neglected in our field, this effort to examine archeological and textual features of Imperial
rhetorical practice will renew interest in the Roman period. A broadened evidentiary base for
distinguishing imperial from republican rhetoric harmonizes with the work of scholars such as
Paul Zanker, whose consideration of the symbolic power of imperial artifacts and architecture
has invigorated the study of imperial Rome, and the work of John Hanson, whose study of the theater-temple has called attention to the connections between Roman temples and public events during the late Republic and early Principate. George Kennedy has noted some of the rhetorical implications of the Augustan period, identifying Augustus as the founder of “new techniques of visual and verbal persuasion,” and arguing that the most noteworthy instances of Augustan rhetoric should be appreciated as “manifestation(s) of epideictic rhetoric.” By widening the variety of unconventional rhetorical artifacts in the history of imperial rhetoric, scholars can productively render it more salient to contemporary students and establish its relevance, not as a watered-down successor to the Ciceronian tradition, but as a distinctive movement reflecting changes in the socio-cultural and political conditions of Rome’s rhetorical culture.

This chapter clarifies the relationship between Augustus’s emphasis on displays of authority and the developing importance of epideictic coincident with the political transition from republic to empire. The first half compares Augustus’s autobiographical Res Gestae with Cicero’s speech tactics in order to isolate critical differences between the fluid Ciceronian practices of ethos established by personae specifically constructed for an agonistic rhetorical encounter, and Augustus’s construction of auctoritas as a stable persona based in clearly specified honors and virtues. Auctoritas must be distinguished from ethos lest we ignore the contrast between the narrow range of speaking personae permissible to ceremonial speakers and the broad range of political, social, and religious experiences that speakers invoked to augment their ethos when pondering political and juridical questions. Although not a speech, the Res Gestae remains a peerless artifact, reflecting the transition in rhetoric occurring at the end of the Republic. The second half of the chapter emphasizes that auctoritas was a critical feature of imperial public discourse by observing the religious basis for civil and military power. It
analyzes the ways that ceremonial occasions became increasingly public events that reinforced imperial power and argues that the evolving patterns of Roman temple construction and design reflect a concerted effort to control these events. The disclosure of the role that epideictic values played in constructing Augustus’s *auctoritas*, when examined in conjunction with analyses addressing the physical and stylistic conditions of imperial speech, may broaden our perspective on imperial rhetorical history.

**Res Gestae**

The *Res Gestae*, Augustus’s enigmatic personal testament, clarifies the rhetorical basis of the Augustan Principate. Its use of the first person simulates the emperor’s direct address and augments the rhetorical explanations and justifications of Augustan political values.\(^6\) The opening sentence of the *Res Gestae* establishes that the original inscription was cast on two bronze pillars set up outside Augustus’s Mausoleum, which at that time was located near the outskirts of the Roman city.\(^7\) There is also some speculation that an abridged version of the inscription may have existed somewhere in the Forum Augustum.\(^8\) The original bronze inscription no longer exists, and there is general agreement that the bronze pillars were melted down for some other use; however, copies of varying quality have been discovered in areas of modern Turkey since 1555.\(^9\) To date, three inscriptions have been found in Ankara, Apollonia, and Antioch, which replicate the original in Latin and sometimes Greek. The circumstances surrounding the production of the text reflect Augustus’s desire to dictate his historical legacy by leaving a posthumous record of his life and ideals.

Even critics who might prefer to place this text outside an imperial rhetorical corpus would concede that it is both suggestive of and instructive about the themes that guided rhetoric in the Augustan Age. Scholars have not settled conclusively on a specific category for
classifying the *Res Gestae*, but its placement in any likely subgenre (panegyric, encomium, eulogy, or auto-biography) establishes it as an epideictic text and its epideictic themes illustrate some of the pragmatic functions of this discursive form during the imperial period. Moreover, Edwin Judge has noted an overt rhetorical function in Roman inscriptions, which endeavor to “capture the vital essence of the moment” and address audience members and scholars of subsequent ages with “the words at the very point of utterance.” Indeed, the significance of the *Res Gestae* may be impossible to overstate; Judge has declared it the “most momentous inscription of them all,” and Edwin Ramage called it “the single most important historical document of the Augustan period and one of the most important of the empire.”

Often read as a unified text that beckons and accedes to literary interpretation, the *Res Gestae*’s physical origins as an inscription carved into the stone walls lying near Roman temples should bring attention to its original rhetorical uses to signify, unify, and sanctify imperial religious space. Brunt and Moore’s introduction to their translation reminds readers that the most intact inscription, the “*Monumentum Ancyranum*, [is] an inscription in the temple of ‘Rome and Augustus’ at Ancyra in Galatia, the modern Ankara.” Present-day English language texts are translations of Latin approximations, reconstructed and synthesized from different Latin and Greek excavations. Such admirable efforts to produce a unified literary text necessarily have guided scholarly treatments of the *Res Gestae*, and they have set the stage for further consideration of the typical circumstances under which an imperial subject might have encountered Augustus’s monumentalized words. Either directly to readers or indirectly to listeners through a literate intermediary, the inscription’s signification of the emperor’s presence helps to communicate the ideals that influenced Augustus’s activities beginning with his nineteenth year (44 B.C.E.) and ending almost sixty years later (14 C.E.).
The idealization of Augustus’s honors, deeds, and rewards in the opening sentence of this text is typical of speeches of praise. The main body of the text that follows accounts for the deeds by which Augustus subdued the world and the civic projects he privately funded in passages documenting the offices he held and the honors bestowed on him. In typical epideictic fashion, Augustus casts himself Rome’s defender who, like the hero Evagoras in Isocrates’s famous encomium, commissioned an army that “successfully championed the liberty of the Republic” (RG 1.1). This prefatory narrative, beginning with his initial activities to raise an army and liberate the Republic and concluding with a description of his capstone title, the father of the country, pater patriae, frame the main body, which catalogues Augustus’s noteworthy achievements and narrates his life’s course.

Associations connecting religious space and Augustus’s voice add three distinctly rhetorical dimensions to the Res Gestae. First, the text’s calibration of auctoritas as a center of imperial power points to the strengthened role of social, political, and religious virtue in the imperial political decision-making calculus. Second, its mode of address as an inscription renders the text a signifier identifying temple structures as points of contact between citizens and their emperor. Few temples displayed the Res Gestae inscription in front, but most contained some visual cue alluding to the emperor or his divine associations. It is likely that this process of linking temples to various thematic allusions to the emperor reinforced the trend to transform temples into a stable source of political signification. Third, the new centering of leadership around projections of virtuous examples gives ceremonial events a larger role in sanctifying certain types of political rhetoric and calls attention to a new fusion of political messages in religious environments. These three facets of the Res Gestae document the rhetorical changes that accompanied cultural trends in the emerging Augustan Age.
Auctoritas

Throughout the *Res Gestae*, Augustus’s retrospective voice summons citizens to honor the virtues witnessed throughout his reign. The text presents themes found in other public statements, such as that in Suetonius’s biography, that appear to show the *princeps’* determination to lead through virtuous example: “I have contrived this to lead the citizens to require me, while I live, and the rulers of later times as well, to attain the standard set by those worthies of old.”¹⁴ By updating the standards of the past through his living example, Augustus also desired to link his glory to the state’s prosperity. This desire even appears to have been subject to official statement, if we read Suetonius’s use of the phrase *testatus est* to imply a publicly recorded source: “May it be my privilege to establish the State in a firm and secure position, and reap from that act the fruit that I desire; but only if I may be called the author of the best possible government, and bear with me the hope when I die that the foundations which I have laid for the State will remain unshaken.”¹⁵ Augustus’s desire to be remembered as an architect of a reborn Rome, as an *optimi status auctor*, a “designer of the best state,” reflects the more permanent nature of *auctoritas*. For such a goal to endure as a guiding force throughout the existence of the “restored” republic, he needed to create symbols that effectively could convey his legacy in a preserved state, impervious to the wear of time. Augustus’s understanding of this need to shape public memory spawned an agenda that combined the codifying of moral virtue in Roman law with public displays of his personal example: “By new laws passed on my proposal I brought back into use many exemplary practices of our ancestors…and in many ways I myself transmitted exemplary practices to posterity for their imitation”(RG 8.5). In this way, the *Res Gestae’s* celebration of the first *princeps’* notable achievements standardized principles and behaviors for future emperors to emulate. As a result of this standardization process, political
messages could be bolstered by the moral authority of the princeps if they were presented in a manner consistent with the themes grounding his authority.

The abstract ideals underpinning auctoritas achieved clarity through Augustus’s living exemplification of them. By instantiating the specific behaviors associated with these virtues, Augustus’s epitaph redefined the types of public deeds that would allow future rulers to project virtuous personae.¹⁶ The passage of the Res Gestae summarizing Augustus’s civil achievements reveals the full connection between auctoritas and political power by disclosing that rhetorical messages tied to such public manifestations of the emperor’s charisma trump the power that comes from political offices:

In my sixth and seventh consulships, after I had extinguished civil wars, and at a time when with universal consent I was in complete control of affairs, I transferred the republic from my power to the dominion of the senate and the people of Rome. For this service of mine I was named Augustus by decree of the senate and the door-posts of my house were publicly wreathed with bay leaves and a civic crown was fixed over my door and a golden shield was set in the Curia Julia, which, as attested by the inscription thereon, was given me by the senate and people of Rome on account of my courage, clemency, justice and piety. After this time I excelled all in influence, although I possessed no more official power than others who were my colleagues in the several magistracies. (RG 35-7)

This passage’s contrast between power and authority led Ramage to argue that when Augustus “says that he surpassed all in auctoritas, he is in essence summarizing and underlining what he has already said about himself and is making an important statement about his position in the new regime.”¹⁷ Brunt and Moore’s translation of the word auctoritas as “influence” merely connotes the respect enjoyed by an elder, not that of a semi-divine savior. In a broadened conception of the word more fitting to the imperial Roman worldview, auctoritas translates into “authority”—perhaps, given that his authority surpasses everyone else, meaning “sole authority”—and stands for an entirely different set of power arrangements, a broad array of resources that endorse, reinforce, and express the will of the princeps.
Even the phrase “sole authority,” fails to convey the full range of connotations of the name Augustus. As an adjective, the term overlaid objects with a sacred, holy, or revered quality. Contemporaries who recognized the common etymological derivation of Augustus and *auctoritas* from the root word *augere* (to increase in size) might have also appreciated some of the common connotations in the Oxford Latin Dictionary’s listing of twelve principle meanings for *augere*, all of which involve increases in size, quantity, growth, power, or dignity. An intriguing passage, found in the work of Augustus’s chief architect, Vitruvius, places these two words in close enough proximity possibly to constitute a polyptoton, the use of different grammatical forms of the same word to call attention to its wealth of meanings. Certainly, the passage emphasizes Augustus’s interest in the *auctoritas* of public buildings and an enhanced state, *aucta civitatis*:

> But I observed that you cared not only about the common life of all men, and the constitution of the state, but also about the provision of suitable public buildings; so that the state was not only made greater (*esset aucta*) through you by its new provinces, but the majesty of the empire was also expressed through the eminent dignity (*egregias auctoritates*) of its public buildings.\(^{18}\)

In this passage, Granger’s clever phrase “eminent dignity” for *egregias auctoritates* also connotes the “dignified” sense of the adjective *augustus*. Given this word’s semantic wealth, it comes as no surprise that Augustus became a generic title for emperors who followed Octavian. The title semantically connected them to his historic legacy and the echoes of his existence resonating from the buildings he built. Augustus, the title, communicated a set of standards for the ruler and ruled as much as it conveyed possession of power.

**Ethos**

The rhetorical conditions of the Principate stand in stark contrast to the rhetorical activities of Cicero, whose public career, many believe, epitomizes the rhetoric of the Republic.\(^ {19}\) Juxtaposing Cicero’s rhetorical perspective against the wider range of rhetorical ideals prevailing
during the Republic, although necessary for a full comparison of republican and imperial rhetoric, exceeds the limits of this study. Nevertheless, a brief account of his conception of ethos establishes a fundamental point of contrast: Cicero outlines an audience-centered conception of ethos appropriate for the agonistic rhetoric of the Republic but distinct from Augustus’s rhetorical conception of *auctoritas*, which placed an epideictic emphasis on ceremony and place.

Throughout his writings, Cicero stresses the importance of recognizing and understanding an audience’s preconceived expectations for behavior suitable to convey character. Scholarly reconstructions of Cicero’s conception of ethos have emphasized the central role the audience plays in his theoretical development of *dignitas* and sympathy and in his corresponding constructions of sympathetic characters in his speeches. Cicero’s theory and practice convey a set of rhetorical norms and demonstrate a keen appreciation for how the audience’s expectations can influence a speech. These norms signal Cicero’s awareness that well designed passages of self-reference can win the audience’s sympathy, a departure from Aristotle’s theory of ethos. In Cicero’s speeches, artful constructions of persona correspond to the theoretical stance he advocated.

Cicero’s theoretical stance advised speakers to link specific aspects of their persona to the rhetorical issue at hand in order to impress the audience with the magnitude of their service. Cicero emphasized a flexible set of appeals that help evoke the listeners’ feelings of sympathy in agonistic speaking situations. In *De Oratore* (2.182), he identifies the “character” “habits” “deeds,” and “life” of the speaker and client as specific sources of appeals to the audience’s sympathy. These sources of esteem bond the speaker with the audience and create a basis for appeals to sympathy. Jakob Wisse’s detailed study of Ciceronian ethos explains that Cicero took a more “abstract and philosophical” approach because he recognized that the speaker
ultimately needed to make prudent choices about the rhetoric and construct a suitable response. Cicero focuses ethos around audience response and defends the process of gaining the audience’s feelings of sympathy for the circumstances of the orator or the orator’s client. In addition to the short-term flexibility offered by character appeals, the social and political conditions of the Republic created a rhetorical climate that allowed orators who accumulated status and prestige in speeches ultimately to obtain social and political power. An orator would communicate his persona in a manner fitting to the specific rhetorical situation, but certain features of this persona would endure past the specific occasion. Jean Goodwin’s study of Cicero’s agonistic rhetoric has led her to speculate that a speaker’s auctoritas was partially dependent upon his ethos and that in situations where the speaker suffered a loss in ethos he would suffer a corresponding loss in auctoritas. In other words, character development under the Republic, in addition to operating as source of rhetorical appeals during the speech, also had a “sustaining influence” that benefited the orator in subsequent speeches. The political conditions of the Republic enabled orators to accumulate honor, power, and glory through characterizations of their activities on behalf of the Republic. Cicero’s speeches contain several examples of the technique sometimes referred to as dramatic ethos, a technique of incorporating ethos into the general narrative flow of the speech by depicting an individual’s character “believably without detracting from the dramatic action.”

The manner in which Cicero wove his personal ethos into the fabric of his speeches—at times a rustic ethos stressing simplicity and impartiality; at other times a sophisticated one full of honor and dignity—highlights a complex system of argumentation that emphasized the orator’s personal commitment to the outcome of the dispute. The linkage of ethos to his service on behalf of the Republic developed over the course of Cicero’s career and culminated in the
speeches following his return from exile. Cicero incorporated ethos fluidly through a diverse and wide range of argumentative proofs as support. May describes the extent of this usage: “As an orator working under the Roman convention of advocacy, it was absolutely necessary that he deal not only with the characters of his client and his opponent, but also with his own ethos and that of opposing counsel.”33 In the later stage of Cicero’s career, expressions of his ethos emphasize his patriotism by framing questions of his loyalty in relation to his earlier acts to identify the conspiracy of Catiline and his followers.34 Cicero’s savvy weaving of a complex system of status, honor, and ancestry characterized republican rhetoric, highlighting a social and political mobility during the republican age. Once the hierarchy attained a level of permanence and petrifaction under Augustus, these rhetorical tropes became yet another symbol of order.

Cicero’s speeches, following his return from exile, take pains to stress the statesman’s ethos as Rome’s defender.35 In defense of actions considered to be illegal, Cicero seeks to legitimize his political role in the Post-exile speeches by foregrounding his personal role as an advocate, an ethical proof linking his ideals to the Republic’s.36 In Cicero’s Post Reditum in Senatu, the linkage between the orator and the republic, in addition to guiding the structural pattern, explicitly is a proof for the speech.37 This correlation between the life of the orator and the life of the Republic gives extraordinary force to a later passage in the speech: “The moment I was struck down they flew to drink my blood, and while the Republic was still breathing to strip it of their spoil”38 May’s reading of Cicero’s later speeches emphasizes an identification process through which his rhetorical action and living body became living symbols of the republic.

Cicero’s legacy as a transition figure between the Republic and Principate clouds efforts to distinguish between the rhetorical practice of the two periods. May notes that Cicero's legacy reached tremendous proportions shortly after his passing; “Almost within his own lifetime (so
Quintilian tells us), Cicero’s name became a word synonymous with eloquence, *non hominis nomen sed eloquentiae.*³⁹ Naturally, considering the association between this famed orator, theorist, and historian of rhetoric with eloquence, it is not surprising that his intellectual shadow was cast over all subsequent Roman rhetoricians and over the study of Roman rhetoric ever since. His multi-faceted deployments of ethos highlight his artistry and emphasize the republican era’s gravitation toward deliberative and forensic conceptions of rhetoric.

The consistency between Cicero’s theory of ethos and practice suggests that his activities were acceptable examples of agonistic rhetoric, if not typical ones.⁴⁰ We may not be able to determine whether Cicero’s rhetorical understanding was completely consistent with the prevailing rhetorical doctrines of the republican age, but his perspectives still offer a helpful point of contrast between the republican ideals of agonistic rhetoric and imperial emphasis on epideictic events. As Cicero’s writings illustrate, agonistic modes of rhetoric offered an orator more possibilities to establish character and gain the potential sympathy of the audience. In contrast to agonistic rhetoric, in which the speaker’s relation to the audience influences his self-portrayal, the nature of the ceremonial event and its spatial domain had more influence over the depiction of an orator’s *auctoritas.*

**Ceremony**

The gradual suffusion of demonstrative rhetoric into all forms of imperial address generated a new rhetorical climate; Roman rhetoric continued to develop in the field of epideictic, but this development sapped the vitality of the other rhetorical fields once political debate and courtroom speeches incorporated the routinized themes most closely associated with hackneyed forms of epideictic address.⁴¹ Even without extant speeches from the Augustan Age, some evidence of this transformation can be observed in a comparison of Quintilian’s and
Cicero’s discussions of epideictic. Antonius, the voice of conventional wisdom in Cicero’s *De Oratore*, offers an accounting of the use of epideictic speech in his dialogue only after emphasizing “many other speeches that are more important and of greater scope,” and informing us that that Romans “do not generally use laudatory speeches that much.”\footnote{Anf} However, in Quintilian’s *Institutio Oratoria*, there is a clear imperial departure in the section addressing the pragmatics of epideictic speaking. Here Quintilian defends the use of an epideictic manner of presentation in all rhetorical situations. In this passage, he specifies and distinguishes the Roman practice of adding an epideictic flavor in political speeches as much as in the standard speeches of entertainment. Quintilian distinguishes Roman rhetoric from what he saw as an earlier Greek tendency to remove epideictic from pragmatic affairs and relegate it to a passive audience of listeners: “This class appears to have been entirely divorced by Aristotle, and following him by Theophrastus from the practical side of oratory (which they call πραγματικὲ) and to have reserved solely for the delectation of audiences, which indeed is shown to be its peculiar function by its name, which implies display.”\footnote{Anf3} What Quintilian means by his use of the Greek word *pragmatikê* (πραγματικὲ) is open to interpretation, but his basic direction appears to advocate an epideictic approach to agonistic rhetorical encounters. In essence, mastery of epideictic principles has become a pragmatic function of epideictic in the imperial rhetoric of the first century (C.E.).

Despite difficulties with pinpointing an exact moment of transition and doubts that one existed, identifying the evidence situating this movement in the reign of Augustus would aid in understanding some of these pragmatic functions of epideictic speech. Suetonius’s description of Augustus’s habits of public address, specifically his revelation that Augustus used written
manuscripts for the duration of his career, suggests to some extent an incorporation of epideictic technique:

From early youth he devoted himself eagerly and with the utmost diligence to oratory and liberal studies. During the war at Mutina, amid such a press of affairs, he is said to have read, written and declaimed every day. In fact he never afterwards spoke in the senate or to the people or to the soldiers, except in a studied and written address, although he did not lack the gift of speaking offhand without preparation.\(^{44}\)

A plausible explanation of Augustus’s rhetorical shift to speaking only through a “studied and written address,” lies in passages of rhetorical treatises discussing the use of written speeches. Rhetorical theorists in the ancient world argued that epideictic speech was best conveyed through a written text (e.g., Aristotle *Rhetoric* 3.12; Cicero *De Oratore* 2.341). Given the increasing scholarly attention to the connection between written speech and epideictic rhetoric, Suetonius’s passage tentatively supports the conclusion that the modes of rhetorical address changed under the Principate.\(^{45}\)

The rhetorical significance of this change becomes clear when the increasing importance of the authority embodied in *auctoritas* is contrasted with the transformation in the conduct of civic deliberation. In the Senate, the alteration of the deliberative process reflects a de-emphasis on public deliberation and greater emphasis on and respect for the symbolic forms of power embodied in *auctoritas*. The institution of the imperial council, a smaller committee designed to debate policy measures before forwarding final proposals to the Senate, preserved the appearance of consensual decision making by removing political contentiousness from the open Senate.\(^{46}\) Instead of seeking to enhance the influence obtained from formal *potestas*, Augustus followed a two-fold strategy of limiting the range of formal deliberative powers and of projecting his image and *auctoritas* to achieve political goals. The effects rendered by the limitations imposed on traditional sources of power, *potestas*, limited the potential to resist an emperor with
dramatically augmented *auctoritas*. Likely established during Augustus’s reign between 27 and 18, and definitely by 4 B.C.E., these councils did little to extend the legal power of the emperor but played a substantial role as extensions of imperial authority.

