

Reading Mob Violence and Treason with Pseudo-Quintilian and Lorenzo Patarol

Neil W. Bernstein, Ohio University

This paper examines the reception of the pseudo-Quintilianic *Major Declamations* in the work of the Venetian scholar Lorenzo Patarol (1674-1727). The *Major Declamations* falsely ascribed to Quintilian are a series of demonstration speeches produced by a group of unknown rhetors between the second and fourth centuries CE (Bernstein 2013). Each offers a case for a party on one side of a fictional lawsuit. In the early 18th century, Patarol produced an unique work in the history of declamation: an edition of the fifteen unpaired *Major Declamations* with explanatory notes and a series of *Antilogiae* (responses) to the pseudo-Quintilianic authors' speeches. Patarol's commentary and responses offer complementary, multidimensional forms of engagement with the *Major Declamations*.

This paper examines Patarol's *Antilogia* to *Major Declamations* 11, *Dives Accusatus Proditionis* ("The Rich Man Accused of Treason"). In the pseudo-Quintilianic original, a poor man incites a mob to stone the children of a rich general rumored to be planning to betray the community to its enemies. This scenario of mob violence is fictional but not implausible; the family of the wealthy Herodes Atticus was similarly threatened during a riot (Kelly, Kennell). The rich man then prosecutes his poor opponent after returning victoriously from campaign. His speech uses the *lex talionis* as its theme; since the poor man caused the death of his children, he now demands the death of the poor man's children as appropriate revenge.

Previous scholarship has discussed this work as providing, as many declamations do, a form of social comfort to the wealthy young men whose parents could afford a rhetorical education (Bernstein 2016, Santorelli). These future leaders of their communities were taught to confront scenarios of familial or social disorder by reasserting the commonly held values of the Roman elite (Bloomer, Kaster). In generating an argument on behalf of the poor man, Patarol's *Antilogia* upends this consensus. His speech moves beyond consideration of the *lex talionis* to inquire who has ultimate responsibility for mob violence: the individuals who comprised the mob or their inciter? Who has ultimate responsibility for rumor: the calumniators or their target? Through a combination of scholarship and creative supplementation, Patarol addresses both the ancient rhetorical tradition and the concerns of an age of revolution.

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