The Augustan Principate transformed the essence of republican ideology while maintaining its façade by subordinating traditional sources of power to new methods of control. Alongside the new political system, a new rhetorical system emerged that evaluated a message’s legitimacy by the extent to which it connected to the emperor. In effect, the trappings of leadership remained similar to those of the republican period, but the means to achieving them differed from that time. In addition to establishing councils that shifted the deliberative process away from the public sphere, Suetonius notes that Augustus took steps to limit the power of deliberative rhetoric by prohibiting the publication of the Senate’s deliberation.47

Ceremonial events linked public displays of power to *auctoritas*, underscoring the political need to control time, physical spaces, and ritual events. The malleable nature of Roman religious practice created excellent conditions for reorienting religious time through modifications, additions, emphasis, and de-emphasis on various religious rituals. As the *Res Gestae* records, the Senate decreed holidays 890 times during his reign (RG 4.2). Augustus’s participation in a wide range of ceremonial events established new and lasting connections between his deeds and Rome’s civil-religious rituals. Early in the text he mentions his two ovations, three triumphs, “nine kings or children of kings” displayed during these triumphs, and twenty-one salutes for being the military commander (RG 4.1). This section also depicts his votive laying of a laurel wreath (symbolizing victory) wrapped around his *fasces* on the Capitol, calling attention to his role in the preservation of the Republic (RG 4.1). Public receptions of foreign embassies and ambassadors convey the respect paid to Rome’s political hegemony (RG
31-33). The laying of the Parthian standards in the Temple to Mars Ultor (29.2) and the reception of fugitive kings as suppliants (32.1-2) emphasize Rome’s military might. Emphasis on displays of imperial presence even occurred amid the spectacle of massive public games and the staging of *Ludi*, public shows. In the twenty-six games that were given in his name, over five thousand wild animals were slaughtered, and he even simulated a naval battle, replete with biremes, triremes, and five thousand combatants (RG 22-3). Augustus’ name was incorporated into the *Carmen Saliare*, a hymn designed to maintain divine protection for Rome (RG 10.1). Many of these were significant political events during the Principate, and together they highlight the expanded range of occasions for Augustus to display his civil, military, and religious virtue.

Ceremonial events were connected to an aesthetic of power even more fully in the Greek regions of the Roman Empire, where transformations of public space suggest a more complete domination of epideictic speech. In these Greek-speaking regions, specifically the province of Asia, the civic transformation of space linked local religious practices to the emperor’s *auctoritas*, possibly emphasizing the linkages between his divinity and the local centers of power. Here, development of the imperial cult coincided with the molding of civic space into an area that endorsed and reinforced the themes and ideology of the empire: “Imperial temples and sanctuaries were generally located in the most prominent and prestigious positions available within the city.” During festivals, much of the attendant spectacle revolved around the veneration of the emperor and was governed by a ceremonial speech operator, a panegyriarch. Price evaluates these imperial festivals as ordered affairs that amalgamated a broad variety of participatory civic activities, channeled the energy of a people to the political power of Rome, and provided a shared framework for imperial worship. “Imperial festivals were certainly not casual, half-hearted affairs. Some celebrations were attached to festivals of local deities, others
were carefully organized on a regular basis; they lasted for a significant period of time and at the provincial festivals the city would be thronged with visitors. The imperial cult was clearly part of the life of the city.\textsuperscript{51} Fully situating the theory and practice of ceremonial speech in Rome’s Greek dominion requires more than a casual appraisal, but even this brief glimpse should emphasize the historical and rhetorical significance of the Greek rhetorical texts produced under the Roman Empire, particularly those attributed to Menander, a third/fourth-century (C.E.) rhetor whose treatise primarily concerns epideictic speech and imperial ritual.\textsuperscript{52} Additionally, evidence about the importance of the imperial cult in the East should highlight the political significance of Augustus’s paternalistic assumptions.

**Religious Archaeology**

Although the Res Gestae’s similarities to epideictic literature could and should be subject to academic study, its primary importance in the history of the epideictic genre is the ways it outlines and even facilitates connections between political communication and ceremonial spaces. The Res Gestae’s location in sacred places sanctifies them, marking them as extensions of Augustus’s spirit and establishing these religious domains as centers of political activity. Given the nature of this text as a physical component of a religious structure, some have even speculated that it was a canonical text that guided visitors through temples associated with the imperial cult. E.G. Hardy, who produced an English translation of the Ankara inscription, felt it was “probable that Tiberius caused copies of the document to be engraved on the walls of all temples of Rome and Augustus existing at the time of his accession….”\textsuperscript{53} Because the civic centers of the imperial provinces were locations “where more provincials were likely to see and read the inscriptions,” Hardy argued that surest method of propagation must have been to construct these inscriptions in “temples where the deified Augustus shared the veneration of the
provincials with the goddess of the imperial city.” Arthur Gordon has expressed some skepticism about the extent to which the inscriptions reflect an orchestrated policy of Tiberius, but agrees that all copies of the *Res Gestae* would have been “cut on public monuments somehow connected with the cult of Rome and Augustus.” Even if future archeological study does not sustain this conclusion, the shift in rhetorical modes can be understood better alongside the zeal for temple construction and reconstruction coinciding with Augustus’s Principate because both trends highlight the rhetorical effects resulting from the distinctively imperial blend of politics, religion, and the institution of the Principate. The discovery of inscriptions replicating the Roman original, such as the one found in the temple of Augustus in modern Turkey call attention to the “visual” rhetorical uses of Roman temples as media inexorably bound to the messages of the imperial regime.

The process of publicly constructing values through the image-based ceremonial events magnified *auctoritas* as an important source of imperial authority, and illustrates the ways that portions of the reservoir of power shifted from traditional agonistic fora—where ethos functioned fluidly—into epideictic fora, where control over the means of delivery and visual display regulated access to political authority and thereby limited political dissent. Furthermore, in agonistic fora, the addition of statues and other objects alluding to the emperor’s *auctoritas* facilitated the type of genre blending noted by Quintilian. For instance, in a military debate, a speaker addressing an audience from the *rostrum* in front of the Temple of Divus Julius would have found opportunity to comment on the shield of Augustus lying nearby in the Curia Julia and perhaps associate his subject with any of the four virtues (courage, justice, clemency, and piety) inscribed upon it (RG 34.2). Other analyses of the *Res Gestae* (e.g., Ramage) have demonstrated that it worked to redefine the political landscape by emphasizing *auctoritas*, but these studies
would be aided by considering how physical designs bolstered this political design and by speculating about their combined effect on rhetoric. In pointing out the connections between auctoritas and modern notions of charisma, these commentators have located the rhetorical aspect of Augustus’s political programs, but students of contemporary rhetoric have still not fully appreciated the implications of this change.

The connections between temples and auctoritas, although not readily apparent, concern the ways in which temples controlled and restricted access to public power, while associating political power with ceremonial events. Augustus’s changes in Rome's urban landscape reconstituted imperial rhetorical practice by establishing competing speaking fora on the Palatine and suffusing the entire site with new visual cues suggesting the emperor’s spiritual connections to the republic and his divine associations. 

Similar constructions in the Forum Romanum helped to reformulate its religious symbolism into a broad coalescence of praise for Augustus. The construction of specially designed temples, clearly visible to anyone engaging in a political or judicial dispute in these fora, the Forum Romanum (Temple of Divus Iulius) and the Forum Iulium (Temple of Venus Genetrix), reveals Augustus’s and Julius’s designs to offer constant reminders of their religious importance through these edifices. Furthermore, indications that these temples represented a significant evolutionary turn in the design and placement of the Templum Rostratum structure highlight the rhetorical importance of these constructions as places in which ceremonial events could have coopted traditionally deliberative spaces.

Roger Ulrich’s archeological inquiry into the history, development, and implications of the speaker platforms attached to temple structures has generated new insight into the changing conditions of Roman speeches. The term Templum Rostratum designates a variety of physical platforms that were connected to the outside of a temple and allowed speakers to address the
crowds celebrating religious rites. Signaling the first political shift in the *Templum Rostratrum’s* use, a more focused building program by Pompey and Julius Caesar, two republican citizens desiring to “break with the republic” and establish their own shrines, resulted in factional use of specific speaking sites for public activities (assemblies) and announcements. Following Julius Caesar’s deliberate incorporation of a *Templum Rostratum* into the Temple of Venus Genetrix, the second major stage witnessed designs that limited and controlled access to the *Templum Rostratum*. This development demonstrates that the attachment of the speaking platform to a religious site augmented the display of political power. Architectural developments in the *Templum Rostratum* structure helped to set the scene for the reception of Augustan rhetorical practice. These developments culminated with a reformulation of political and religious themes in the three major fora, which included a spatial shifting of political rituals and a wide array of new visual symbols, pregnant with rhetorical potential. Active planning and incorporation of the speaking platform into the *Templum Rostratum* of the Temple of Divus Julius completed the progressive development of state-sponsored temple construction and temple-associated public speech.

The conceptual development of the *Templum Rostratum* follows an increasingly premeditated course associating speaking events with religious rites and activities. Early remnants of the *Templum Rostratum* indicate that the initial, Pre-imperial structures were constructed on a more ad hoc basis, located along the perimeter of civic spaces, and designed to facilitate public oratory. Tracing the history of their incorporation into temple structures, Ulrich’s archeological reconstructions have established the late second century (B.C.E.) or early first century (B.C.E.) as the time when the *templum rostratum* became an integral component of the Temple of Castor’s permanent structure. Contrasting with early *Templum Rostratum*
structures, which were built as improvised adaptations to a public need to conduct assemblies, subsequent constructions reflect more conscious constructions of public space in order to influence the rhetorical significance of assemblies. The shrine of Castor was a republican symbol, but it contrasted with later republican shrines that fostered more personality oriented cults such as Pompey and Julius Caesar’s shrines to Venus. The Templum Rostratum design suited populist leaders who addressed and encouraged but did not debate, because it facilitated an asymmetrical address to the people that contrasts with the more symmetrical deliberation of the Senate.

The construction of the Temple of Venus Victrix, dedicated by Julius Caesar (46 B.C.E.), limited approach to the place of delivery, gave unprecedented control over the speaking environment, and marked a transition from previous temple construction design. Given Julius Caesar’s attempts to appropriate for himself Pompey’s religious ties to Venus Victrix, this development in the history of the Templum Rostratum demonstrates some of the associations between the political changes ultimately culminating with the Principate and the ever-increasing reliance on various forms of ceremonial rhetoric. As Hanson has pointed out, some of these political considerations are revealed by Caesar’s original vow of a temple to Venus Victrix and ultimate construction of a temple to Venus Genetrix.

In the process of associating himself with the goddess Venus Victrix and also dissociating Pompey from her, Caesar’s participation in the vowing, building, and dedication of the temple also foreshadowed Augustus’s eventual domination of all aspects of temple construction. Designed for speaking displays but not for senatorial debates, the Temple of Venus Genetrix incorporated the traditional symbols of public speech and proclamation but shielded the main speakers from any potential mob action, balancing the need for public appearance with
hidden security measures. Unlike other platforms, which were incorporated into the temple only after a special ceremonial occasion arose that required oratorical conveyance to the public, the speaker’s platform in the Temple of Venus was part of the initial temple construction. With its spatial design, symbols alluding to previous leaders and structures, and fusion of structure with the image of Julius Caesar, a changed context for the discourse of the imperial Roman city followed.

The *Templum Rostratum* assumed a larger importance under the imperial regime. As it became an increasingly important center of Roman civic practice, beginning with the Temple of Castor and culminating with the imperial Temple of Divus Julius (29 B.C.E.), it began to tie all rhetorical acts to the official imagery of the imperial state. The erection of the latter temple for the recently deified Julius, much like the endorsement of the slain emperor’s public cult, helped Octavian to project his imperial persona and to establish the conditions for assuming similar authority. Thus, it is not surprising that extensive input from Octavian guided the construction of the Temple of Divus Julius. This exemplifies a sustained effort to unify previously scattered and disparate forms of art, architecture, religious cults, social structures, political organization, and social groups. The Temple of Divus Julius offered the full range of visual suggestions of the unified power that Augustus needed:

The façade of the Temple of Divus Iulius was decorated with bronze beaks captured at Actium (31 B.C. [E.]). Additional *rostra* were affixed to the façade of a massive terrace wall built into the Greek hillside overlooking the scene of the historic naval engagement. The *rostra aedis divi Iulii* were named after this embellishment and could not have failed to invite comparisons with the original Rostra. Within the cella of the temple stood war spoils from Egypt and a priceless painting by Apelles of Venus. The masterpiece would have further strengthened the association between this shrine and that of Venus Genetrix. In sum, the Temple of Divus Iulius was at once a heroon to Julius Caesar, closely related with the shrine dedicated to Venus Genetrix, and a victory monument for Augustus, its speakers’ platform evoking—but also subtly competing with—the Rostra Augusti.
and the Temple of Castor. In the Temple of Divus Iulius, the *templum rostratum* plan has become the stage for the new Imperial order.\textsuperscript{72}

As Ulrich explains, the temple aligned Augustus with his deified stepfather and supplied an array of allusions and motifs that would bolster his ethos during a speech. The temple’s longstanding use by subsequent Caesars benefited from the same religious associations that Octavian used to consecrate Julius’s divine heritage and enabled them to invoke this divine ethos.\textsuperscript{73} A depiction of the active use of the *Templum Rostratum* on a coin dated in Hadrian’s reign may signal the persistent use of the Temple of Divine Julius as a forum for public speeches throughout the early imperial period.\textsuperscript{74}

The building program that manipulated the means for broadly casting Augustus's political messages could only have radically altered the goals and conditions of public oratory. Upon assuming leadership, Octavian embarked on a massive public campaign to associate all spectacles of power with him, even limiting sponsorship of gladiatorial events and public monument building to members of his family.\textsuperscript{75} Even if he did want to cast himself as a traditional statesman for the Republic, his emerging control over the city’s images permanently altered the conduct of events in ways that prohibited the return to republican rhetorical practice.\textsuperscript{76} Whereas republican temples and other public buildings held fewer personal associations, in part because the vow, construction, and dedication were given by different people, after the precedent set by Julius and Augustus, the publicity gained by public vows, constructions, and dedications was limited to members of the imperial court. Following Augustus’s control of the traditional sources of public power, an entirely new set of power dynamics permanently established the emperor as the focal point of all rhetoric.\textsuperscript{77}

Augustus altered the political context surrounding temple construction, establishing a pattern of temple construction and use, solidifying control over both, and securing the
Principate’s secular and religious authority throughout the imperial period. Deviating from the complex interplay between dedication and construction that coincided with more heterogeneous republican religious practices, construction and dedication under the emperors encouraged religious homogenization by promoting religious practices that facilitated exaltation of the emperor. The republican tradition of construction involving multiple actors in the dedication, decree by the Senate, and final construction changed following Julius Caesar’s performance of all these deeds while establishing his temple to Venus Genetrix. By the time of Augustus’s Principate, ultimate authority for temple construction lay with the Senate. When the process of temple dedication traditionally resulted from a votive offering given prior to a military campaign, the dedication was the primary source of prestige and importance, rendering the person offering the dedication, typically the military leader, its primary recipient. Once control over building became the exclusive province of the Senate, they could strongly influence the future development of religious practice. In conjunction with its imperial policy, the Senate was able to balance the needs of the empire with those of religious stability, typically harmonizing newly incorporated gods with a newly assimilated group’s religious practices.

**Conclusion**

Recognizing the need to explore new avenues of textual support for understanding Augustan rhetoric and to expand the acceptable range of suitable artifacts to document this period is much easier than the daunting task of interpreting the significance of their clues. One example, the range of textual support required to argue that the Mercury figure was transformed from a cultic deity into a symbol of rhetorical activity, must span from early works of literature and theological speculation to later texts on neo-platonism and rhetorical theory. The difficulties with suggesting a transformation in Mercury’s symbolism underscore the confining limits
imposed by the traditional textual boundaries of “rhetorical theory.” Mercury’s symbolic use by the new regime was certainly less significant than official imagery that linked Augustus with other deities such as Apollo, Jupiter, Neptune, or Mars, but it still reveals important information about the new position of rhetoric under the Principate.

Like postulates in a geometric proof determining a triangle’s third angle using the measurements of the first two angles, discussions of Augustus’s Res Gestae and the speaking sites of his time help to establish some of the parameters of imperial rhetoric in Rome. In contrast to Cicero’s emblematic relegation of epideictic rhetoric in his treatise, De Oratore, imperial rhetoric appears to connect epideictic values to a powerful rhetorical system that probably influenced even the terms and conditions of rhetorical deliberation at times. It is difficult to determine to what extent the political changes altered the rhetoric, and vice versa, how much rhetorical changes altered politics, but Zanker goes so far as to argue that the language and grammar of the official imagery overwhelmed the average Roman’s ability to construct a personalized artistic language, leading the populace willingly to adopt the cultural and moral dictates of the new state. It is likely that these political and rhetorical trends mutually reinforced each other.

The formation of auctoritas in a ceremonial event depended on the imperial-age speakers’ ability to emphasize the propriety of their role under a set of communicative codes predetermined by expectations of appropriate piety and authority. Auctoritas ultimately emanated from the emperor and official Augustan propaganda that would emphasize the emperor’s civil, military, and religious stature. The use of religious rites during civil and military events needs to be appreciated more because, as Ramage puts it, the combination of his civil, military, and religious authority fully solidified his auctoritas. It led to a certain tautological
logic; only a person with religious sanction could be successful in this military campaign, only a soldier would take care of the people and defend them, only a supreme patron would receive the blessings of the gods. During special religious, military, and civic occasions, the themes of heroes past and all their attendant connotations bolstered imperial displays of authority by habituating Romans to their destiny.

Such conditions established one source of Augustus’s power in his character, specifically, the ways in which his character was conveyed to the rest of Rome. The Res Gestae’s idealization of Augustus’s epideictic values illustrates the pragmatic ends achieved by the transformation of this discourse into a guided channel for proclaiming imperial virtue. Its narrative depiction of a protagonist who defends these values and assumes the title “Augustus” parallels the permanently modified relationship between the speaker and the imperial regime. Because ceremonial occasions were ideal opportunities to display a community’s social hierarchy and to manifest Augustus’s religious authority and because his fusion of this religious authority with tremendous military and civil authority must have shaped the rhetoric of this time, Augustus’s Rome became an important chapter in the history of rhetoric.

Quintilian’s intriguing explanation of the pragmatics of epideictic rhetoric has given us a helpful clue about Augustus’ rhetoric. Quintilian’s discussion of epideictic relocates analysis that attempts to situate the text to analysis of the sites of textual delivery. It also demonstrates the need to re-examine Cicero’s De Oratore, paying special attention to the importance of the palaestra and questions regarding the propriety of the training this space facilitated. In that dialogue, the central dispute concerns whether students should learn a rhetoric of display or a more logically rigorous rhetoric. Similarly, in Orator, Cicero argues that the palaestra is a
metaphor for well-grounded preparation for oratorical practice and that superficial rhetoric, like the training of the *palaestra*, would be the activity of someone still honing his skill:

> For as we observe that boxers, and gladiators not much less, do not make any motion, either in cautious parrying or vigorous thrusting, which does not have a certain grace, so that whatever is useful for the combat is also attractive to look upon, so the orator does not strike a heavy blow unless the thrust has been properly directed, nor can he avoid the attack safely unless even in yielding he knows what is becoming.  

These arguments make Quintilian’s analysis of epideictic more striking because he calls attention to the need to identify suitable sources for rhetorical analysis, such as the scenic setting of epideictic rhetoric in temples and the documentary legacy left behind in Augustus’s singular *Res Gestae*. 
Chapter Four: Pliny’s *Actio Gratiarum*

The set of texts, collectively known as the “imperial panegyrics” have escaped the notice of most classicists, and no mention of them exists in the rhetoric journals. Perhaps this is because these abstruse celebrations of obscure ceremonies, rulers, and propagandistic themes offer little immediate incentive that would attract sustained attention. The few readers who undertake a study of this relatively small corpus—twelve texts constitute the Imperial panegyrics—must also familiarize themselves with a less understood historical period in order to render the texts of rhetorical interest.

And yet this corpus nearly rivals Pre-Augustan oratory in theoretical significance. These speeches, designed to prioritize the political and religious values of Rome’s rulers, conveyed normative political rules that created and communicated the civic, military, and religious relationships binding people and their government. Collectively, they reveal an evolving set of visual, spatial, and ritualized rhetorical influences that helped preserve the empire’s stability despite the geopolitical convulsions of wars, shifting alliances, and religious strife. Within the speeches, the speakers reinforced the communal norms that conceptualized and solidified Rome’s ever changing political institutions. In other words, the speech form functioned as a rudimentary statement of political theory, a role that would later be appreciated by renaissance rhetoricians and political theorists.¹
Pliny’s *actio gratiarum* (100 C.E.) is the earliest extant text in the collection of the Imperial panegyrics and probably became a model that aided the inventional and stylistic choices of later panegyrist in antiquity.² Its historical significance as a rare instance of Imperial rhetoric and its literary significance as a model text are indisputable, but its rhetorical processes remain under-studied as scholars uncritically accept its classification as a panegyric.³ Averil Cameron’s pithy dismissal of Pliny’s *actio* as a “monster of bad taste in modern eyes”⁴ summed up the prevailing attitude amongst contemporary scholars, an attitude that has further discouraged interest in the text. Nevertheless, such discomfort stems less from Pliny’s lack of taste than from dominant notions of political and religious propriety and there remains a need to consider the rhetorical implications of Pliny’s *actio*, specifically, to consider whether its glorification of imperial values and its celebration of divine influence upon the political process reflected the traditional format of Roman *actiones*.

Given at “the Senate’s command” (1.3) and legislated by senatorial decree, a *senatus consultum*, Pliny’s speech was one instance of an understudied tradition known as thanks-giving *titulo gratiarum agendarum* (4.1).⁵ Such officially legislated speeches may have been published and were given regularly during the imperial period. The designation of the speaking event as a giving of thanks signaled the general expectation of a salutary prayer for the health of the emperor and Roman polity and also that the speech enact the populace’s loyalty to their emperor.

Pliny’s assumption of the suffect consulship marked the occasion for his *actio* and his literary ambition compelled him to revise his text. In the process, he immortalized Trajan’s principate (98–117 C.E.) by offering an enduring testament to the sacred rhetorical images of his reign. The written text that Pliny produced assimilated the rhetorical properties of a distinctive Roman tradition, the *actio*, into a more literary, and thus enduring, panegyric form, marking this
traditional occasion as a moment of literary production. In Pliny’s time, the standard texts comprising the panegyric genre were Greek and Pliny’s own stated enthusiasm for Greek letters makes it reasonable to assume he consulted some of these texts while conducting his own extensive revision. The written document might have expanded upon the original oration, but it did not completely depart from it. A fidelity to the delivered actio is particularly evident in the utterances that conveyed the tradition’s ceremonial procedures, where a desire for verisimilitude must have mitigated against the complete removal of its performative vestiges. This tradition of delivering an actio has largely been ignored or overlooked by scholars of Pliny’s text and their neglect of the literary evidence documenting many of its fundamental features has coincided with an unwillingness to engage its performative utterances, some of which are particularly observable in the text’s votive sections.

Despite the evidence produced within the speech and in a range of other sources that collectively identify the actio as a distinctively Roman literary tradition and also give an approximation of that tradition’s features, scholars continue to conflate Pliny’s actio and consequently all actiones with the panegyric genre. The conventional characterization of Pliny’s actio as a panegyric is the result of a habitual deference to the written text’s inclusion in the corpus of Latin panegyrics. In fact, Pliny’s actio was the earliest speech catalogued in this collection, and it was also placed at the head of the collection. Pliny’s actio has been so strongly associated with the panegyric genre that the text of his actio was rarely published with the rest of his literary work until relatively recently. Such a grouping may be correct technically, since the word panegyric has come to be a broad covering term for any speech of praise, but in the case of Pliny’s actio, the panegyric category occludes the distinctive tradition that occasioned the delivery of his speech and of actiones in general.
Since the panegyric genre was originally a Greek literary category, it is an imprecise classification for texts emerging out of a Latin discursive tradition. Even when they mimicked Greek antecedents, the Latin texts of the Roman Empire addressed particular occasions and performed cultural functions that were far removed and generally distinct from a Greek context. Indigenous expectations had more influence upon the thematic content of Roman discursive traditions and played a greater role governing the reception of such texts following their delivery, and so Latin speakers operating in the shadow of Roman tradition had to be cognizant of the demands of tradition. The scholarly tendency to characterize Pliny’s *actio* as a species of panegyric has fostered inquiry into the articulation of the vice-regency and Roman propaganda--thematic features shared by his oration and other panegyric texts--but such generic associations have dulled interest in understanding the more immediate tradition influencing its production. Historian Dan Schowalter, who interpreted it largely as a piece of praise literature, placed little emphasis on its ceremonial qualities and read it as a crafty memoir of a political survivor.\(^8\) George Kennedy, though cognizant that Pliny’s *actio* followed a distinctly Roman practice, classified the oration as a typical panegyric and largely overlooked its unique ceremonial features.\(^9\) Likewise, J. Rufus Feers’ authoritative analysis of the institution of vice-regency treated Pliny’s *actio* as little more than an instance of the panegyric, which he documented as a Greek genre. Such studies have enhanced appreciation for some aspects of Roman political and religious culture, but they have deflected attention away from the traditional circumstances surrounding all *actiones*; performative enactment of appropriate prayer and ritual are overlooked when generic analyses emphasize customary (ie. “Greek”) topics and dismiss other rhetorical features (ie. Roman cultural themes) as simply anomalous.
But discarding the panegyric label and reevaluating the *actio* as a distinct oral tradition is not a simple task. No handbook passages survive that address such a speech and the arguments found within Pliny’s text, the only complete *actio* extant, discourage generalization since they reflexively rejected traditions formed in his immediate past. Did Pliny completely reject the conventional wisdom of prior *actiones*? It is doubtful, but a definitive answer is impossible. His correspondence, which emphasized his departure from the tradition, is undermined by his general conformance to handbook recommendations for laudatory speech, recommendations that even included the need to emphasize a departure from tradition. In other words, Pliny’s speech signaled his divergence from the excessive emphasis on reverence for the emperor’s divine features, but, given the literary and political conditions, the rejection of past impieties might have been a standard topic covered in all *actio*.

Pliny’s own comments document the *actio* as an established tradition during Trajan’s reign and, although scholars cannot reproduce the *actio*’s rhetorical form with complete certainty, sections of his published oration allude to the ceremonial norms this tradition generated. The performative utterances recorded in Pliny’s written text offer confirmation that the *actio*’s primary purpose was to enact prayer on behalf of the *Res Publica* and that that this type of prayer had become instituted as a customary speech. I argue that the least revised components of Pliny’s larger elaborated oration are the sections devoted to prayer, giving thanks. Moreover, because Pliny followed the long enduring norms for giving thanks, even as he adapted these customary topics to the propaganda of Trajan’s regime, these themes should be evaluated in tandem.

Prior to the delivery of Pliny’s oration, formal legislation had established the requirement that an *actio* convey the Senate’s thanks and gratitude for the principate. As explicated in Pliny’s
letter to Vetennius Severus, an incoming Consul, (3.18) the consulate spoke as a representative of the entire Res Publica, and his thanks to the princeps signified the populace’s votive gratitude. In this correspondence, Pliny’s use of official terminology for duty, officium consulatus, to emphasize his consular obligation highlighted the compulsory force of the oration, a compulsion further amplified by the verb iniunxit which metaphorically bound Pliny to his obligation with an image of yoking. Even though the speech was compulsory, the consul was compelled not by punitive or coercive threats but by piety, the need to symbolically fulfill a political and religious role. Pliny’s own idealizations of his speech expressed his favorable regard for this duty and his disdain for the flattery that he felt had been associated with the recent actiones delivered under the deposed emperor Domitian.

Some scholars have interpreted Pliny’s overt antipathy toward these actiones and his publication of his own actio as signaling his own attempt to rectify the rhetorical sins of the recent past. But it is also likely, given Pliny’s literary advent in Post-Augustan Rome and given his decision to revise and expand his actio, that he shared the motivations of earlier poets and orators, who published their writings to attain the enduring literary stature that accompanied a favorable peer review. The speech’s complexity reflected Pliny’s efforts to record a statement aligning the literary traditions of past panegyricists with a laudation that reflected the broad aesthetic of the Trajanic era. Just as earlier literary artifacts bear thematic resemblance to physical memorials—a similarity that for Habinek, connected the text and stone in a literal and metaphorical way—Pliny’s commonplaces reflect the spatial and visual aesthetic of his time.

The correspondence between Pliny’s Actio and the Principate’s visual propaganda suggests a synaesthetic spatial design, a coordinated display of visual and verbal rhetoric. Pliny’s reiteration of the religious expressions visually displayed by architectural media, reveals a
rhetorical emphasis, pursued, in part, through institutional control of religious symbolism and ritual. Pliny praised war and the defense of the population as service to the gods, an adaptation of a traditional topic of praise, military accomplishment, to signify the Trajanic regime’s fulfillment of what has been termed the institution of “vice regency.”\textsuperscript{12} It contains an abridged typology of the visual and verbal expressions enunciated in Trajan’s early propaganda, an edifying source for understanding the broader connections between ritual, text, and imperial power.

Following the political ascension of Trajan (53-117 C.E.), the Roman principate and Senate designed a series of architectural projects to reflect his status as Rome’s leader, deploying an adaptive visual rhetoric that emphasized political ritual and integrated his figure into Rome’s landscape. Near the end of the first century C.E., imperial architects began a restoration of fire-damaged portions of the Temple to Venus Genetrix, an Augustan-era edifice that had radically transformed republican space. This project was completed in the beginning of Trajan’s principate and probably influenced the design and construction of Trajan’s forum, a project that lasted the rest of Trajan’s life, approximately twenty years following the initial groundbreaking in C.E. 106. Its main structure was completed in 112 C.E. and Trajan’s column was placed within the complex five years later. Trajan’s successor Hadrian (117-138 C.E.) completed the project and consecrated the temple to the deified Trajan in 128 C.E. Thereafter, the forum remained Rome’s civic center for at least two hundred years, a place where laws were promulgated, heroes were memorialized, and leaders addressed political concerns.\textsuperscript{13}

The ambitious forum construction was initiated well after the delivery of Pliny’s \textit{actio}, but it conveyed themes common to other rhetoric emerging during Trajan’s principate; in particular, it shared Pliny’s memorializing sentiment, his aesthetic emphasis upon the sacred features of political action, and his reoriented narrative presenting Trajan’s principate as the
culminating event of Rome’s history. Of particular interest to rhetorical scholars are the pair of brass columns known as Trajan’s column and the façade atop Trajan’s victory arch, two structures within this redesigned space that communicated, among other things, the religious significance of Trajan’s military consecration of Roman Imperium. These memorials to the Dacian conquest (101-106 C.E.) visually amplified the empire’s praises, a physical correspondence to the epideictic themes exemplified in Pliny’s actio. Also, like Pliny’s oration, the forum stylistically amplified Trajan’s significance through repetitious, a forciort presentation configuring him in a range of civic, religious, and military roles, and constructing “a biography in stone which successively revealed the various stages in the life of its hero as he progressed from mortality to deification.”

The architecture simplified and repeated its dominant themes, a move away from the more baroque designs of the Flavian period that paralleled the rhetorical emphasis upon pure and simple expressions of virtues and piety. As a unique rhetorical medium, the forum’s design and symbolism reinforced the rhetorical messages of Trajan’s principate, leading one archeologist, James E. Packer to characterize it as being “conceived in the manner of a contemporary literary essay” that followed a quasi-narrative process of “quoting” features of the surrounding edifices. Its narrative retelling of Rome’s history emphasizes the unprecedented advent of Trajan and the influence of religious practices upon civic life, two themes that were uniquely treated in Pliny’s actio.

Pliny’s Actio

The Loeb edition of Pliny’s actio divides the text into ninety-five sections. These sections can be clustered roughly into pentads, which move biographically from Trajan’s earliest military leadership to his culminating assumption of the unprecedented title Optimus. Following the opening prayer in the prooemium (1-4), which along with the concluding prayer braced the five
pentads, the first pentad (5-20) addressed Trajan’s exceptional military accomplishments, recollecting how his martial virtues portended his restoration of proper governance. Trajan earned the right to triumph following two distinct military victories, but he deferred taking them, Pliny argued, in order to continue honoring his own commander, Nerva. Pliny’s characterization of the citizenry as secure in the second pentad (21-50) portrayed Trajan’s concerted efforts to distribute peace’s rewards throughout the *res publica* and to advance the public’s welfare through munificent deeds (funds for destitute children, a dole of corn for the *populum Romanum*, etc.) and a relaxing of economic penalties (a reduction of excessive tax burdens and coercive inheritance procedures). The third fifth of the oration (51-58) further elaborated the conditions of the *Res Publica* (*Res Placida*), but concentrated on more public symbols of order. Whereas the first and second pentad addressed Trajan’s concern for his subjects, this section elaborated Trajan’s leadership, including the restoration of culture, the institution of a smoothly functioning court, the lack of political intrigue, and the renovation of important public structures. The fourth pentad (59-79), which probably received the most extensive revision, extolled the proper attitude of an ideal ruler, lauding Trajan’s conduct during his third and fourth consulship and contrasting it to Domitian’s outrageous deeds. The final Pentad (80-93) celebrated the new relationship between Trajan and the *Res Publica* signaled by Trajan’s designation as *Optimus* and it concluded with prayers addressed to Jupiter (94-5).

A cursory review of Quintilian’s outline of laudatory speech demonstrates Pliny’s deviation from prevailing literary standards. Quintilian divided speeches of praise into two primary categories—praising gods and praising men. He then suggested the inclusion of prayer as an appropriate way to praise a deity. But besides opening with a prayer, Pliny also concluded with one, generally addressing all of the gods, but specifically Capitoline Jupiter “You have
heard our prayers under a bad prince; now give ear to our wishes on behalf of his opposite. We are not burdening you with vows—we do not pray for peace, concord, and serenity, nor for wealth and honours: our desire is simple, all-embracing, and unanimous: the safety of our prince.” (94.2) Pliny’s veneration of Jupiter seems misplaced, a clear mixing of the categories identified by Quintilian. Pliny’s structural positioning of the opening prayer functionally rendered his speech an oblique encomium to Jupiter with praise for Trajan indirectly standing in for Jupiter’s praise. The bulk of Pliny’s speech conveyed praise for a mortal, Trajan, and it essentially followed Quintilian’s advice, slightly adapting it to elaborate the imperial context behind Trajan’s reign. In other words, Pliny’s praise for Trajan’s background, father, and the prophecy of his rule accorded with the three main topoi found in Quintilian; however Pliny emphasized Trajan’s adopted father Nerva, and Trajan’s more immediate military background. The actio’s thematic content, typical of most laudatory speeches, continually drew comparison between the object of praise, Trajan, and Rome’s earlier leaders, particularly Domitian.

Pliny’s actio complicated this comparative process by additionally relating his oration to the actiones of the immediate past, and this pursuit, which included Pliny’s insistent declarations of his own honesty, exposed a potential irony; praise for Trajan’s virtues potentially replicated the very commonplaces assailed as flattery. Pliny documented his recognition of this potential dilemma and outlined his creative solution, in his reply to Vettenius Severus. Admittedly in retrospect, Pliny emphasized he deliberately and overtly moderated his praise while critiquing earlier displays of flattery. Pliny encouraged his audience to accept his candid speech as evidence of Trajan’s restoration of liberty at the same time he praised Trajan with exuberance. Such tempered enthusiasm harmonized his praise for Trajan as Rome’s ideal ruler, the oration’s major theme, with an enactment of popular support, its minor theme. The effort to remove any
audience doubt regarding his sincerity made extensive use of the figure of antithesis, which Shadi Bartsch characterized as “the speech’s most pervasive organizing device.” Pliny identified the avoidance of flattery as the fundamental challenge of all actiones and an obstacle motivating the ostensibly innovative arrangement of his own actio. Under conditions of absolute rule, effective panegyric speakers needed to perform their praise without being perceived as covertly encoding censure. Even as Pliny proposed to morally edify future rulers, he openly acknowledged the risk of misperception; a laudation of a ruler’s humanity could covertly blame the subject’s arrogance and an encomium to a king’s mercy risked being perceived as disparaging his cruelty (3.4). Pliny identified this as a past rhetorical dilemma, but his own efforts to recontextualize his devotional act, indicated some level of anxiety about its traditional format. Shadi Barsch summed up Pliny’s efforts to resolve the tension between praise and flattery as “an obsessive attempt to prove its own sincerity.” Bartsch, like many, concluded that Pliny was guilty of the very behavior he indicted, a warranted if skeptical assumption, but he did so by ignoring the function of ritual in the actio, a function which could only have shifted the presumption away from mendacity.

The ritual of prayer shielded the orator from the fundamental irony of the speech form because the evaluation of sincerity was not a duty of men, but of gods. For Romans, the most basic element of giving thanks was the utterance of prayer and the consular actio summoned the speaker to offer prayers for the well being of the emperor, gods, and citizenry. If enacted piously, it restored order, and if not it resulted in chaos. The audience screened its perception of the actio’s fidelity through a larger interpretative lens, one that encompassed a wide range of subsequent cultural and political events. Pliny’s commitment to public prayers must have been assumed from the outset, and could only have turned out “false” in retrospect. From the
audience’s perspective, a skeptical conclusion could not have followed the speech’s delivery, but in a lack of subsequent security, a sign that the gods did not accept the prayers. Additionally, as a statement of popular sentiment, the *actio* demanded a general belief in its fidelity as a necessary precondition to its cathartic power to rejuvenate the *Res Publica*.

The performance of devotion within the text is a critical source for appreciating its broader social function, a function revealed in Pliny’s devotional language and his figuration of the title *Optimus*. Scholars generally agree that Pliny’s published *actio* expanded upon his original, but they also typically question the feasibility of apprehending the delivered portions of the text or even the utility of attempting to contemplate the speech’s initial form. Nevertheless the task is not entirely futile; it is doubtful that Pliny excised much if any of his original oration and other sources can facilitate an approximation of many of the *actio*’s normative procedures.

In the order of its arrangement, Pliny’s *actio* largely agreed with the syntactic formula for giving thanks mocked in the Plautine comedy *The Persian* over three hundred years earlier. The playwright reviewed a series of tiresome topics endemic to giving thanks, through the words of Toxilius, a slave whose hundred word mock encomium to himself visited many of the topics elaborated in Pliny’s *actio*. This comedy predated Augustus’ institution of a regular consular oration, but the language used in the recitation, *gratias egi*, marked the speech act as a thanks giving and its metered presentation of formulaic *topoi* in succinct and memorable phrases reproduced culturally recognizable and normative topics. Although this early instance of thanksgiving shared many topics, some critical differences between this early giving of thanks and Pliny’s oration inhibit its classification as a speech type. First, the early thanksgiving speech was autobiographical, whereas Pliny’s later speech praised someone else. Second, this consular oration was not tied to a regularized occasion like Pliny’s occasion.
Plautus’ abbreviated actio was thematically similar to the framework of Pliny’s first three pentads and concluding prayer. It points to later sections (56-90) as the areas where extensive emendations occurred. Pliny addressed the first four of the six topoi identified in Plautus’ comedy as a basis for thanks and his conclusion shared its focus on the activities of giving thanks and disbursing political spoils. Pliny’s first two pentads divide into four specific sections which followed the first four topics in the first Plautine couplet: 1) enemies conquered (12-20) 2) citizens safe (21-32) 3) political conditions calm (33-46) 4) peace completed (47-55).28

Religious Performance

Pliny’s speech instantiated how institutional manipulation of religious symbolism became a central feature in the public display of imperial virtues.29 The votive utterances within the panegyric resemble the rhetorical passages of sacred texts and require sensitivity to this facet. Michael Carter’s study of the religious language in Plato’s Menexenus, explained that the analysis of votive forms was necessary to appreciate the rituals intersecting religious and political cultures, but a corresponding analysis of Roman speech has not been undertaken. The religious dimensions of Roman rhetoric are typically treated as extraneous and esoteric matters.

The votive language in the actio structured the entire speech and was an essential feature in this discursive tradition. The enactment of religious rite unified a wide range of socio-political topics. Devotional passages structured Pliny’s actio as a sacred ceremony and reiterated temporal comparisons connected it to a broader cosmological narrative.

An opening prayer initiated the speech and defined it as a devotional activity undertaken in the tradition of Rome’s aristocratic ancestors (maiores instituerunt ut rerum agendarum ita dicendi initium a precationibus capere) (1.1).30 A corresponding survey of the Capitoline altars, potentially visible from his position in the Curia, punctuated Pliny’s gestures. He directly
implored Jupiter, te, to show interest in the panegyric, by addressing him in a manner that emphasized the senator’s religious adoration. In explicitly beseeching Rome’s “founder” and “preserver” supreme Jupiter, Iuppiter optime, Pliny was likely directing his address to the temple of guardian Jupiter templum custode Iovis. Fusing prayer and oratory, Pliny directly implored Jupiter, optime, as the intermediary between an appropriate laudation and a leader worthy of such praise, calling upon him to inspire his speech. Pliny’s prayer offered thanks for Trajan’s rise to power and celebrated the public’s recognition of the divine signs that signaled his excellence. These recollections were carefully situated amidst a concise statement of the aspects of Imperial ideology that continue to receive notice by contemporary scholars; they characterized the emperor as a divine regent, placing the specific worship outside the public domain but recognizing the emperor’s divine substance.

By initiating the panegyric with a reference to time, Pliny set the current regime against all that preceded it, emphasizing the audience’s collaborative role in witnessing this significant epoch. Pliny identified the moment of Trajan’s succession as a critical topic for praise because it signaled a new (novum) and never before witnessed ascent (inauditum iter). Not only did Pliny choose the participle inauditum to describe the occasion and all of the events leading up to it; he also used it to distinguish his own oration from all that preceded. The repetition of the term joined Pliny’s oration with Trajan’s reign, placing both within a thitherto inauditum temporal region that heralded Trajan’s political advent. This effort distinguished Pliny’s laudatory approach from earlier Roman actiones, as the conduct of his speech disclosed a difference in the time (discernatur orationibus nostris diversitas temporum) and conveyed the Trajanic regime’s momentous advent.
In extolling Trajan’s fulfillment of his political duties, Pliny blurred the boundaries between prayers to Trajan and prayers to the gods; when Pliny asked Trajan to continue serving the state by accepting another consul appointment requested by the people, he incorporated the theme of divine agency into the prayer itself: “Grant these prayers, Caesar, and gratify the wishes of those for whom it is your custom to intercede with the gods; for this is in your power.” (78) Likewise, an earlier passage used the language of prayer, but it is structured as a demand. “The gods must fulfill their obligation” A tone more consistent with a feeling of sincerity and piety, not of skepticism. In this formulaic utterance, the notion of giving, repeated twice (dare) implies that the thing given is deserved, a mixture of Trajan’s spirit and body. Dent tibi, Caesar, aetatem di quam mereris, serventque animum quem dederunt (28.6) Translated in Loeb as “Let the gods only grant you, Caesar, the long life which you deserve and preserve the spirit you owe to them.” Subjunctive forms formulaically expressed the religious ritual, for instance, dent tibi which initiated a prayer for Trajan’s health. The tibi makes the sentence closer to an impersonal dialogue, but the subjunctive form signifies Pliny’s wishes, hopes, and possibly ideals. Again, the translation of aetatem as long life might be obvious, but is less preferable than the more abstract term “age” which allows for the slippage into the concept of the “age of Trajan” a period of rule defined by Trajan. This statement of ideology also disclosed the appearance and the methods of visual presentations and spatial presentations that marked the ruler as human and special.

Pliny’s devotional language reconfigured the speech into a hybridized encomium to both a god, Jupiter, and a ruler, Trajan, a formulation that addressed a common rhetorical quandary. Instead of directly calling Trajan a god, Pliny implemented two strategies to highlight the emperor’s divinity, first by detailing Trajan’s role in fulfillment of Jupiter’s work on earth and
second by stressing the divine qualities of the emperor. Earlier readings of the text have concentrated upon its official looking role in documenting the policies of Trajanic Rome. Pliny’s deference to piety and the attitude towards prayer above the significance of the conduct of the rituals is a formulaic trope designed to convey the essence of prayer and to reflect the ideology of the prayer, which holds that a prayer is not very significant unless it is uttered by a pious person.35

The initial description of Nerva’s adoption of Trajan and Trajan’s subsequent ascension to the throne, amplified the idea that Trajan’s reign was divinely conceived and approved: “The gods have claimed credit for this, since it was carried out at their command.” (8.2) The argument for Trajan’s divine qualities expanded the enthymeme, holding that Trajan attained power in accordance with Roman ritual, relying upon the audience’s assumption that Roman prosperity resulted from this divine approval and subsequently, concluding that Trajan performed Jupiter’s earthly tasks, like every emperor—the policies of the emperor served a divine purpose.36

Pliny’s incorporation of veneration for Jupiter within the text, was consistent with the general religious direction of the speech and potentially reflected the visual perspective of the actio’s auditors. This general thematic direction characterized Trajan’s political leadership as religious duty, service done by the vice-regent on Jupiter’s behalf. As a dominant theme, the religious obligation colored the rest of the speech as it informed the Romans that their political blessings were the product of a pious leader—Trajan’s political activity instantiated his religious piety.

The prayer language supported this vision and exhorted future leaders to observe Trajan’s example:

What can I add, in the name of the Senate, to the prayers I shared with the whole Senate except this? May your heart never lose the joy which showed in your eyes
on that occasion, may you always think of that day with affection, and yet go on to greater things, to win fresh rewards and hear new acclamation; for the same words can only be repeated about the same deeds. (75.6)

The prayer summoned an end of history, an endless cyclical repetition of earlier events in a final culminating age. And the final summary passage here reflected upon the significance of the name for Trajan as being as significant and memorable as the adoption of the name Augustus by Octavian, alerting us that the title will be a constant reference to Trajan in the years ahead and that through the title people “will always remember who it was whose merits won it as due.”37

Sacred speech, prayers, explicitly tied the health of the state to the successful cohesion of the sacred and the political spheres, a common notion at the time is also linked up to the offering of personal vows for the success of the empire and of the emperor’s health. Religious practices linked the health and safety of the emperor and the empire to the piety of the individual citizen, making it an obligation and a duty for them to take personal responsibility for the good of the state: “We were accustomed to offering vows to ensure the eternity of the empire and the safety of the emperors, or rather, the safety of the emperors and thereby the eternity of the empire.”

Duty to family is duty to state. We also get the prayer language that the prayer is offered “if he has ruled the State well and in the interests of all” (67.4) Si bene rem publicam et ex utilitate omnium rixerit.

Cicero’s discussion of the nature of divine apotheosis gives some indication of the political and religious resonance from the term Optimus. Unfortunately, Cicero’s discussion is truncated by a lacuna, nevertheless, the chapter in his Re Publica that addresses the path to immortality for rulers lies in the behavior while alive and that the best rulers become immortalized and respected in the religious recollections of the people. The ingrained nature of this belief is perhaps too strong to label ideology and it is more a reflection of the culture or at
least the culture that Cicero wanted to perpetuate in his discussion of this feature. Cicero’s quotation concerns the Roman response to the death of Romulus, the original Roman King. The significance of this anecdote lies in its mythic representation of apotheosis. Cicero identified Romulus’ example as a guide for appropriate symbolic conduct following the death of a most desired king, optimus. By the time optimus had become one of Trajan’s official titles, its associations with Romulus clearly anticipated Trajan’s death and apotheosis. The terms of Trajan’s death were already determined and governed with Pliny’s actio in 100. Cicero’s passage identified related terminology such as “father” and “divinely born” as appropriate for a good king, which marked the king’s influence after his death. Cicero’s passage, which contained an example of a prayer in response to the apotheosis, might not have been truly faithful to the prayer’s formula, but it probably reveals its commonplaces:

…Iusto quidem rege cum ext populus orbatus,
“Pectora diu tenet desiderum,”
sicut ait Ennius, “post optimi regis obitum;
………………………………simul inter
sese sic memorant ‘O Romule, Romulean day,
qualem te patriae custodem di genuerunt!
O pater, o genitor, o sanguen dis oriundum!’
…(hic dixit Cicero),
“‘Tu produxisti nos intra luminis oras’”
(Rep. 1.64)

“When a nation has lost its just ruler, it is just as Ennius said:
“For as long as some keeps this desire in his heart after the death of the most desirable King…so they memorialize amongst themselves:
“‘O Romulus, O Romulean day, The gods bestowed you as a protector to the fatherland, o
Father, o genitor, o divinely begotten blood,”
Optimus

Pliny identified the *actio* as obligating orators to vocalize the piety of the citizenry, the *piorum civium officium*, praise the best prince, the *optimum imperatorem*, and construct a hierarchy that places the role of the imperator atop the rest of the ruling class. Pliny’s introductory remarks concerning the Roman custom of giving thanks emphasized that praising Trajan as the ideal ruler (*princeps optimus*) would be the central theme. Trajan’s cognomen, *Optimus*, received considerable elaboration throughout the speech as a designation of a religious as much as a political basis for leadership. The term called to mind connotative associations with Jupiter, *Optimus Maximus*, the ruler of all gods who divinely influenced the peaceful transfer of power at the temple to Capitolinian Jove, the site of Trajan’s adoption. Given some delicate political conditions and an ad hoc mechanism of imperial secession, conveying the polity’s full support for Trajan would have bolstered the political stability. The terms of this power transfer are summed up as the basis of an *auctoritas* that must be bestowed in order to be received:

This order was the more authoritative for you simply because authority was in grave peril; you thought that obedience was all the more necessary from you since it was lacking in others. Furthermore, you were told that the Senate and people approved, and this choice and decision were not Nerva’s alone, but the heart-felt prayer of the whole country. He did no more than exercise his prerogative as Leader of the State, and anticipate what everyone would have liked to do, nor would his action have been so universally popular if it had not been previously approved. Power and advancement were yours, but heaven may bear witness to the moderate use you made of them. (10.1-3)

The hierarchy of political power functioned only when everyone assumed their proper place within it. Trajan’s own willingness to maintain a role subordinate to Nerva enhanced his authority because it bolstered the hierarchical system that generated political and religious authority. This passage represented the appointment of Trajan as a realignment of political power
around Rome’s religious foundations. Pliny’s actio may be distinguished from other earlier speeches of this kind through this novel justification which received ample elaboration.

Julian Bennet has argued that the official bestowing of the appellation Optimus by the Roman senate “marked a significant change in the constitutional relationship of princeps and senate.”38 For Bennet, the use of the appellation optimus signaled that Trajan’s “virtues made him rank only just after the supreme deity.”39 In honoring the meritorious selection of the perfect leader, Pliny castigated the traditional means of political succession, undertaken either as a default transfer of hereditary power (cognatio) or in response to force or its threatened use (necessitudo). Pliny’s use of the term optimus to link Jupiter’s heavenly deeds to Trajan’s service to empire is one of the earliest extant articulations of the Roman emperor’s divine election.40 The term communicated Trajan’s religious and political attributes, his elevated role above the rest of the senators. The comparison related Trajan’s munificence as a manifestation of Jupiter’s paternalism and connected Trajan and Capitolinian Jove, when he narrated Trajan’s triumph following the Dacian wars.41

Pliny praised the placement of the name (after the rest of Trajan’s titles) and argued for its superiority over the title of Augustus, a title maintained by emperors for over a century by this point, emphasizing how “it means less to be Emperor and Caesar and Augustus than to be better than all those who have borne those titles before you.” (88.8) Unlike “Emperor,” “Caesar,” and “Augustus,” terms which define an imperator’s position but not his attributes, the title optimus illustrated Trajan’s superiority to all those who have come before, and all who will follow.

This title was used by the Senate and the Roman People, which suggests that an official inscription was made (SPQR) and also a program of official propaganda. Pliny praises this new title and ruled out other epithets such as fortunate (felix) and great (magnum). In his awkward
phrasing, Pliny praised the name *optimus* as equal to Trajan’s own name, noting that the name just as much defines him as his given cognomen; “In adopting you, the best of emperors gave you his own name, to which the Senate added that of *Optimus*, to be as much your personal name as the one your father gave. Thus you are designated and defined by the name of *Optimus* as by that of Trajan.” Pliny praised the placement of the name (after the rest of Trajan’s titles) and argued for its superiority to the title of Augustus, a title kept by emperors for over a century by this point, emphasizing how “it means less to be Emperor and Caesar and Augustus than to be better than all those who have borne those titles before you.” (88.8) Whereas the earlier three words are definitions, not attributes, the title of *optimus* operates in a mirror-like fashion—it would appear false if it designated a future despotic emperor.

Pliny’s figuration of the word *optimus* throughout the *actio* highlighted the ways in which the tradition of giving thanks, like other imperial traditions, had functioned to legitimate the religious authority of the imperial government. Drawing from an extended comparison to Jupiter, Pliny lauded Trajan’s cognomen, stating to him “the Father of gods and men is worshipped under the title *Optimus* followed by *Maximus*, Best and Highest, and the more honour is due to you, who in the eyes of all are equally Highest and Best.”42 This recitation of Jupiter’s numerous appellations highlighted his conscious recognition that Trajan’s appellation, *optimus*, elevated his religious stature. It expanded upon the tradition of offering prayers to Jupiter, by offering praise for Trajan as an exemplification of devotion to the gods. The presentation and adjustment of the words principate and princeps shift the relationship in accordance to its figuration as Pliny’s own oration enacted the transference of power. Adoration linked the idea of *optimus*, connecting the prayers of the people to the best ruler. The enthymeme connected the people’s actions to the state’s, summoning of the citizens to actively pray for Trajan to endure as their best leader (43).
The concluding allusions to Jupiter and Augustus expressed ideals that bolstered Trajan’s political and religious program, emphasizing Trajan’s religious associations with Jove and intimating his potential to initiate a new age, a propagandistic message reinforced most by the architectural designs of his forum complex.

Consecrated Space

Early on in the speech, Pliny invoked public memory of Trajan’s early public appearance, deploying a *recordatio*. When Pliny recounted a portent of Trajan’s future greatness, he specified the temple of Jupiter as the critical space for understanding the connection between Jupiter and his vice regent. Specifically, Pliny’s brief narrative of an earlier “chance” sighting of Trajan in the temple of Capitolinian Jove that related Trajan’s accidental manifestation of his similarity to Jupiter, a chance appearance that provoked a spontaneous and collective roar for Jupiter, “*imperator,*” the misidentified figure of Trajan.

Pliny’s physical proximity of the temple to Capitolinian Jove would have called for a physical gesture that topically gave him the transition to move into his *recordatio*, through a recollection of the reception of Trajan’s at his earlier appearance, a retelling that flattered the audience by emphasizing their ability to recognize divine signs. Even as Pliny’s rhetorical question elevated divine will above human desire, the narration located the manifestation of divine will in the popular acclaim for Trajan as an *imperator* (5.2-4).

Religious language, syncopated Pliny’s narration, authoritatively marking the sequence of events, beginning with the implored deities (*exorata numina*) granting prodigies and ending with Trajan’s revealed divinity, a profound omen. Trajan’s accidental manifestation of his similarity to Jupiter provoked a spontaneous and collective roar for Jupiter, “imperator.” In other words, Trajan happened to be present in the Temple before a public rite and was “accidentally”
misidentified as the figure of the God Jupiter sauntering through his temple. Pliny used religious language to support his interpretation. In retelling this earlier event, apparently witnessed openly and in public, Pliny emphasized that Trajan was “discovered” by Jupiter ab Iove Ipso. The unstated implication of this auspicious moment was that Jupiter adorned Trajan with his divine-like features in order to signal to the Roman populace that he favored Trajan as a potential ruler. Pliny reinforced the link after describing Trajan’s approach to the threshold of the temple and his ascension, casually noting the people’s “mistaken” thought that they were addressing Jove: “At the time it was thought that they were addressing Jupiter, but events have proved that the title was intended for you, and the omen was thus interpreted by all.” Here Pliny deployed the adjective coram, in public, a term which also marks the os, the face—the viewing of the emperor’s face, suggesting a ceremonial precursor to Trajan’s ascension.

When Pliny celebrated the charismatic revelation of Trajan’s physiognomy, the awe-inspiring luminosity that exposed the deficiencies of prior rulers, he followed the prevailing aesthetic of power, lauding a gestured force instrumentally wielded through speech or even a nod. He contrasted the principate’s visual signs of divinity and a corresponding sequence of iconographic depictions to prove Trajan’s superiority to a series of prior rulers; some excelled in war, but faltered in peace; others governed well but commanded poorly (4.4). The deictic pronouns even suggest to specific disparagement of portraits—one ille who terrorized the populace to gain their reverence and another alius who humiliated himself to gain public honor (4.5). Anthony Corbiel’s landmark study of Roman rhetoric has called attention to the ways rhetorical gestures operate as their own language and elucidate the messages and designs that went into the production and reading of images. In fact, an inspection of the linguistic cues to visual gesture can uncover the rhetorical design shaping the oratory and the ritual influence upon
modes of public deliberation. Pliny’s rehearsed dismissal of flawed leaders segued into his praise for an image or series of images of Trajan, whose true aspect exceeded the imaginative domain of orator and portraitist (4.6). Pliny’s verbal portrait of Trajan followed the conventions of Imperial depiction; His initial approach led the audience to a specific frame, encouraging a comparison with other figures to favorably emphasize Trajan’s size and posture, before commenting upon the dignified stature of age shown by the expression of the head and its facial comportment, and finally detailing the hairs, decorated with the majestic insignia of the gods (4.7). Pliny detailed Trajan’s essential features to prove his powerful nature and the audience’s appreciation for this proof would have been enhanced by the visual presence of the princeps.

Features of Trajan’s forum complex, the large collection of architectural works symbolizing his reign reveal the extent to which visual images corresponded to the political messages of the time. Structurally, the complex balanced its expansion of previous architectural schemes, by expanding upon their thematic elements instead of breaking away from them, and this gave assurance that the complex was a fulfillment of a predictable destiny, hence a stable development.46 Thus, the two compelling impulses guiding its construction were balance and exaggeration—exaggeration to surpass everything that preceded it in scale and balance to match earlier structures in design and spatial layout. Physical movement through the complex brought visitors to its spatially distinct regions “architectural secrets” which depicted Trajan’s heroic life in a series of “progressive visual revelations” and other dramatic media.47 Each revelation was contained in a distinct region of Trajan’s forum, revealing a critical feature of this redefined present, each one obscured by the other significant features of the forum.

Architectural reconstructions of Trajan’s forum have revealed how its structure and content adapted to the surrounding physical landscape, recasting the monuments of the past as
anticipateds of the present by quoting the surrounding structures, in particular the Forum of Augustus, the Basilica Aemila, the Temple to Divus Julius, and the Temple to Mars Ultor. Its spatial layout aligned with the Temple of Peace and the area surrounding the Forum Iulium—early and later imperial spaces—to connect the immediate past to the golden era of Augustus. This design integrated the temple to peace, a Flavian-era monument from the immediate past with a broader Augustanesque imperial narrative that redefined imperial space rendering Trajan indispensable.

The forum celebrated Trajan’s divinely ordained advent with awe-inspiring depictions of Trajan performing myriad roles. Its majestic scope communicated through visual displays of Trajan’s advent the power, grandeur, and awesomeness of the Roman empire. Since celebrating the victories of war required a praiseworthy warrior, a statue of triumphant Trajan, mounted on a horse stood in the center of the forum, standing along an axis with other statues depicting his martial prowess: “…the figure of Trajan, mounted on an impressive charger, held aloft the symbols of war and victory. On the central axis of the Forum, this statue, aligned with the triumphator in the chariot on the central arch, with the statue in the chariot on the middle porch of the Basilica, and with the colossus of the deified hero on the Column of Trajan (clearly visible from the forum square above the gilded roof of the Basilica Ulpia), introduced the second grand theme of the Forum: the exaltation of the victorious commander-in-chief.” (191)

The temple of deified Trajan, the last addition to the forum complex, was spatially positioned to be a pedestrian’s ultimate destination. As the elaborate reconstructions of the monument attest, the path to the temple was lined with a range of depictions portraying Trajan in various stages of his life, culminating with a depiction of Trajan’s apotheosis atop the Temple’s façade and an instantiation of his divinity in the form of a massive statue within the structure of
Trajan “arrayed as Olympian Zeus.” The temple was a religious anchor in a civic space, and it invited spectators to witness “the emperor’s conquest of death and ascent to heaven.” (Packer, 191) Visual depiction of Trajan’s divinity gave assurance that the civic space held its activities with divine approval, leading visitors to “marvel, applaud, and depart, rejoicing in their newfound understanding of the central principles and power on which the Imperium Romanum had been established—and now triumphantly celebrated.” (191)

Conclusion

Unlike the late Roman revival of sophistic theory which interests postmodernists or the speeches of Cicero that sustain some interest for scholars of argumentation and political rhetoric, the Imperial panegyrics have gone unheralded—a fact that is reflected in our lack of adequate means for integrating these speeches into discussions of contemporary rhetoric. These rudimentary statements operated in a demanding environment, in which the constant need to reinvent secession criteria affected the political and legal status of the Roman emperors. The emperors’ whims, dearth of suitable heirs, internal intrigue, external strife, and popular discontent all complicated the process of hereditary succession. Accordingly, adopted sons, nephews, uncles, a trusted political ally, and even popular military figures could be chosen as an emperor given the right combination of popular acclamation, senate machinations, and military support. Under circumstances of orderly transmission of power, a new emperor could be appointed by the outgoing emperor and confirmed by a compliant senate, but when disorderly, the prospective emperor needed to secure alliances and legitimacy. Families that attained some level of dynastic power were cooperative organizations, held together by tenuous alliances of blood and marriage, groupings that bore little resemblance to contemporary families. The unexpected death of an emperor, whether by natural or unnatural causes, compounded all of this,
rendering the conditions of each transition unique and without a clear precedent. To justify a political succession, the confirmation of the seceding ruler and the conveyance of universal approval and support for this succession were critical to reassure the people of the legitimacy and orderliness of the government. Under these conditions, a succession’s orderliness was influenced by rhetorical depictions of the emperor’s legitimacy. This entire process was a precondition to the effective display of power. The diverse forms of political secession attested to the resiliency of the office of the princeps and the imperial political system.

Despite much scholarship on the rhetorical training that occurred throughout this period of institutional resiliency, there has been little inquiry into the connection between Imperial rhetoric and Rome’s political institutions. Rhetorical scholarship can contribute to an understanding of the institutional stability that transcended regular uncertain regime changes. One text clearly illustrates many types of the messages that helped the coordination of diverse religious and political actors is Pliny’s (c. 62 C.E. – 115) Actio Gratiarum, a record of the values emphasized by the rulers and in behalf of the rulers to communicate power. Pliny’s reinscription of traditional votive topoi aligned his speech to the dictates of an oratorical tradition, though his literary work comported to the thematic form of the panegyric genre. In celebrating imperial virtues, it expressed the conditions and sources of institutional power, and lauded the social contract that linked ruler and ruled. Its ceremonial setting underscores the importance that rhetorical rituals had in reinforcing the conceptions of political power and religious propriety.
Chapter Five: Conclusion

This dissertation has identified the fundamental connections linking Greek and Roman epideictic practices in an effort to reveal some of Rome’s indigenous traditions that have remained outside the purview of contemporary rhetorical scholarship. It defends the theoretical importance of Roman epideictic texts and posits some tentative conclusions regarding the potential contributions such texts make to revising the history of epideictic. Rhetorical inquiry into classical epideictic has traditionally emphasized Greek epideictic texts and ignored the complex, diverse, and unique range of Roman epideictic expression. The three case studies conducted in this dissertation, though hardly exhaustive, instantiate a set of significant rhetorical occasions, political contexts, and religious processes that distinctly influenced the conduct of Pre- and Post-Augustan epideictic.

The influence of Roman religious place and ceremony upon epideictic expression continuously motivated inventive deployments of epideictic topics, style, physical media, and occasion. The ongoing political struggle to influence religious values, practices, and ideals had a dramatic effect upon the conduct of Roman rhetoric. The intensity of this struggle waned in the centuries immediately following the principate, but Augustus’ successors, ever-mindful of the political benefits obtained by religious authority redirected their energies to crafting and co-opting symbols illustrating the values they exemplified and to integrating these symbols into the design and use of Rome’s religious and civic spaces. This dynamic interplay was an essential
feature of the Roman political landscape, and it is critical for understanding the functions of religious media and institutions in Roman rhetorical contexts.

The rhetorical works of Isocrates, Plato, and Aristotle document the evident interest in the connections between epideictic and the institutions of power in Greece. Greek rhetorical theory and practice promoted the continuing development and sophisticated expansion of epideictic rhetoric as it advanced from more rudimentary forms toward later more literate incarnations that emerged out of oral tradition. Isocrates concentrated on designing pragmatic epideictic texts that could motivate Greek citizens and leaders to undertake political action and to regulate their behavior with appropriate conduct. Likewise, the political rituals associated the funeral oration arose as a topic of ethical concern in Plato’s *Menexenus*. Aristotle was the first thinker to systematically theorize the scope, function, and design of epideictic rhetoric and his general statements regarding its generic components continue to initiate reflection and introspection addressing epideictic concerns.

For all their strength, the epideictic texts of Greece hardly reflected the Roman context. This study attends to the relationship between ceremony, space and time in Roman epideictic—historically under-explored areas of rhetorical scholarship. Examinations of the interaction between Aristotle’s epideictic theory and the broader rhetorical milieu, including its sophistic and Isocratean variants, have enriched our conception of epideictic’s aesthetic and civic dimensions, but our understanding of the ceremonial domains of a range of epideictic occasions remains impoverished. Greek epideictic texts have helped to reconfigure epideictic theory, but the primary blind spots remaining are poorly addressed by these texts, blind spots that center around some of the most critical issues in contemporary epideictic scholarship and partially addressed the concerns of the Romans.
The advances that have been made in clarifying the rhetorical worldview of the Hellenistic period have established some degree of continuity with the panegyric form and also document an eagerness to expand the epideictic rhetoric to a new range of genres. The thematic patterns in earlier Greek texts also anticipated some of the major and minor *topoi* of Roman panegyric, but it is an oversimplification to describe Roman epideictic as a simple extension of Greek principles. In fact, it is just as difficult to fully track how epideictic theories were received during the Hellenistic period as it is to understand how the Romans read and received these ideas. The texts that do remain indicate that the use of this tradition was selective and that the Romans cautiously appropriated epideictic ideas in ways that wouldn’t upset their own moral domain, but even this selectivity was a complex process driven by a host of other factors.

A range of political, cultural, and demographic changes influenced the performative and ritualized features of public discourse in the late Republic. The recurring religious topoi in Roman rhetorical texts corroborate classicist Dennis Feeney’s reading of Roman political history as “a struggle over who is going to be allowed access to the knowledge necessary to mediate between gods and humans.”¹ The continuous expansion of literacy expanded the range of ways to engage in textual production and message assimilation.² Competing political agendas, prompted by a prolonged military expansion and corresponding integration of a colonial economy, placed Rome’s Senate and popular generals in constant opposition. The resulting competition, as reflected in many propagandistic messages, clarifies the polity’s perpetual instability. Demographic changes expanded the population in and around Rome and boosted the contentiousness between political rivals competing for the approval of citizens who could more readily vote by virtue of their proximity to the Forum. Competition among speakers to secure a suitably large group of supporters gave rise to efforts to control the physical and visual domain
where speeches occurred. Because hostile responses threatened the viability of any political message, securing control over public space and limiting a rival’s access became ways to manipulate the successful processing of rhetorical articulations. Accordingly, Roman epideictic developments reflected novel adaptations to the shifting political and cultural climate.

The Pro Lege Manilia enacted a rhetorical sacralization of deliberative space that defined the epideictic process of witnessing as a form of political action. Textual elements from Cicero’s speech, along with other Roman sources documenting the contional tradition, clarify some of the sacred roots of Rome’s political discourse. Only Cicero’s contiones remain, a factor that prevents comparison of Cicero’s messages to any of the other contiones addressing the Manilian legislation. Nevertheless, it is doubtful that Cicero’s hybrid form violated the rhetorical expectations of his audience. Likewise it is impossible to evaluate the reception of Cicero’s speech, but the ultimate passage of the legislation it promoted suggests that his audience was neither surprised by his characterization of military power as a sign of divine favor nor alarmed by his subordination of deliberation that redefined it as an extension of epideictic praise. Cicero’s advocacy of Pompey’s command was hardly illustrative of his rhetorical theory, but it was not entirely anomalous. Its particular deference to the occasion and surrounding circumstances as a strategic alternative to more traditional appeals to ethos, demonstrated alternative ways to appeal to the authority of the people.

The intersection between Rome’s political institutions, religious culture, and rhetorical traditions renders these texts fascinating and worthy of continued study. Their under-representation in contemporary rhetorical scholarship, despite the universal consensus concerning their religious significance, may be due to the fact that these texts have been presumed to be merely religious. But, renewed scholarship in Roman epideictic texts requires a
corresponding awareness of the religious trends at this time. Cicero’s creative response to the rhetorical circumstances in the late Republic became more difficult following a series of religious reforms. The records of priestly offices document how aristocracy augmented its religious authority by consolidating these offices and reformulating religious tradition. Julius Caesar initiated the reforms that eliminated prohibitions against holding multiple religious offices and a fuller transformation was catalyzed by the principate’s promotion of members of the imperial family and its supporters to sacerdotal offices. This process gained momentum with the consolidation of religious offices, which correspondingly limited ritual participation to a select group who parleyed their symbolic capital into increased political prestige. In the end, as Richard Gordon has summed up this process, “the emperors took over the religion of Rome.”

This assimilative process, observable in the earliest instances of Roman ceremonial speech, became a more evident source of power in the codified ceremonial forms accompanying the institution of the principate. The implications of this take over are fully apparent in Augustus’s Res Gestae, a memorializing elaboration of the new conditions of imperial rhetoric and power. Augustus’s text documents the augmentation of the religious foundations of his power through the redefinition of the concept of authority, auctoritas, and through a vigorous effort to blend civic and religious spaces. The implications of these efforts can be appreciated by comparing auctoritas with earlier Republican conceptions of ethos. Such a comparison clarifies how increased control over civil and religious space characteristic of the Imperial period accompanied the shift in Roman imperial rhetoric, best understood as a movement that further expanded the range of and emphasis upon more epideictic modes of address.

Textual analysis of Pliny’s actio fosters an appreciation for the generally sacred nature of Roman Imperial rhetoric and for the uniquely Roman intersection of power and ritual. Pliny’s
oration traces the rhetorical elements of Imperial religious practice and consequently discloses new sources of rhetorical power in the Imperial age. Imperial rituals are notable sites of investigation because they combine the rhetorical uses of spectacle and theatricality with the diffusion and popularization of new religious practices. Ritualized rhetorical traditions played an important role in legitimating Roman institutional power. In addition to the magnitude of Trajan’s new forum, which occupied as much space as the fora of Augustus and Julius combined, Trajan’s visual displays thematically connected a conservative civic ideology to imperial interests. The general consistency between Pliny’s *actio* and later neo-sophistic formulations of the panegyric form indicate that institutional control of religious symbolism and ritual aided in the evolution of Imperial rhetorical power.

Although the texts produced in the Post-Augustan period might represent what are more easily understood as ceremonial epideictic texts, an enrichment of this study requires further work. Other critical texts, which are often misunderstood as simply poetic expressions, help to establish some of the ceremonial boundaries of that were strongly tied to Rome’s rhetorical expressions. To begin with, the *carmen saeculare* of Horace demonstrates the participatory dimension of Augustan era ritual. This *carmen* was designed to celebrate a series of poetic games and ritual affairs in a manner that integrated the people together and demonstrated the significant belief that the Romans were entering into a new time at this juncture of history and that this epoch inaugurated a new golden age. This belief in a new age strongly determined the ways in which rites were conducted, as it reinforced the piety of the present. Moreover, it initiated a new conceptualization of sacred and profane time, most clearly elaborated in Ovid’s incomplete masterpiece, the *Fasti*. The concern with marking, tracking, and labeling time and ritual occasions continued to expand throughout the Post-Augustan period.
Overall, this dissertation underscores the continued salience of classical rhetorical texts and of the benefits gained by reconfiguring the traditionally accepted canon. Moreover, it establishes some new scholarly approaches to appreciating the overlapping rhetorical trends of the later imperial and early Christian period. Early Christian discourse cohered around a fundamental set of messages and symbols basic enough to communicate to a broad variety of people, yet it still retained the essential mysteries that would make the religion so powerful. Instead of seeing Christian discourse as a new strain of rhetoric, Averil Cameron identified it as a rhetoric that had successfully absorbed a wide variety of epideictic lessons into its own form, primarily the panegyric and the biography, two forms that could reinforce essential ideas, absorb the ceremonies of the past, and communicate in a variety of ways. Sabine Maccormack, who focused more specifically on the ceremonies that set the context for the panegyric speeches, detailed how three primary ceremonies of the imperial regime reflected the interplay between power, the people governed, places, and the divine. Her readings of the later Latin panegyrics establishes the typologies for three primary ceremonies, the adventus, the consecratio, and the ascensio, that flourished in a somewhat altered form in the medieval period as well.

Roman epideictic fulfilled a particularly important civic function, assimilating religious idiom into political discourse. All three case studies exemplify ways in which speakers captured the rewards of these religious messages and advanced their own personal political agendas. For Cicero and Pliny, such messages advanced political agendas and secured power vis-à-vis the people and the Senate. For Augustus, the res gestae also operated as a tool for memory, a mnemonic prompt to the posthumous narrative of Augustus’ life and to the interpretation of Augustan-era ideals--the perpetuation of Augustan Republicanism. Epideictic theorizations remain largely silent concerning the importance of religious institutions in the formulation of
Roman rhetoric, a silence that conceals a normalizing assumption of Roman secularity which distorts our reception of the texts and renders impossible a full appreciation of the most critical texts of this time. The rewriting of this history will generate a fuller understanding and appreciation for the religious texts, locales, customs, and myths that so thoroughly dominated Latin society.
Notes for Chapter One: Introduction

1 Some scholars mark the beginning of the imperial period sometime in the late Republic, signaled by a period of extensive imperial expansion, however the phrase “imperial period” more often refers to the period that begins with the establishment of the Augustan principate.

2 Textual examples from the Republican age indicate that the fusion of ceremony into political affairs was customary. Cicero’s diminution of the significance of ceremonial rhetoric may reinforce the perception that Republican and Pre-Republican era ceremonial forms were not rhetorical events, but even Cicero conceded the unique rhetorical significance of the funeral procession. (Cicero, De Oratore. Trans. H. Rackham. (Cambridge: Harvard UP): Cicero’s admission is corroborated by scholarship detailing the unique qualities that made the Roman funeral procession a political performance aligning family ancestry with political power and esteem. The extreme care and caution taken to limit the rhetorical magnitude of the political ritual surrounding the triumph reveals its significance and clarifies why a theorist such as Cicero might have downplayed its use in advancing political ambitions. (H.S. Versnel, Triumphus: An Inquiry into the Origin, Development, and Meaning of the Roman Triumph. (Leiden: Brill): 1970. One consequence of the loosening of restrictions on the political displays of military power allowed the more political use of the triumph as this became a routinized event that was designed to be incorporated into a political biography. The shifting significance of the Triumph or the political funeral are two ceremonial events that became increasingly politicized during the imperial period and the increasing importance of these events is mirrored in the increasing importance of epideictic rhetoric.

3 Gilbert Dagron, Emperor and Priest: The Imperial Office in Byzantium. Trans. Jean Birrell, (Cambridge: UP): 2003. Byzantine rituals influenced political events but were elastic processes which solidified the terms and secured the concepts of leadership and power, but at the same time were secured by the enactment of the ceremonial process.

4 Sabine G. MacCormack, Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity. (Berkeley: University of California Press): 1981; Despite evidence of epideictic rhetoric’s increased innovation and influence during the Imperial period, scholars who attribute excessive significance to the Roman panegyrics risk assigning a rigid periodization and asserting an Imperial provenance. MacCormack’s work tantalizingly points to the need to foster a more focused study of the Imperial era and its relation to the ceremonial speech. Superficial interpretations of the one thousand year rhetorical era in which political ceremony and panegyric virtues became critical components to any politically entity in Europe (Christian or pagan) fail to consider the critical differences in the political, religious, and cultural systems of that extended period. As a result, such a view might recognize how rhetorical transactions were conducted during this period, but probably wait to take into account other critical factors.

5 Naturally, this dichotomization is already flawed, as the ruling elite have blended in their own stories with the myths of localities and of the various religious customs, but nevertheless, it is useful to remember that the religious views and traditions of families were locally preserved, or preserved by the groups.

6 Finally, on top of all of these is the idea of time and the notion that certain spiritual forces are more active during certain times. On top of these temporal patterns, we can add the seasonal fluctuations the secular historical events and the way they could potentially y
rhetorically supercharge certain times and leave them open for new interpretations and analysis and then also the way in which official governments might try to expropriate or expropriate times in order to allow them to suit their own agenda, be it political or religious.

7 Denis Feeney, Literature and Religion at Rome: cultures, contexts, and beliefs. (Cambridge: UP): 1998, 2; “The main reason, however, is that they are the inheritors of a patronizing attitude to Roman literature. The dominant tradition of reading amongst Latinists has always been highly formalist. As a result, Latinists have tended to isolate literary texts and transform them into self-sufficient products of an autonomous and inward-turning literary tradition, cutting them off from a larger cultural context – and when that cultural context is a religious one in particular, a vicious circle makes the formalist approach appear even more natural, because tenacious conventional preconceptions about Roman religion have militated against taking that religious system seriously in the first place.”

8 Thomas Habinek, “Grecian Wonders and Roman Woe: The Romantic Rejection of Rome and its Consequences of the Study of Latin Literature,” The Interpretation of Roman Poetry: Empiricism or Hermeneutics? (Peter Lang: Frankfurt): 1992, 227-8; “The modern university, in which criticism of Latin literature is still by and large carried out, is the product of the late German Romantic period, and most academicians, at least to some degree, fancy themselves inhabitants of a realm designed to realize the Romantic ideal of the aesthetic, a place where purer motives might expel the professions. While Romantic legacy is a mixed blessing for all humanists, its construction of classical studies that arose during and immediately following the Romantic period involved the creation of a hierarchy between Greece and Rome that privileged the former and denigrated the latter, and that worked, in particular, to aestheticize the study of Latin literature, removing it from a connection with Roman culture that might have made clear its relevance and intrinsic interest to contemporary society. Rome was suspect to the romantics for a variety of reasons, and if Latin literature was to be preserved as an area of study, it had to be removed as far as possible from the culture that enabled its production. Recognizing the suppression of Rome that lies at the heart of our discipline can make it easier for Latinists to accept the challenge of refashioning the discipline to respond to and take advantage of changes in the contemporary intellectual and social environment, and can also suggest some directions in which that refashioning might proceed.” Habinek’s own explorations of a wide range of these broader social and political questions are evident in his recent study of rhetoric has noted the unique status held by the Roman orator, pointing to this figure as a critical metaphor for understanding and appreciating Roman political culture. Habinek’s provocative claim must have motivated him to recast the story of rhetoric as an elaborate definition of a sociological phenomenon. His study noted its elements and related them to the state and technical uses paying little attention to it as a progressive tradition and instead noting that it was a sociological phenomenon reflecting an analytical frame work and ideology that values anti-tyranny and deliberation amongst a small group of elite citizens. See Thomas Habinek, Ancient Rhetoric and Oratory. (Maldan, Blackwell Publishing): 2005, passim.

9 M. L. Clarke, Rhetoric at Rome: A Historical Survey. (New York: Barnes and Noble): 1953, 10; Clarke’s motley assortment of educated Greeks fleeing from their decaying homeland in pursuit of the profitable task of teaching rhetoric to the Romans, resembles the story of the Sophists, the Greek thinkers fleeing a fallen Constantinople, and even the European émigrés departing from the ruined land of Post-War Europe, with whom Clark must have had some familiarity.
Clarke, 11.
13 Feeney, 8
14 Feeney, 26; “Interaction with Greek culture, was from the start, a distinctive feature of the Romans’ relentlessly energetic modernism, marking them out from their peers as early as the seventh century BCE when ‘Rome, perhaps alone among the native communities of central Italy, began to take on some of the features of the Greek polis’. Religion was as much involved in this process of cultural interaction as any other part of Roman life, and the Romans’ religious dialogue with the Greek world was therefore very ancient. It was a dialogue that the Romans were careful never fully to naturalize or domesticate, maintaining throughout their history elaborate and self-conscious mechanisms for preserving a sense of distance and difference from the Greek element in the religious life (even if the distinctions they drew are not necessarily the same as those a modern historian might want to draw).”
15 In fact, a close to three hundred and fifty year gap would have scholars look at the Earl of Strafford’s speech regarding his impeachment delivered in 1641 and comparing it to Bill Clinton’s response to his own impeachment.
17 Laurent Pernot, *Rhetoric in Antiquity*. Trans. W.E. Higgins. (Washington D.C.: Catholic University Press): 2005, 21; “Different sorts of specialists, whether scholars or technical experts, used the *epideixis* to display their art to audiences narrow and wide. The texts were written down and published. The Hippocratic Collection preserves some examples of such lectures, namely the treatises *Concerning the Winds* and *On Art*, dating from the last quarter of the fifth century. They are really speeches of persuasion—the second is a polemic—in an ornate style. The display could just as well take the form of an antilogy, setting forth opposing opinions, with a debate in several rounds and stages of cross-examination.”
20 Loraux, 207.
21 Kennedy, *The Art of Persuasion in Greece* 115; “The importance of the *Rhetorica Ad Alexandrum* is not so much in its direct influence, which was apparently negligible, but in the fact that it represents better than anything else the tradition of sophist rhetoric.”
and Secular Tradition. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press): 1999; follows a topical
UP): 1963; pursues a combination of the two.

24 Thomas Cole, The Origins of Rhetoric in Ancient Greece. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins

25 Burgess, ibid.; J. Richard Chase, “The Classical Conception of Epideictic,” QJS 47.3
(October, 1961): 293-300; Clarke Roumtree, “The (Almost) Blameless Genre of Classical Greek
Epideictic,” Rhetorica. 19.3 (Summer, 2001): 293-305; Christine Oravec, “Observation” in

26 Carol Poster, “Aristotle’s Rhetoric against Rhetoric: Unitarian Reading and Esoteric
Hermeneutics,” American Journal of Philology 118 (1997): 219-49; has read it as an anti-
rhetorical text.

27 Chase, 295; argues against considering the epideictic a display speech and instead
defines epideictic speeches as primarily speeches of praise and blame. Chase, 297; concludes:
“To summarize, Aristotle’s third class of oratory is epideiktikon, not because it is necessarily
wanton sophistic display, but, if we have rightly interpreted him, because the speaking occasion
and subject matter peculiar to praising and blaming allow for a greater attention to all facets of
rhetorical art.” However, Chase, 195; long recognized for his rigid neo-Aristotelianism, observed
that epideictic “does double duty; it both designates and describes. Epideictic designates a class
that is dominated by the praising and blaming of things noble and disgraceful. On the other hand
the term is also descriptive; retaining its etymological sense, it connotes an oratory of display.”
Admittedly, the circumstances of epideictic are constantly changing and mutating, but it is
fallacious to argue that certain ceremonies are not epideictic and cannot be considered epideictic
by virtue of their omission in Aristotle’s text. Chase rightly noted that the unlimited expansion of
the category epideictic empties the term of any meaning, but epideictic’s identifying features
ought balance being flexible enough to describe new forms of speech, with enough rigidity to
preserve some core levels of meaning.

28 Oravec, ibid.

29 Oravec, 165.

30 Burgess, 96; discounted the literalistic conception of epideictic taken by his quasi-
protégé Chase, and he argued that the practice and theory of the two are quite separate and that
looking for definitions in the theory will fail to impart a true sense of the literature: “According
to one conception, it had a comparatively narrow field into which praise and blame entered as a
definite and easily distinguishable, usually far the most prominent, element. This was especially
ture of its earlier theoretical treatment. Its practice was always wider than its theory.”

Rhetoric Society Quarterly. 29.1 (1999): 14

32 Hauser, 17; “Epideictic was essential for acclimatizing the Athenian public realm to the
activities it had to accommodate. This public realm was an active domain for political
participation. Epideictic encouraged the constitutive activity propaedeutic to action: reflecting on
public norms for proper political conduct. Aristotle’s discussion italicizes an essential didactic
element necessary for a smoothly functioning public sphere to exist.”

33 Chase, 293.

34 Aristotle Rhetoric III.xii.1-3 also see Richard Graff, “Reading and the “written Style”
Ned O’Gorman, “Aristotle’s Phantasia in the Rhetoric: Lexis, Appearance, and the Epideictic Function of Discourse,” Philosophy and Rhetoric. 38.1 (2004): 16-40; expands upon the notion of epideictic as an exercise in display, e.g. Schiappa, 313; “Cole’s claim may be supported by the following speculative morphological argument. I noted earlier that epideiknumi is typically translated as “display” or “show.” I should add that the same is true of the shorter verb deiknumi. Other meanings include “bring to light” and “show forth.” The noun deikelon can designate a specific exhibition. The meaning of the preposition epi- varies; it lacks the sort of core meaning that some prefixes have. Its sense depends on context and case; possible meanings include: upon, at, toward, against etc. The question becomes, Why was the preposition epi-compounded with deiknumi to create epi-deiknumi? It is difficult to say. Even in English, one can find prefixes that at one point might have conveyed an active sense of position or motion, but that later became a dormant appendage: One can picture an event, or depicture it. One can cede or concede a position. One can limit or delimit. One can splay or display a banner. We may conjecture plausibly that originally epideiknumi designated a special sort of “showing.” It is certainly possible that, with respect to discourse, it had to be written in order for it to be something that could be “di-played” or re-presented. If Cole’s argument is correct, than what later would be called epideictic speech originated with the recounting or recitation of an “exhibit” or “specimen” of written prose discourse.”

O’Gorman, 26.

O’Gorman, 15.

O’Gorman, 15.

Kennedy, Art of Persuasion in Greece., 285.

It is not unusual to find contemporary historians or philosophers of antiquity who hold a broad view of the Hellenistic period, encompassing Cicero’s age and even the first Caesars. This view receives preference by those confounded by the uncertainties in dating texts and difficulties identifying precise linear sequences of their production.

Kennedy, Art of Persuasion in Greece, 264; “Of the many Greek writings on rhetoric in these three hundred years we have practically none; what we know about Hellenistic developments comes largely from works written by Roman authors or by later Greek authors who refer to Hellenistic rhetoricians and their writings.”

Burgess, 106.

Pernot, 60; “The work is important because (assuming this dating is correct) it is the only Greek treatise, along with the works of Philodemus, preserved from the hellenistic period and because it broaches numerous topics, not just the single issue of style.”


Pernot, 62, describes Demetrios’ place in the overall history of figurative language development; “The figures play an important role in Demetrios to the extent that for this theorist they serve to divine the genres of style better. Other Greeks were interested in the topic, like Athenaious (second century B.C.) or Apollonios Molon (first century B.C.), who were authors of definitions of skh ma. Nowadays we know about the theory of tropes and figures from the treatise On Tropes attributed to the grammarian Tryphon (first century A.D., in Spengel, Rhetores Graeci, III, pp. 191-206) and from sources in Latin: book 4 of the Rhetorica ad Herennium, the works of Cicero (On the Orator 3 and The Orator), and the treatise of Rutilius Lupos (first century A.D.) On the figures of Thought and Diction. The last is a partial translation
of a Greek treatise by Gorgias the Younger, a rhetorician of the first century B.C., who was the
teacher of Cicero’s son at Athens.”

UP): 1995, 29; “Such clauses may also contribute towards an imposing grandeur, like the many
antithesis of Gorgias and Isocrates.”

47 Demetrius, *On Style*, 423.


49 Demetrius, *On Style*, 503, has contents quite relevant to this context: “The figure of
aposiopesis which I have already mentioned is of the same kind, and it too adds force to what we
said. Another figure of thought which may be used to produce force is the figure called
prosopopoeia, for example “Imagine that your ancestors are rebuking you and speak such
words, or imagine Greece, or your country in the form of a woman.” This is what Plato uses in
his Funeral Speech, “Children that you are the sons of brave men…” he does not speak in his
own person but in that of their fathers. The personification makes the language more lively and
forceful, or rather it really turns into a drama.”

50 Demetrius, *On Style*, 517-19; “Innuendo may be used in yet another way, as in this
case: since powerful men and women dislike hearing their own faults mentioned, we will not
speak openly, if we are advising them against a fault, but we will either blame others who have
acted in a similar way, for example, in addressing the tyrant Dionysius, we will attack the tyrant
Phalaris and the cruelty of Phalaris; or we will praise people who acted in the opposite way to
Dionysius, and say that Gelo or Hiero, for example, are like fathers and teachers of Sicily.
Dionysius is receiving advice as he listens, but he does not feel insulted; he is envious of Gelo,
the subject of this praise, and wants to be praised himself. Such caution is often needed in
dealing with rulers. Because he had only one eye, Philip would grow angry if anyone mentioned
Cyclops in his presence of used the word “eye” at all. Hermeias, the ruler of Atarneus, was in
other respects good-tempered, it is said, but he resented any mention of a knife, surgery, or
amputation, because he was a eunuch. I have mentioned these points to bring out very clearly the
true nature of those in power, and to show that it especially calls for that circumspection in
speech which is called innuendo. It is also the case, however, that great and powerful
democracies often need this type of speech just as much as tyrants, for example the democracy of
Athens when it was ruler of Greece and the home of flatterers like Cleon and Cleophon. Flattery
is shameful, open criticism is dangerous, and the best course lies in the middle, namely
innuendo. Sometimes we will compliment the very man who has a weakness not on the
weakness but on his avoidance of it. We will complement a bad-tempered man, for example, that
he was praised yesterday for the mildness he showed when so and so was at fault, and that he is a
model to his fellow citizens. Every one likes to be his own example and is eager to add praise to
praise, or rather to win one uniform record of praise.” (517-9)

Hunter (Berkeley: University of California Press): 2003; The hymn itself assumes a poetic form,
and it complicates the perception of Isocrates.

52 Richard Hunter, *Introduction, Encomium of Ptolemy Philadelphus*, 21; “The most
elaborate and influential analysis of EP as a “rhetorical” poem is that of Francis Cairns, who sees
Theocritus’s poem as a basilikos logos, “speech for a king/emperor,” patterns for which are
prescribed in the surviving treatises ascribed to Menander “the rhetorician…There are a number
of topoi, of course that are shared between EP and Menander’s prescriptions and there is an
obvious temptation to see in Theocritus’s poem a forerunner of the “poems on the emperor of
festival competitions under the Roman empire.”

Hunter, 15; points to similarities which may justify revisiting Isocrates to relate the
generic similarities between these two forms; “That encomia and epitaphioi logoi shared many
themes and commonplaces was well known to the subsequent tradition of technical rhetorical
teaching. Thus, for example, the Evagoras concerns not a living individual, but a recent deceased
king, and the praise of Alcibiades that is included in a speech for that Isocrates wrote for the
famous Athenian’s son…is an excellent illustration of the links between encomium, funeral
oration, and epinician. It is a great pity that we know nothing of the speech composed by a
Zenocrates in praise of the deceased Arsinoe.”

Pernot, 69.

Kennedy, Art of Persuasion in Greece, 272.

Burgess, 172, recognized this strange connection to the Epicurean school and noticed
Philodemus’ derision of “the practice of addressing words of praise to a deity…” an observation
which would bolster his conclusion that Philodemus was hostile to epideictic. Burgess, 223,
points out that Philodemus “…compares rhetoric and philosophy, to the disadvantage of the
former. Rhetoric contributes nothing to human welfare. Rhetors are sycophants; they get money
falsely; they destroy the people. Philosophy is the benefactor of the race; it is the only source of
right living, the true basis for oratory.”

Kennedy, The Art of Persuasion in Greece, 301.

Kennedy, ibid.

Robert N. Gaines, “Philodemus and the Epicurean Outlook on Epideictic Speaking,”

Gaines, 197; “A second reason for historical interest in Philodemus’ evidence is that it
displays development of the Epicurean outlook over time. In contrast to Epicurus’ indignant
dismissal of epideictic speaking, Philodemus’ critique contemplates a constructive purpose for
epideictic, namely moral guidance, and seems to suggests [sic] that many shortcomings in
epideictic speaking might be remedied, if epideictic speakers equipped themselves with
philosophical knowledge related to their practice. Such a development seems significant and may
conceivably illumined other changes in Epicurean rhetorical theory during the Hellenistic era.”

Gaines, 197, concludes; “Regarding the Epicurean outlook on epideictic speaking, the
evidence of Philodemus’ On Rhetoric 3 and 4 is historically interesting for at least two reasons.
First, it provides a substantial body of Epicurean analysis and critique that is consistent with
Diogenes’ report of the stance of the school. In this connection, it corroborates the report and
complicates our apprehension of the Epicurean outlook. It may even disclose why the school
placed panegyric speaking outside the activities of the wise man.”[0]

Pernot, 70-71, concludes; “On Rhetoric is not a systematic treatise, but a polemical
work directed against the pretensions of rhetors (specialists in rhetoric) and the erroneous ideas
of philosophers belonging to various schools. True to Epicureanism, Philodemos is
fundamentally hostile to rhetoric. He can only see in judicial and deliberative rhetoric a routine
unworthy of the name of art, and in his estimation the true man of politics has no need for
elocution. He makes an exception, however, in book 2, for “sophistic” rhetoric, a large field,
exemplified in his mind by Isokarates, which includes compositions written in a chastened style,
that is, epideictic orations (of praise and blame) and school orations. To this type of rhetoric he
grants the status of art, because it rests upon a science of rules, and he avers that Epicurus
himself thought similarly, although other Epicureans disputed this (evidence like this shows that there were bitter debates over rhetoric among the school’s disciples). Philodemos, this man “profoundly cultured” (*perpolitus*) in all areas of intellectual activity (Cicero, *Against Piso* 70), therefore recognized an aesthetic dimension to the art of the spoken word. But this welcoming stance remained carefully hedged, because sophistic rhetoric so defined was deprived of all political and practical usefulness (something Isokrates would never have accepted). Philodemos, moreover expressed reservations in no uncertain terms about the moral validity of encomia bestowed by epideictic orators

63 Cicero, *De Oratore*. Trans. H. Rackham. (Cambridge: Harvard UP): (II-11): “I know that I myself and all who were present, were highly delighted when your mother Popilia was eulogized in this fashion by yourself; she being, I think, the first woman to whom such honour was ever rendered in our own community. But to my mind not everything that we say need be reduced to theory and rule. For from those same sources, whence the rules of speaking are all derived, we shall also be able to set off a funeral oration without feeling the want of those scholastic rudiments, since, even though no one were to teach these, is there any man who would not know the good points of a human being? In fact, if he has laid down those axioms enunciated by Crassus in the opening of that famous speech of his, which he delivered when censor in opposition to his colleague in office, when he declared that while he could cheerfully endure inferiority in respect to gifts bestowed on mankind by nature or by chance, he could not consent to be surpassed in such credit as men may win for themselves, he who proposes to be the panegyrist of anyone will understand that he has in the first place to deal fully with the favours of fortune. Those are the advantages of race, wealth, connexions, friendships, power, good health, beauty, vigour, talent, and the rest of the attributes that are either physical or externally imposed: it must be explained that the person commended made a right use of these benefits if he possessed them, managed sensibly without them, if they were denied to him, and bore the loss with resignation, if they were taken away from him; and after that the speaker will marshal instances of conduct, either active or passive, on the part of the subject of his praises; whereby he manifested wisdom, generosity, valour, righteousness, greatness of soul, sense of duty, gratitude, kindliness, or in short, any moral excellence you please. These and similar indications of character the would-be panegyrist will readily discern, and he who seeks to disparage will as readily find evidence in rebuttal.” (II-46)

64 Dugan, 38, “this rhetorical type provoked deep seated cultural anxieties which may have contributed to the later-republican Roman rhetoricians’ general reticence about the genus.”

65 Dugan, 38.

66 Perhaps, this is an indication that the genre itself could be used to disagree with the external signs as they convey themselves. Doubtful and could only be argued if Antonius recognizes the possibility of arguing from a lack of a sign or from a sign’s misapprehension.

67 Vasaly, 101.

68 Gregory Aldrete, *Gestures and Acclamations in Ancient Rome*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP): 1999, 25; has argued that Cicero tried to deliver his speeches in places where the religious import of his message could be conveyed.

69 Vasaly, 85-6.

70 Vasaly, 87, has the following discussion of Cateline II: “Cicero emphasizes that in the great battle that has been won with the help of the gods the lives of all and even the existence of the city itself had hung in the balance. Finally, in the first *Catilinarian* Jupitor Stator is referred
to as the most ancient protector of Rome, and it is he who is invoked from his temple to protect Rome from the conspirators; in the rhetoric of the third Catilinarian, Jupiter Optimus Maximus, whose statue had recently been erected on the Capitolium, is restored to his traditional role as the supreme guardian of the city.” (italics Vasaly).


72 Gradel, 223; “In two instances from Rome inscriptions inform us of temples, financed by cultores or their curatores. The oft-repeated assertion that there was no cult of the living emperor in Rome is proved absurd by these and other private monuments. The distinction is simply wrong in the geographical terms usually employed in research; Rome was clearly crowded with cults dedicated to the living emperor) and cult of the Divi was no doubt much rarer). Only in constitutional terms can the case be argued in the state cult, and only there, no direct divine worship of the emperor took place. The fact that this claim as to the absence of emperor worship has become so commonly accepted as to be quoted in virtually every handbook on the Roman empire without any doubt or opposition only goes to show the exclusivity with which scholarship has focused on public emperor worship and ignored private cults.”

73 Gradel, 52; “Again we should bear in mind that pagan Roman thought did not include any clear distinction between ‘honours’ and ‘worship’. Divine worship differed in degree, not in kind, from ‘political’ or ‘secular’ honours.”

Notes for Chapter Two: Cicero’s Pro Lege Manilia


3 Stamper, 85.


6 Robert Morstein-Marx, Mass Oratory and Political Power in the Late Roman Republic. (Cambridge: University Press): 2004, 10-11; “All other news and important announcements, from dispatches of generals from the battlefield to magisterial edicts, were delivered to the People in contione: Cicero’s Second Catilinarian comes readily to mind, informing the People of Catile’s flight from the city while they watched the Senate being summoned. The contio was also the essential setting for major, public, illocutionary speech acts: Sulla abdicated the dictatorship in a contio; in 63 Cicero declined a consular province in a contio; Caesar’s and Pompey’s final offers of peace on the eve of Civil war in 49 were read out in contiones; in the run-up to another civil war, young Octavian promised to pay Caesar’s legacy to the People in a contio. At their first contio upon assuming office magistrates not only thanked the People for their election and praised their ancestors but indicated how they would administer their magistracy; praetors in particular would describe the principles by which they would dispense justice. Then there were the contiones called in order for the People to witness an important legal act, and implicitly to enforce its execution: magistrates, senators, or even candidates for office were required by certain laws to swear obedience to them publicly, in contione, immediately
upon election, magistrates-designate swore in a *contio* that they would uphold the laws, and at the end of their term, consuls (perhaps all magistrates) swore in another *contio* that they had administered their office in accordance with the laws, perhaps often adding a justificatory account of their tenure of the office, as Cicero attempted to do. To complete the picture we might add the *contiones* of victorious generals at the end of their triumphal procession; those of censors in connection with the quinquennial revision of the citizen rolls and *lustrum*; the nomination of replacements to the augural college in *contione* (from 104); and the lottery in a *contio* among candidates for a place among the Vestals. Even noble funerals held at the Rostra took the form of a *contio*. Even more than the more noteworthy sort of meeting that fueled a legislative campaign or heated political controversy, the routine nature of some of these *contiones* demonstrates how central the institution was to the (urban) citizen’s political experience, for they convey a strong sense that publicity and the flow of information to the citizenry were taken very seriously."

7 Francisco, Pina-Polo, “Procedures and Functions of Civil and Military *contiones* in Rome,” Klio 77 (1995), 205-6; “Throughout the Republican period every magistrate with *potestas* had the *potestas contionandi* as well.”

8 Morstein-Marx, 8; “The unique importance of the *contio* lies in the fact that orators’ attempts to win decisive public support in such meetings were the chief feature of the run-up to any vote on legislation, that most direct assertion of the Popular Will which, as Millar well shows, more or less covered the gamut of major political issues, foreign or “imperial” as well as domestic. (In the Republic, all legislation was passed by popular vote: in this sense, at least, Rome might be called a “direct democracy” in form.) Magistrates promulgated bills orally in a *contio*, at the same time posting up written copies of their proposals on whitened boards, and after 98 BC the passage of three successive market-days (thus a minimum of seventeen to twenty-five days), when the influx of people from outside the city would ensure maximum publicity, was required before the vote could be taken. During this period a flurry of *contiones* will have taken place, mostly called by the proposer of the legislation, seeking to rally public enthusiasm for his bill.”

9 Morstein-Marx, 16; has noted that within Cicero’s corpus specifically, nine remaining speeches of his were delivered in *Contio*. Also, Morstein-Marx, 24-5 identified the other eight as *De Lege Agraria*, *Pro Rabriro perduellionis reo*, the second and third Catilinarian, *post reditum ad quirites*, and the fourth and sixth *Philippics*.

10 Pina Polo, 203; “Scholarship, however, has not dealt with one of the Roman popular assemblies, the *contio*, which has been viewed as an institution of little relevance, a mere preparative meeting of the legislative and judicial *comitia* without other functions and defined therefore sometimes as an informal and unofficial assembly.”

11 Pina Polo, 207; “To convene a *contio*, it was not necessary to take the *auspicia*. One could not, therefore, carry out the *obnuntiaitio* against the assembly. Nevertheless, the meeting began with a religious feature, a solemn prayer.”


13 Maurus Servius Honoratus, *In Vergilii Comentarii* (Leipzig: Teubner): 1881; 11.301; “praefatus divos more antique: nam maiores nullam orationem nisi invocatis numinibus inchoabant, sicut sunt omnes orationes Catonis et Gracchi; nam generale caput in omnibus legimus.” Roughly, “praying to the gods in the old style, for our ancestors initiated no oration before the spirits had been called, and so all orations of Cato and Graccus are like this; for we
generally see this head in every one.” It isn’t clear to me by this quote which of the Catones and which of the Gracchi, Servius was referring to. (Perseus)


15 Vaahteria, 107; “We know that in order to be valid every important official action needed to be performed in a templum—that is, a locus which was established by an augur through the ceremony of inaugurato.” Also, Vaahteria pointed out, 108; “the common factor for all different places in which the Republic was administered was that they were all loca inaugurata…we know that the rostra constituted a templum.” Also note, Ulrich, 80.

16 Morestein-Marx, 49-51.

17 Morestein-Marx, 54, observed, reference to the Rostra is a “virtually metonymic” signifier for “deliberation and decision by the Roman People.”

18 Morestein-Marx, 54; “By asserting the primacy of the Rostra over other loci of speech and action on behalf of the republic, Cicero assures his audience that (despite his record) he cherishes the principles of popular deliberation and decision higher than mere praise for rhetorical brilliance (for which the courts were the chief venue) or the personal power that might be won in the Senate, out of the gaze of the People.”

19 Morestein-Marx, 53

20 Morestein Marx, 54, pointed to the significance of the visual imagery of the Rostra, signaling its function as the place where speakers, particularly the consul, conveyed their governance in a transparent manner that conformed to popular will; “The popular orator loves the very sight of the People and understands that defending the People’s interests from this spot is the true path to fame in the res publica. He will not shun the Rostra and “the sight of you”—a pledge whose significance is more explicitly brought out by Cicero’s later claim, when he reached the consulship, that many consuls do just that, thus acknowledging their debt for the honor of public office not to the People but to the “support of powerful men, the extraordinary influence of the few” in the Senate. The emphasis on face-to-face confrontation of the popular gaze is palpable: the Rostra is made into a kind of touchstone for the true sentiments of members of the senatorial elite.”

21 Edwin S. Ramage, “Sulla’s Propaganda,” Klio 73 (1991): 93 pointed out that Sulla, who ruled over a decade before the first of the texts being studied in this dissertation; “…developed a program of propaganda that was to serve as the prototype for that of his successors.”

22 Ursula Heibges, “Religion and Rhetoric in Cicero’s speeches” Latomas, 24.8 (1969): 844; “Although divine approval of a person can be used most effectively in a judicial speech in order to win favor of a client, it can also become a factor in a deliberative speech. If the orator can demonstrate a certain course of action to be in accordance with the will of the gods, he can recommend it more persuasively, so it seems, to the assembly. The contio given in support of the Manilian Law frequently alludes to the special qualifications of Pompey as gifts granted to him by the gods. His virtus is called divina (33; 36), while his felicitas, a concept which in itself has religious overtones is singled out as an illustrations (sic) of the potestas deorum in regard to an individual (47-48). Since the gods bestow this gift freely on their favorites, they can easily take it away. It is, therefore, with utmost caution that Cicero introduces the topic. But when he later
summarizes the qualifications that make Pompey so eminently suitable for the command in the east, he beseeches the assembly not to refuse this gift of the gods (49). To vote for the man whose person reflects divine favor becomes then identical with obedience to the will of the gods (50).

There is a reference to Ad Her 3.15 that states epideictic can be present in forensic and deliberative.

John Dugan, “How to Make (and Break) a Cicero: Epideixis, Textuality, and Self-Fashioning in Pro Archia and In Pisonem.” Classical Antiquity 20.1 (2001): 41; “Later in the De Oratore, Cicero employs a series of stark antitheses to distance the Roman laudatio from the Greek epideixis: while the Greek epideictic oration is meant for reading, pleasure, and individual glorification, Roman laudationes, when in the form of court depositions, provide a useful public service and are brief and stylistically restrained; moreover, ostentatious oratory is inappropriate for a funeral. Cicero’s cultural arguments naturalize the Roman laudatio by placing it within the domain of traditional values (public, useful, unadorned) while they mark out the alterity of Greek epideixis by relegating it to the realm of the questionable (private, pleasurable, ornate). By drawing this distinction along such fundamental cultural polarities, Cicero shows how the separation between epideixis and laudatio is embedded within the De Oratore’s program of cultural self-definition.”

Dugan, id, 38.

Dugan, 36.

Dugan, 37.

Geoffrey S. Sumi, Ceremony and Power: Performing Politics in Rome between Republic and Empire. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press): 2005, 6; “the traditional political institutions, embodied in the curia and the Forum, were no longer adequate venues for political exchange and communication, aristocratic self-advertisement and performance. These were partially replaced, or supplemented, by funerals, triumphs, and games—by public ceremonies of various kinds.”

Sumi, 8; “Public ceremonies were one type of arena where political activity took place in the Roman Republic, where, in fact, the fundamental dynamic of Roman politics—the interaction of elite and non-elite—played out.”

Sumi, 10.

Sumi, 10.

Although generalizations about the connection between political processes and public speech are of limited utility, recent scholarship has given us some of the key features that link these two processes together. Depending upon whether legislation required Senatorial approval or whether it required a full vote, the legislative processes followed different paths.


Rose, 382.

Sumi, 156 described a not too distant backlash against civic unrest that motivated politicians to appear conciliatory. The unusual sequence of events followed C. Onatious Aurelius’ public revelation that was commanded by Jupiter to promote public concord and a subsequent delivery of a speech praising Pompey. C Onatious Aurelius’ laudation of Pompey
prompted a reconciliation between Pompey and Crassus and revealed the extent to which civic strife had generated public disfavor; “Perhaps the most famous of such reconciliations occurred in 70 when the consuls for that year, Cn. Pompeius and M. Crassus, who had clashed throughout their term of office, finally came to terms (Plut. *Crass*. 12.4-5; cf. *Pomp*. 23.1-3). While speaking before a *contio* in the Forum, the two consuls were interrupted by C. Onatius Aurelius, a member of the equestrian order, who leaped onto the platform and related a dream in which Jupiter appeared to urge the two rivals to reconcile. Crassus made the first move by clasping Pompeius’ hand and addressing him personally. He then turned to the people with words of praise for Pompeius. With the civil war of Sulla and Marius still a vivid memory, this reconciliation took on greater significance.” This anecdote is also relevant to this essay because oneiric symbolism of the two vice regents accomplishing Jupiter’s divine will demonstrates the panegyric’s utility as a speech invoking common values and assumptions about political reality.

37 Trans. Hodge, p. 31.

38 C.E.W. Steel, *Cicero, Rhetoric, and Empire*. (Oxford: UP, 2001), 224-5; “The series of big commands—the pirates, Mithradates, the corn supply, Spain—could all be seen as attempts to accumulate power, in which the greater efficiency of the model of a supreme commander with legates came about not from any disinterested desire on Pompeius’ part to improve the running of the empire but in order to improve his own position. And the law of 52 was not originally Pompeius’ idea, nor was its aim to alter the management of empire, but rather to control rampant corruption in elections: by sponsoring it Pompeius was indicating deference to the Senate and his intention of bringing order back to domestic politics, not engaging in a deliberate overhaul of how the empire was run.”

39 Steele, 215; “But there are two wider aspects to what Pompeius did which are novel and distinctive. One is the scale and systematic nature of his territorial settlement, covering a huge area (and one, of course, that extended well beyond his original commission under the Manilian law to deal with Mithradates) but at the same time showing the attention to detail necessary for a lasting arrangement. No other province was the target of a comparable strategy of urbanization. Second and perhaps more important, is the fact that Pompeius made these arrangements himself: he did not wait for a senatorial commission to come out and oversee the administration of newly captured territory.”

40 C.E. W. Steel, *Cicero, Rhetoric, and Empire*. (Oxford: UP, 2001): 131; “The most striking feature about this strategy is that it enables Cicero to avoid comparisons: while it is not clear from 27 that there is no one to rival Pompeius, he does not have to denigrate any specific individual. The use of the statement of qualities also allows him to portray Pompeius as an archetype: he is, it becomes clear, the *summus imperator*, since he conforms in every respect to the model which Cicero has set up. The persuasiveness of this strategy is obvious.”

41 Videte, ne, ut illis pulcherrimum fuit tantam vobis imperii gloriam tradere, sic vobis turpissimum sit id, quod accepistis, tueri et conservare non posse”

42 Trans. Hodge.

43 Trans. Hodge.

44 “Wherefore, even if you possess a general who seems capable of vanquishing the royal army in a pitched battle, still, unless he be also capable of withholding his hands, his eyes, his thoughts from the wealth of our allies, from their wives and children, from the adornments of temples and of cities, from the gold and treasure of kings, he will not be a suitable man to be sent to the war against an Asiatic monarch.” Trans. Hodge.
“in this war against an Asiatic monarch, not only those military qualities are needed which are so peculiarly to be found in Gnaeus Pompeius, but other great and numerous moral qualities as well.” Trans. Hodge.

Ramage, 99; “It is worth noticing in passing that, besides virtus and felicitas, Sulla in this passage exhibits two other virtues of the successful Roman General: the ability to plan successfully (consilium) and the capacity to act quickly (celeritas). These virtues, stated or implicit, show that the picture of Sulla in the Commentarii has connections with panegyric and that self-promotion and propaganda are at work.”

“It remains for me to speak—though guardedly and briefly, as is fitting when men discuss a prerogative of the gods—on the subject of good luck, which no man may claim as his own, but which we may remember and record in the case of another. For in my opinion Quintus Fabius the Great, Marcellus, Scipio, Marius, and other great generals were entrusted with commands and armies not only because of their merits but not infrequently because of their good fortune. For some great men have undoubtedly been helped to the attainment of honour, glory, and success, by a kind of Heaven-sent fortune. And as for the good luck of the man whom we are now discussing, I shall speak of it with such reserve as to convey the impression that, without claiming good fortune as his prerogative, I am both mindful of the past and hopeful for the future, and to avoid appearing by what I say either to show ingratitude or to cause offense to the immortal gods.”

Ramage, 117; “At the center of this ideology was the charismatic leader, whose characteristics were vividly presented in the propaganda. As a general he showed such virtues as virtus, felicitas, pietas, celeritas, consilium, facilitas. After victory he revealed those of the true Roman statesman pietas again, liberalitas, benevolentia, humanitas, fides, aequitas, iustitia. Felicitas was especially important in this ideology, for it looked in two directions. It was that personal good luck enjoyed by Sulla in the field, but it was also the public prosperity that resulted from his successes.

As a personal virtue felicitas showed Sulla to be the favorite of the gods in everything he did, and he, in turn, because of his pietas, thanked them and protected and promoted their interests at every opportunity. The sources show that the Dictator associated himself with a wide variety of gods and goddesses: Victoria, Venus, Diana, Mars, the Dioscuri, Apollo, Janus, Saturn, Jupiter, and Hercules.”

Ramage, 100; argues “It has been pointed out often enough that felicitas is a purely Roman concept and one not part of Greek thinking.”

Ramage, 101 compared this epithet to others and concluded; “Felix was also different from cognomina such as Magnus and Pius, where on the one hand the achievements of the individual and on the other proper attitudes to gods, country, and family were the focus. Sulla’s title had greater depth. It implied an alliance between man and gods that produced good actions. It also moved in another direction, for the connotations of prosperity that clustered about the word helped to characterize and advertise Sulla as the bringer of public good. For Rome a new era of prosperity had begun. Thus it is possible to see why Sulla’s demanding the cognomen Felix from the people was a natural, climactic final step following closely on victory and triumph. These successes and honors were evidence of Sulla’s closeness to deity, but they were also the harbingers of prosperity for the Romans. By calling himself Felix, Sulla would
constantly represent himself in all media as the savior, benefactor, and ultimate hope of Rome. Indeed, at his triumph he was called savior and father.”

52 Peter Rose, “Cicero and the Rhetoric of Imperialism: Putting the Politics Back into Political Rhetoric.” Rhetorica. 13.4, 383; “Moreover, in attempting to counter the weight of prestige—the auctoritas of the might senators who oppose him—Cicero engages in a telling appeal for the goodwill of his audience by opposing their auctoritas as the sovereign Roman people and the superiority of their foresight to that of these same senators who in the earlier debate over Pompey’s similarly extraordinary—and in the event, highly successful—command against the pirates, had bitterly opposed the wishes of the people.”

53 Rose, 376.

54 “Now, therefore, everyone in those regions regards Gnaeus Pompeius not as an emissary from this city but as an angel from heaven: now at last they begin to believe that there once existed Romans of like self-control, though foreign nations were beginning to think such a think incredible, a mere mistaken legend: now does the brightness of your empire begin to shed the light of hope upon those races: now they begin to realize that their forefathers were not without reason in preferring, at a time when we had magistrates of like moderation, to serve Rome rather than to rule others. Moreover, it is said that he is so easy of access to ordinary people, so open to hear their complaints of wrongs done them by others, that he whose greatness surpasses that of princes appears in accessibility the equal of the lowest.” Trans. Hodge.

55 “Again, even though there be those to whom a sense of decency and self control teaches some degree of moderation, no one credits them with such qualities owing to the rapacity of so many others. Words cannot express, gentlemen, how bitterly we are hated among foreign nations owing to the wanton and outrageous conduct of the men whom of late years we have sent to govern them.” Trans. Hodge.

56 “Avarice did not entice him from his appointed course to plunder of any kind, nor appetite to indulgence, nor pleasant prospects to enjoyment, nor the fame of any city to sight-seeing, nor, indeed, even toil to the taking of rest; and finally, the statues and pictures and other treasures of Greek towns which most men think themselves entitled to carry off, he did not think fit even to look at.” Trans. Hodge

57 “The avarice that to-day inspires a governor’s departure for his province, the sacrifices and the bargaining that it entails, are, it would seem, unknown to those who think that supreme command ought not to be given to one man: as though indeed it were not obvious that Pompeius owes his greatness not to his own merits alone but also to the demerits of other men. Then hesitate no longer to entrust supreme command to this one man, the only general found in all these years whose allies rejoice to receive him and his army into their cities.” Trans Hodge;

58 Swearingen, Rhetoric and Irony: Western Literacy and Western Lies, (Oxford: UP): 1991 134 and at p.137 “the historical sections of De Oratore, Brutus, and orator single out elements in earlier rhetorics which should be eliminated or reshaped. In this enterprise Cicero functions not merely as a translator but as a restorer and reformer as well. Like Plato and Isocrates before him, he reunites rhetoric and philosophy, strips away the overly technical elements in each, and removes rhetoric from the status it had been given in the Stoic classification as a subdivision of dialectic. The views he develops concur with both Aristotle and Plato. Rhetoric is seen as aligned with ethics; philosophy and ethics must be united to overcome “the severance of tongue and brain.” Philosophy and rhetoric forming the basis of education can both direct and generate liberal studies, which in turn will allow the production of improved
systematic and recorded history, law, and philosophy. These in turn will improve the polis, civitas, the common life.”

59 Rose, 390; “The contradictions in this state between the intense jealousy of this inward-looking, privileged elite and their need to generate successful expansionist warlords, between the maintenance of the privileges of this elite concentrated in the senate and the constitutional threat of achieving power by the appeals to the desperate needs of the all but disenfranchised masses—these major contradictions make themselves felt in the very texture of Cicero’s ideological construct, which keeps them silenced only at the price of generating contradictions internal to his text.”

60 Rose, 368; “The logic of perpetual imperial expansion and the reality of disaffected masses at home and rebellious subject states abroad ultimately reduced the Republic to the plaything of the super-generals, who alone were capable both of saving and expanding the empire abroad and of either buying off or violently repressing the masses at Rome. The bloody civil war of Marius and Sulla in the early decades of the first century BC was only a prelude to the civil war of Pompey and Julius Caesar that put a definitive end to the Republic.”

61 Steele, 176; “One of the effects of a speaker’s possessing auctoritas is of course to have his advice followed, and so the overall impression is that the people have power, but only to choose whose advice they will follow. This is strengthened by Cicero’s description of what a speaker does when addressing the people as vestram causam defendere (2), since this suggests that the people are in the position of a cliens, being protected, in court, by his patronus. Cicero is here adopting the conservative model of popular participation. It is striking to compare his tone with that of Gaius Gracchus, most notably in his speech opposing a lex Aufeia, in which he urges the people to distrust everyone who addresses them, since all, including him, have their self-interested motives.

Describing the speaker’s task as vestram causam defendere also has implications for what Cicero himself is doing in this case. By using the language of forensic rhetoric Cicero perhaps tries to suggest that he is more experienced in this kind of speaking than in fact he is. It also implies that Pompeius’ getting the command against Mithradates is the people’s causa. The people are not faced with a choice between two courses of action: they are identified with one of them, and any opposition to Manilius’ proposed law is also, Cicero suggests, opposition to them. And this vocabulary also enables Cicero to sidestep the question of the law’s novelty. It becomes the natural and current state of affairs, which just happens, at this moment, to be under attack, and Cicero is just one of a large number who have stood up to protect it.”

Notes for Chapter Three: Ritual and Power in Imperial Roman Epideictic

1 Horace, Epodes and Odes: A New Annotated Latin Edition, ed. Daniel H. Garrison, Oklahoma Series in Classical Culture 10 (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 38: Mercuri, facunde nepos Atlantis, qui feros cultus hominum recentum voce formasti catus et decorae more palaestrae. Italics and translation mine. Horace depicts the god in all of his activities, playfully moving from glib Mercury to the thief Mercury’s innocent stealing of Apollo’s herd, and abruptly ending with the matter-of-fact description of Mercury controlling life and death and meting out divine justice. Horace must have modeled his ideas after the Homeric hymn to Hermes. Interestingly, the reference to the palaestra is only found in Horace.


6 The subject matter of the inscription justifies naming it an epitaph, but its length distinguishes it from the standard epitaphs of the era. See Richmond Lattimore, *Themes in Greek and Latin Epitaphs* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1962). On the other hand, its monumentalizing and public nature establish it in the more original tradition of *epitaphoi*, which were public funeral orations provided at the expense of the Athenian city. See Nicole Loraux, *The Invention of Athens: The Funeral Oration in the Classic City*, trans. Alan Sheridan (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986).


9 Gordon, 128.

10 Ramage, 26, notes Augustus’s stylistic similarities to the eulogy: “Augustus leaves the virtues with their heavy connotations of eulogy firmly fixed to the shield and so in the hands and minds of the senate and the Roman people.” Overall, classicists have yet to agree on the exact nature of the genre. A succinct discussion of the debate and further bibliography can be found on 135-9.


15 Suet. Aug. 28.

Press, 1990); Karl Galinsky, *Augustan Culture: An Interpretive Introduction* (Princeton: University Press 1996), have documented the political function and significance of *auctoritas* in the Augustan Age and have highlighted the pivotal nature of this term in any study of Augustan political culture.

17 Ramage, 43.
22 See Wisse’s instructive translation of *De Oratore* 2.182, 229-30.
23 Wisse, 249: “Whereas Aristotle’s *ethos* is ‘rational’ and not aimed at any emotion, Cicero’s *ethos* comprises all aspects of the persons of the orator and client that may put them in a favourable light, and is aimed at sympathy.”
24 Wisse, 249, advised that he had not been able to assimilate some of the conclusions of May’s study, but he recognized that the significance of May’s work lay in his emphasis on Cicero’s speaking career: “Cicero, though aiming at a more abstract and philosophical basis for oratory than handbook theory had to offer, and though certainly not inconsistent, is sometimes rather loose on the conceptual level, but never loses sight of oratorical practice.”
25 Wisse, 249, concludes that the characteristics of the speaker are a vital component of a speaker’s development of ethos: “Cicero is clearly aware that ethos and pathos, thus defined, both play upon the audience’s feelings, but consistently maintains the distinction. Moreover, ethos should not, as has frequently been done, be equated with *leniores affectus* (‘gentle emotions’) without an essential qualification: it is indeed aimed at one of the gentle emotions, viz. sympathy (and the opposite towards the opponents), but it remains tightly bound up with character.”
26 Enos and Schnakenberg, 198: “This sort of long-term, cumulative effect of *ethos* is central to understanding and appreciating not only Cicero’s views on the social dynamism of creating *ethos* but also its diachronic development. Rhetoric could ‘create’ *ethos* at the moment of discourse and its effect could transcend the event and remain as either a residual force or a detriment for the rhetor long after the situation.”
28 Enos and Schnakenberg: 206.
29 For an explanation of the orators’ need to convey their *dignitas*, which could be flexibly established through one of its constituent parts, *ingenium*, *prudentia*, or *diligentia*, see Enos and Schnakenberg, 197: “the concept of Ciceronian *ethos* includes three essential traits of
character: *ingenium* (also termed *natura*), *prudentia*, and *diligentia*. Cicero firmly believed that every great rhetor earned his reputation by manifesting *ingenium*, or *natura*, a natural capacity for eloquence (*De Oratore* 1.146).” For further elaboration on these components, see Enos and Schnakenberg, 201: “*Ingenium*, *prudentia*, and *diligentia* are the triumvirate of character traits of Ciceronian ethos; together they constitute his notion of *dignitas*. *Prudentia* constitutes the orator’s ability to recognize applications of their own unique traits and explicate their similarities to the rhetorical circumstances. In other words, *prudentia* was contextually dependent, and the context extended beyond the immediate speaking situation to encompass the broader connections between the orator, audience, and rhetoric. See Enos and Schnakenberg, 198: “Complementing the manifestation of natural talent is the trait of *prudentia*. Sagacity to adapt and modify rhetorical discourse to the context of the situation was a trait that others, such as Brutus (*Epistulae ad Brutum* 11) and Quintilian (6.5.9-11), praised in Cicero, who manifested it throughout his legal career (Enos, *Literate Mode*).”


31 Hughes, 213.

32 May, 47: “We catch a glimpse of the bitterness and loneliness of Cicero the *novus homo*, seeking acceptance among the nobles; we can focus upon his dilemma and are made to sympathize with him as he struggles and succeeds to mold a persona that can counteract their inherent prejudices and win for itself a place of dignity, respect, and leverage in Roman society.”

33 May, 163.

34 May, 77.

35 For a characterization of the *post reditum* speeches, see May, 127: “Once again he is searching for a persona, struggling to reassert his authority in the state.”

36 May, 161: “He is, as he had portrayed himself more than a decade earlier, the personification of the Republic, upon whose survival rests the survival of the state.”

37 May, 24: “In order to make such identification more explicit, Cicero employs throughout the speech two metaphors: the image of the Republic as a wounded or afflicted body, and the reference to the movement for Cicero’s recall as the *causa*, or “court case” of the Republic. He has already described the alliance of Piso and Gabinius with Clodius in terms of the afflicted state: “they handed over the Republic to Clodius, prostrate and fettered, and then ratified the pact by shedding of Cicero’s blood.”

38 May, 54.

39 May, 169.

40 I employ the term agonistic rhetoric to describe forms of “practical oratory,” such as forensic and deliberative rhetoric. This usage is consistent with that found in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* (3.12), where the term “agonistic rhetoric” refers to rhetorical forms distinct from epideictic speech.


44 Suet. *Aug.* 84.
47 Suet. Aug. 36.
50 Price, 107: “The control of the proceedings was the duty of a special official, the panegyriarch, who is found at both local and provincial festivals…”
51 Price, 107.
52 *Menander Rhetor*, ed., trans., and commentary D. A. Russell and N. G. Wilson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981). For additional accounts of imperial epideictic theory, see *Two Greek Rhetorical Treatises from the Roman Empire*, intro. and ed. Mervin R. Dilts and George A. Kennedy (Leiden: Brill, 1997). Russell and Wilson, xxxviii, address the question of Menander’s attribution in their introduction, noting that the question of Menander’s authorship of both treatises can be advanced on consideration of the stylistic differences between treatise one and two. Additionally, in noting the literary debts of these texts, Russell and Wilson suggest Alexander Numenius’ first-century treatise on rhetoric (xxiv-xxv), which though incomplete, could establish an earlier date for this epideictic orientation in Greek rhetorical texts.
54 Hardy, 10.
55 Gordon, 130.
56 One intriguing temple, the Temple of Dendur, poses more questions than answers but gives some indication that temple construction coincided with imperial expansion. No translation of the hieroglyphics exists, but a broad description and explanation of certain scenes is available. See “The Temple of Dendur,” *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 36 (1978): 5-108. Enough information is available to suggest that (1) the scenes depict Augustus as both ruler over Egypt and as a semi-divine being; (2) the scenes connect Augustus’s religious deeds to the continued success of his rule. The temple uses Egyptian religious themes and ideals as a vehicle to convey Roman principles. Most interesting is the secret “trap door” in the rear of the temple that seems to allow an egress from the temple to a convenient locale for addressing a gathering. Pictures from early nineteenth-century temple visitors show the temple lying amid the Nile, and although it is difficult to determine whether a broad gathering space was present next to the temple, it appears doubtful. Even though this structure does not appear to be a full *Templum Rostratum*, it adapts some of the principles of this design and is highly suggestive of the rhetorical uses of temples under the empire.
57 Crook, 107, takes up this discussion but notes the ways that the positioning of other rhetorical events, i.e., legal rhetoric/forensic/judicial proceedings, occurred in controlled physical spaces: “Augustus adhered faithfully to the traditional *cognitio pro tribunali* of the Roman magistrate, sometimes in the forum, sometimes in the portico of the temple of Hercules at Tibur. For the hearing of the Jewish embassies after the death of Herod, on a specially solemn public occasion, the council sat in the temple of Apollo itself, on the Palatine. Even in old age,
Augustus did not abandon these sessions in public, though he no longer went beyond the Palatine.”

Zanker, 81: “These monuments set up by or for Octavian transformed the appearance of the Forum. Wherever one looked, there were symbols of victory. In the pediment of the recently completed Temple of Saturn, for example, instead of an image of the ancient god of the sowing season, there were Tritons gaily blowing on trumpets. Triton was widely recognized as one of those marine creatures who had assisted in the victory at Actium, and the temple’s patron, Manutius Plancus, thus joined in the universal praise of Octavian.”


Ulrich, 14-16, points out that a new Templum Rostratum was constructed after Augustus’s time, but that the three that he had initiated were remodeled and enlarged. This suggests the end of an evolution of the structure and a new stage in Roman politics.

Ulrich, 72.
Ulrich, 83.
Ulrich, 55.
Ulrich, 113-15.
Ulrich, 126-7.

Eric Orlin, Temples, Religion and Politics in the Roman Republic (Leiden: E.J. Britt, 1997), 197-8: “Thus these actions were originally directed specifically against Pompey; Caesar appropriated Pompey’s special divinity just before the critical battle, almost in the matter of an evocatio… Certainly the actions of Caesar in constructing a forum and a temple closely associated with his family set a precedent which was subsequently followed by many of the emperors. This temple should be viewed not so much as the last Republican state temple, but rather as the first Imperial building project.”

Hanson, 51.
Ulrich, 150.
Ulrich, 118-9.
Ulrich, 155: “The Temple of Venus Genetrix and its setting recalled the axial layout of the Etruscan sacred sanctuary, the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, which rose above the city, and the Temple of Castor with its façade platform and history as a setting for public debate. Caesar’s temple was designed specifically to evoke his claims of divine lineage as well as his status as the undisputed political leader of Rome.”

Ulrich, 177: “In conclusion, the location and plan of the Temple of Divus Iulius would have filled the contemporary Roman’s mind with several associations: the familial relationship between the slain dictator and the cult of Venus Genetrix, his public manifestation of pietas as Pontifex Maximus of the city, and his role as an advocate of the people, represented most eloquently by the speakers’ platform itself.”

Ulrich, 185.
Ulrich, 180.
Ulrich, 188-9, raises some doubt about whether orations were delivered here generally. That this image was chosen as imperial propaganda still makes the essential point about speech’s political and religious associations during this time.

Gregory S. Aldrete, Gestures and Acclamations in Ancient Rome (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 156.
Aldrete, 168, even argues that rhetoric was not needed as much as role enactment: “Ultimately, this role-playing resulted in somewhat of a loss of individuality upon the part of the emperor, as his personality became submerged in the various roles he was required to perform as emperor. The more thoroughly documented interactions between emperor and plebs in the later Roman Empire and in the Byzantine Empire illustrate both the persistence of these models and the extreme degree to which such behaviors became formalized.”

Orlin, 159: “[T]he Senate played an active role by appointing special commissioners to let the contract and by providing the funds for construction. Private initiative mingled with public oversight to create a situation in which both sides shared in the rewards; a sharp distinction between private and public is again not possible.”

Notes for Chapter Four: Pliny’s Actio Gratiarum

1 Elaine Fantham, Roman Literary Culture: From Cicero to Apuleius. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP): 1996, 206; “The speech itself, more subtle and carefully thought out than many subsequent panegyrics, shows Pliny’s real concern to work out a concept of imperial authority compatible with his belief in senatorial liberty; it also takes pains to understand and express the impact of all the members of the imperial house as a model for the wider society. The senator also measures Trajan’s role as emperor of the Roman people at large, in a way that is perhaps lacking in Tacitus’s more aristocratic text. More important to our understanding of Roman ideology than of its literary history, the Panegyricus was the Roman ancestor of a persistent literary genre. It would become a blueprint not only for second-century encomium, sophistic and epigraphical, but for many centuries of “Mirrors for Princes,” persuasive descriptions of princely virtue addressed to the princes of Europe in Latin, Italian, and all the vernaculars in turn.”


4 (Cameron, 73) In this phrase Pliny suggested that it is called (titled) “thanks that should be (collectively) given,” but in the specific instance of a given speech, I follow scholarly convention and use the singular word *actio*.


8 George A. Kennedy, *The Art of Rhetoric in the Roman World*. (Princeton: UP): 1972, 546: “Judged as a piece of oratory the *Panegyricus* is tiresome in the extreme. Its length now mitigates against its interest, but the fundamental objection is the homogeneity of tone. There are no emotional high points, no abrupt changes of speed or style, no sudden flashes of passion or of wit, none of the charm of variety which marks the great efforts of Cicero. Some of this quality results from the subject and occasion, which doubtless debarred joking, but Pliny has not sought variety. Throughout he maintains the same highly worked out flow of noble *sententiae*. Even the exclamations and the rhetorical questions do not ruffle the surface of his paean. It is fitting tone for the oratory of a glorious, but static, empire.”

9 Pliny *Letters and Panegyricus*, Vol. I. Trans Betty Radice. 3.18; *Officium consulatus in iuxta mihi, ut rei publicae nomine principi gratias agerem*.

10 Thomas N. Habinek, *The Politics of Latin Literature: Writing, Identity, and Empire in Ancient Rome*. (Princeton: UP): 1998, 113; “By describing their books of poetry in terms appropriate to inscriptions or public writing, Catullus, Horace, and other poets of the classical period undercut the dichotomy between paper and stone, or private and public writing, and seek to assign to their texts certain powers that they and Roman culture generally associate with inscriptions. The authorial persona, in its full social context, is displayed to passersby; longevity is secured; prestige is enhanced; and the community is indirectly reminded of the authority vested in remnants of the past. Perhaps most surprisingly, the association of written text with inscriptions secures the primacy of authorial presence, for just as epitaphs and dedications invite the “revoicing” of long-dead ancestors, so now the book hails the reader and commands his or her participation in the representation of the absent or deceased author. Thus the book, which might at first glance seem to signal the dislocation and diminution of aristocratic power, becomes a strategy for its reinscription and the “private” writing of literature demands acquiescence on the part of its reader with a force comparable to that of “public” writing on stone.”

11 E.g. Feers.


13 Packer, 191.

14 Packer, 187; “Consequently, although the high quality of the execution of all these decorations may have been the partial result of a reorganization of the marble carvers and a closer supervision of their work, the constant repetition of such cleanly elegant architectural ornamentation constituted a powerful visual link between the solid virtues celebrated in Trajan’s Forum and those commemorated in that of the Empire’s founder.”

16 Packer, 182.
Kennedy, New History 196 divided the text into six parts, choosing to view Pliny’s account of Trajan’s private virtues as a distinct topic instead of as the basis for the concluding prayer of thanks. He outlined the speech as follows: I—Introduction (1-3), II—An account of Trajan’s career prior to consul for the third time (4-24) III—“a list of Trajan’s services to Rome as emperor” (25-55) IV—A description of his third consulship (56-80) V—An account of the virtues of his private life (81-89) VI--Pliny’s Private expression of thanks (90-95).

Quintilian, 3.7.7-8; “In praising the gods our first step will be to express our veneration of the majesty of their nature in general terms, next we shall proceed to praise the special power of the individual god and the discoveries whereby he has benefited the human race. For example, in the case of Jupiter, we shall extol his power as manifested in the governance of all things…”

Quintilian, 3.7.11; the advice for encomia to gods and Pliny’s prayer are not as close as those Quintilian identifies for praise for humans. “There is greater variety required in the praise of men. In the first place there is a distinction to be made as regards time between the period in which the objects of our praise lived and the time preceding their birth; and further, I the case of the dead, we must also distinguish the period following their death.”

Quintilian, 3.7.11; “With regard to things preceding a man’s birth, there are his country, his parents and his ancestors, a theme which may be handled in two ways. For either it will be creditable to the objects of our praise not to have fallen short of the fair fame of their country and of their sires or to have ennobled a humble origin by the glory of their achievements. Other topics to be drawn from the period preceding their birth will have reference to omens or prophecies foretelling their future greatness, such as the oracle which is said to have been foretold that the son of Thetis would be greater than his father.”

Pliny, Letters, 6.27. specie tamen adulationis abstinui

Pliny, Letters, 6.27.4; “I also had in mind the many tributes paid to the worst of his predecessors, and I felt that nothing could distinguish our noble Emperor from them so well as a different type of speech. I made no attempt to conceal my intention and did not pass over it without mention, for I did not want him to think it forgetfulness on my part rather than a deliberate decision.”

Bartsch, ibid, 149.

Pliny, Letters 6.27.3; “I realized that the highest praise I could offer him was to show that I said nothing because it was expected of me.”

Quintilian, 3.7.15; after then deliberating whether the speech should pursue a strict chronology in recounting the hero’s biography or following a topical approach that addresses virtues: “At times on the other hand it is well to divide our praises, dealing separately with the various virtues, fortitude, justice, self-control and the rest of them and to assign each virtue the deeds performed under its influence.”


Federico Gambarini, Stylistic Theory and Practice in the Younger Pliny. (Hildesheim: Olms – Weidmann): 1983, 383; one of the only scholars who openly speculated about the delivered portions of the actio, Gambarini showed little interest in accounting for the speech’s structure, but emphasized Pliny’s excessive and well organized praise for Trajan’s virtues as a theme recurring throughout the first half of the text (4, 34, 44, 45). He identified passages specifically conveying thanks as original and specified as added portions those addressing events that followed the speech (viz. Trajan’s triumph after the Dacian war (Chapter 17), the digression
on the Egyptian drought (30-32), and the praise for Plotina and Marciana (83-84). In addition, Gamberini read explicit justifications of the actio’s length as potential markers produced during the revision process (25.1, 56.1-2, and 75.1). Also, Gamberini, 403; judged as post hoc the plea to Trajan in sections 59-60 to accept the third consulship and the entire discussion of the fourth consulship. Gamberini, 408; Likewise argued that the description of future triumphs was probably introduced in the revision process beginning somewhere with section 16-17.

28 Plautus, The Persian. Trans. Paul Nixon; (New York: G.P. Putnam’s Sons): 1930; p.508 Here is the opening to act five of Plautus’ Persian:

Hostibus victis, civibus salvis, re placida, pacibus perfectis,
Bello extincto, re bene gesta, integro exercitu et praesidibus,
Cum bene nos, Iuppiter, iuvisti, dique alii omnes caeli potentes,
Eas vobis habeo grates atque ago, quia probe sum ultus meum inimicum
Nunc ob eam rem inter participes didam praedam et participabo.
Here is my rough translation:

Since the enemies have been conquered, since the citizens are secure, since the political condition is calm, and since the peace have been completed, since war has been suffocated, since history has turned out well, since the army is intact and with their defenses, since you have aided us well Jupiter and all other heavenly deities; I hold and I give these thanks to you, because I believe I have been avenged of my enemies and now, because of this, I shall give the booty amongst the participants and I will participate in this as well.”

29 Julian Bennett, Trajan Optimus Princeps: A Life and Times. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press): 1997, 63, noted that the event was not particularly special, just simply the time “when he[Pliny] assumed the suffect consulship on 1 September 100.”

30 The position of the opening prayer lies within the text that was probably delivered: maiores instituerunt ut rerum agendarum ita dicendi initium a precationibus capere “a speech no less than a course of action should take its start from prayers.”

31 Anthony Corbeill, Nature Embodied: Gesture in Ancient Rome. (Princeton: UP): 2004, 26; “Prayer, rooted in the earth through language, also participated physically in the way the external world was perceived. Each of the etymological manifestations of bodily desire I have discussed—gestus, gestire, vultus, facies—finds a further physical analog in the common prayer stance, by which the hands and the gaze are extended in whatever direction the gods are thought to reside. This does not simply mean that prayers were directed by stretching both hands toward the sky, a practice that, an ancient Greek text asserts, all human beings share. Rather, Greeks and Romans could also aim prayers toward the ground or in the direction of an appropriate temple or statue in the vicinity. To fail to realize the variations of this prayer type was to invite derision: the second century Greek declaimer Polemon, upon seeing an actor pointing to the ground while addressing Zeus, but to the sky when addressing Earth, accused the man of committing a “solecism of the hand.” As with many other cultural phenomena, however, we find the Romans adapting to their own outlook cultural practices that they share with the Greeks. The act of prayer, for instance, shows the body of the Roman more overtly involved in worship than that of the Greek. A sensitivity to spatial relationships is indicated by the non-Greek practice of worshipping capite velato; with the head covered, the worshipper avoids meeting signs of ill omen. Nigidius’s speaking lips also seem to find a place in addressing divinities—perhaps even the frequent repetition of tu (you) in prayers is informed in part by a need to point literally to the
deity with the lips. In any event, the lips are central to the Roman act of adoratio. In this display, the suppliant used gestures to extend the reach of the lips. In this case by using the hand to throw kisses toward the object of adoration. Again, the Greeks seem to have identified the posture of adoratio as particularly non-Greek, if Heschyius’s mention of a certain “barbarian” practice refers to the Roman adoratio.”

32 Corbiel, 28 explains how naming and address can be focused toward a statue or even the temple or some other image. In this speech the address of a specific statue, particularly of a god, constitutes the direct address to the divinity himself and this makes sense then in this speech as Pliny’s address are directed towards gods, the question is what about Trajan’s advent signifies.

33 This ambiguity is evidenced for instance in the phrase divinitus constitutum (ambiguous because the word was possibly used as the subject, but also in the object form as a genitive unless my reading of constitutum is incorrect).

34 Quintilian Institutio Oratoria. Trans. H.E. Butler. (Cambridge: Harvard UP): 3.7.16; offers this in terms of the suggestion for which to decide: “We shall have to decide which of these two methods will be the more serviceable, according to the nature of the subject; but we must bear in mind the fact that what most pleases an audience is the celebration of deeds which our hero was the first and only man or at any rate one of the very few to perform: and to these we must add any other achievements which surpassed hope or expectation, emphasising that what was done for the sake of others rather than what he performed on his own behalf.”

35 Francis Hickson Roman Prayer Language, 52; generally describes the ways in which the prayers conduct themselves and the basic elements that contain a prayer: “Roman prayer, public and private, speaks plainly of a concern that the gods be favorably disposed toward human beings. Such an attitude is, according to Roman ideas, the determining factor in the granting of prayer. Thus, prayers commonly include the general request that the gods be well-displeased toward the speaker and the specific petition. These requests identify various related aspects of a favorable disposition, including approval, consent, will, and a more general favor. In addition to these concerns found in both prose and poetry, poetic prayers sometimes request divine pity.”

36 MacCormack, 116; stresses the consistency that guided the latin panegyrics for several centuries: “Here the death of Constantius and the accession of Constantine, the themes of Constantine’s election by God and by his father run parallel; they do also in the panegyric of 310, and even in Pliny’s panegyric of Trajan, where the adoption of Trajan by Nerva, that is, Trajan’s designation as successor, directly precedes Nerva’s death. Eusebius, in other words, describes a ceremonial of imperial death and accession in which no major change had taken place since the early second century concerning the order in which events were to follow one another. The way in which Eusebius differs from the Latin panegyrists, however, is that he stresses the ceremonial rather than Constantius’ divine status as the means of expressing Constantine’s legitimacy.”

37 This title was used by the Senate and the Roman People, which suggests that an official inscription was made (SPQR) and also a program of official propaganda. Bennet, 106; argued that it “marked a significant change in the constitutional relationship of princeps and senate.” This is because the use of the appellation Optimus ranks Trajan’s virtues “only just after the supreme deity.” And so, He concluded that the official use of the appellation on coins signals “a concordat whereby the senate publicly and perpetually entrusted all affairs of state to the guidance of the emperor.” This challenges the conclusions of those who argue that there is little difference between Trajanic policy and Domitian.
Bennet, 106.
Bennet, 106.
Bennett, 63; argued that these texts “took pains to traduce the capricious Domitian, a sign that the enormity of the principicide and the legitimacy of the new reign were still matters of public concern.”
Perhaps Radice was a bit euphemistic. I think it might be better to read it as “would it be right to say that there is never a difference between the ruler who the men chose and the one whom the gods made?” I find this phrasing preferable to “How could any man-made emperor ever be permitted to rank equal with the chosen of the gods?” (5.2) While I am not familiar with silver-Latin usage or with the nuances of the term *differo*, I think that another usage, perhaps *nefas* might have better expressed what the translation’s reading.

The latin passage here is a bit oblique, as Pliny shifts to the impersonal *constat* to emphasize that the it is agreed that Trajan is, in fact, the *Optimus Maximus*.

“You have inspired us not to be satisfied with less than perfection in our ruler, whereas hitherto we prayed only for someone who would prove better than the worst.” Earlier the highest prayers *summa votorum* were simply for something better, but with Trajan’s advent, the people recognize the best ruler, the *optimum*.

This sequence suggests a series of scripted and controlled events designed to secure popular opinion in favor of Trajan, beginning with Trajan’s appearance in a public event before the people and the temple to Capitolinian Jove. While the passage warrants such speculation, settling this question does little to augment or diminish the rhetorical aspects of this section.

Perhaps Pliny is referencing specific sculptures or statues, and moving back in forth between Nerva and Domitian.

Packer, 183; “Their presence emphasized that, however powerful the Empire had now become, the new grandeur merely continued on a larger and more splendid scale the traditions both of the recent imperial past and of the ancient Republic. Consequently, the magnificent monuments of Trajan’s Forum—and the great events they commemorated—were to be understood not as a revolutionary break with the revered past but only as the newly achieved perfection of preexisting artistic—and, by implication, political—forms.”

Packer, 184; “Once surrounded by porticoes inside the forum square, the visitor was, therefore, constantly surprised…From the open pavement in front of the Basilica Ulpia, the East and West Colonnades hid the Hemicycles and the apses of the Basilica. The Basilica blocked off a view of much of the Column of Trajan, the two Libraries, and the Temple; and even from inside the Colonnades or the nave of the Basilica, columnar screens effectively concealed the Hemicycles and apses. Enclosed within its portico, the Column of Trajan was fully visible only from the north terrace of the Basilica Ulpia or the steps of the Temple. Even though the Temple of Trajan equaled the size of the Temple of Mars Ultor, the visitor only first glimpsed it after entering the peristyle around the Column of Trajan. Consequently, these architectural “secrets” transformed a casual walk through the Forum into a series of progressive visual revelations, an effect fundamental to the second of the two great themes around which the Forum was planned.”

Packer, 182-3.

Roger B. Ulrich; The Roman Orator and the Sacred Stage: The Roman *Templum Rostratum* (Bruxelles: Latomas): 1994, 131; “When excavators unearthed the remains of the temple in 1931-1932, they were surprised to discover that none of the architectural fragments recovered from the shrine belonged to the first century B.C.. No ancient source mentions the
destruction of the original building, although an important inscription found in Rome’s port town of Ostia recorded that the emperor Trajan rededicated the Temple of Venus Genetrix along with the Column of Trajan in the year 113 A.D.. Van Blanckenhagen argues that the architectural moldings discovered during the excavations are characteristic of Flavian design. The best guess is that the temple built by Caesar and Augustus was seriously damaged in a fire that swept over the Capitoline Hill in the year 80 A.D.. Repairs involved a complete rebuilding of the shrine’s superstructure and a leveling of the ground behind the temple so that the Forum Iulium complex could communicate more directly with Trajan’s new forum.” For additional information regarding the dating of these restoration efforts see Ulrich, 148-9.

50 Packer, 183; “Although these frequent architectural citations intimately connected the Forum of Trajan with its neighbors and set Apollodorus squarely within the local architectural tradition, their more important purpose was to assure the viewer that the stability of the Roman world yet endured.”

51 Packer, 190; “In the final image, one would observe a massive gold statue of Trajan within the Temple and atop the temple to the deified Trajan upon its frieze another image of him represented as a divus and accompanied by a pair of deities, Packer speculates the Danube and the Euphrates. “This relief—and the grandiose seated statue of the divus inside the Temple—completed the sculptural and decorative program. Its primary underlying theme was immediately clear: the architectural celebration of the Empire’s victorious war over the barbarous forces of disorder—an impressive response to the decorative program of the majestic Forum of Peace at the other end of the same central axis…Face to face, the two for a together symbolized imperial war and peace.”

Notes for Chapter Five: Conclusion

1 The expansion of literacy eliminated dependency upon traditional patronage relationships, relationships that partially sheltered the author from the whims of critics outside their immediate literary circle. It also forced authors to cater to the taste of their immediate audience. See, Denis Feeney, Literature and Religion at Rome: cultures, contexts, and beliefs. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP): 1998; 137.

2 Habinek, 120, explains how New literary media, like the folio form, elevated the importance of previously inaccessible audience members because orators could achieve recognition that traditionally was confined to readers of public monuments; “If the aristocrats were by the very form in which literature was transmitted indirectly keeping it to themselves, individuals of lower rank were not without access to literary stimulation. Public libraries would have provided some opportunities for those with access and leisure. Inscriptions communicated not just regulations, but poetry as well. Mimes and plays as well as competitions at speechmaking would have reached a sizeable audience. Just what percentage of the population of the Roman empire could read is very much under discussion by scholars today. The variety of communities contained within the Roman world makes it impossible to describe reading as an exclusively elite activity. Freedmen, entrepreneurs, village scribes, military record keepers, and stonemasons, not to mention personal secretaries, stenographers, and their teachers, all enjoyed some degree of literacy and constituted a potential audience for imaginative literature of some sort. If the elite authors and the producers of deluxe editions ignored this audience (or pretended to) others may not have. The Christians in particular, who have long been associated with the production of codices, sought converts among precisely these sectors of the population. And the
codex, in turn, was better suited to what one assumes to be the less leisurely opportunities for reading available to the members of the various “subelites” (to borrow Keith Hopkin’s term) of the empire. Exactly the features that differentiate it from the papyrus roll—economy, portability, and ease of use by the nonprofessional reader—are the characteristics that would differentiate the needs of less elite readers from the opportunities available to their wealthier and higher-status contemporaries.”

3 Richard Gordon, “From Republic to Principate: priesthood, religion and ideology,” Pagan Priests, Ed. Mary Beard & John North, (Ithaca: Cornel UP): 1990, 191; “In short, the growing significance of writing in Roman religion was one of the most important means of turning that religion into ideology, into a means of maintaining the social domination of the élite.”

4 Gordon, 182-3.

5 Gordon, 194; “The priest or magistrate, in principle a member of a central or provincial elite group, obtains what is for the most part a symbolic good (the priesthood). In return he (or she) dispossesses him/herself of frequently enormous amounts of real goods, including the provision of games, feasts, monetary distributions and dispensations of oil or wine, help the poor or orphaned, the construction of useful or prestigious civic buildings. What he or she finally accumulates, however, is symbolic capital, the most durable form of wealth, in the form of ‘obligation, gratitude, prestige, personal loyalty.” The civic magistracy of the Graeco-Roman world, of which priesthood is a subclass, should be understood as a routinized system for the creation of symbolic capital in a context in which the modern means of institutionalizing such capital, above all through education systems, the art market in all of its international forms, and the entertainment industry were developed to only a very limited degree (but nevertheless clearly present).”