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Style and the “Idea” of the Sophist after Plato. The Impact of Form Typology on Sophistic Teaching and Writing on Interdisciplinary Scholarly Work

Introduction.

Idea and the relation between philosophy, rhetoric, and sophistry in historical examples

The categories *idea* and *form*, even though occurring in literal contexts of sophists and Plato, are visual and theoretical phenomena. Recently, in studies of visual culture, also ancient cultures have become objects of interest in this relatively new branch of the humanities. For example Francis mentioned that ‘living icons’ in antiquity have an intense emphasis on visuality in literary representation of the second to fourth centuries.¹ The *idea* of the sophist and the work of the sophists in the time after Plato are actually completely different from the image Plato presented in his *Sophist*. But Plato was the first author who established a cliché of them. We must consider that even Plato was as a teacher a skilled performer of communicative strategies in dialogues and his field of teaching was not completely separated from the field of sophistry. His answer to the question ‘What is a Sophist’ in the *Sophist* was a dialectical performance with analytical techniques that produced his image of the sophist. In antiquity after the 1st Sophistic this image became less important in the scholarly reflections about the sophists. In Western scholarship after antiquity Plato’s esteem was the power behind the negative image of the sophists. Plato’s argumentative strategies and techniques have been widely analyzed; Muckelbauer assumed that Plato understood that its self-evident simplicity could be deceptive and that its effects might proliferate uncontrollably.² From a cultural and historical perspective towards the reception of Platonic views Muckelbauer’s statement is truly acceptable. From the perspective of the merits of the activity of the sophists Plato’s image is simply speaking a damage for their contributions to intellectual life of antiquity that are recorded in their writings and biographies. We will now proceed to elaborate on these achievements.

The infamous reputation “to make the weaker argument defeat the stronger” includes *in nuce* Plato’s negative assumptions about sophistry. We

¹James A. FRANCIS, “Living Icons: Tracing a Motif in Verbal and Visual Representation from the Second to Fourth Centuries C.E.,” *American Journal of Philology* 124, r 4 (2003): 575-600.

²John MUCKELBAUER, “Sophistic Travel: Inheriting the Simulacrum Through Plato’s ‘The Sophist,’” *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 34, n°. 3 (2001): 225-44.

agree with Sesonske who mentioned that readers of Plato will most likely think first of the sophists when we hear the phrase ‘to make the weaker argument defeat the stronger.’ For, though he does not often state the charge in just these terms, according to Sesonske, Plato’s treatment of sophists, whether in the ‘sharply etched portrait of Protagoras’ or the ‘schematic logic of the *Sophist*’, seems designed ‘to display this aspect of their activity.’³ Why are Plato’s image of the sophists and the work of the sophists so different? The philosophical concept of the *idea* Plato employed also in his *Sophist* cannot be used in order to understand the sophistic concept of the *idea* of the late 2nd Sophistic. Our examination now investigates the concrete writings of the sophists in order to answer the questions above. Scholars of philosophy and sophistry were not as much separated as Plato wants us to believe; even some of the early sophists were closely related to Plato. According to *Suda*, Metrophanes from Lebadia, a son of the rhetorician Cornelianus, was a sophist. Metrophanes wrote *On the Stylistic Characters of Plato, Xenophon, Nicostratus, Philostratus*, declamations, and panegyric speeches.⁴ Thrasymachos was a Chalcedonian sophist from Bithynia. Thrasymachos was the first to discover period and colon in style, and he introduced the modern kind of rhetoric. Thrasymachos was a pupil of both Plato and the rhetorician Isocrates.⁵

Asking the question *Who is the Sophist?* in the way Plato did might be reasonable and a technically perfect answer, but it failed to describe the special cultural conditions of sophistry and the lifestyle of sophists; we investigate the phenomenon sophistry using antique and Byzantine sources that record the tradition of the heritage of the sophists. The literature we examine consists of compilations of sophistic writings made by contemporary or later writers. The Byzantine lexicon *Suda* is the most comprehensive source about the lives of sophists, even though earlier biographies exist and most of the sources *Suda* consulted are unknown. Plato was a teacher of rhetoricians; among them was for example Hypereides of Athens, son of the rhetorician Glaukippos or Pythocles. Hypereides studied under Plato and Isocrates. According to *Suda*, Hypereides became an ‘able orator’. Hypereides was killed by King Antipater who had him dragged out of the temple of Demeter in Hermione by Archias, his tongue was cut out, and he died. Hypereides left 56 speeches.⁶ The early beginnings of sophistry are represented by Protagoras of Abdera, a son of Artemon, Maeandrides or Neandrius, who was first a philosopher and later turned to rhetoric. According to *Suda*, Protagoras was the first man to be called sophist, the man who invented eristic arguments, made a contest of speeches and charged 100 mina for his service. Protagoras was the teacher of the rhetorician Isocrates. Protagoras divided all discourses into four categories: wish, question, answer, and command. After him others made divisions of

³ Alexander SESONSKE, “To Make the Weaker Argument Defeat the Stronger,” *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 6, n. 3 (1968): 217-31.

⁴ Adler number: mu, 1010. *Suda Online: Byzantine Lexicography*, ed. by Raphael Finkel, Bill Hutton, Patrick Rourke, Ross Scaife, Elizabeth Vandiver, et al., Stoa Organisation, <http://www.stoa.org/sol/> (accessed May 23, 2008).

⁵ *Suda*, Adler number: theta, 462.

⁶ *Suda*, Adler number: upsilon, 294.

narration, question, answer, command, statement, wish, and appellation. Alcidamas said that four kinds of discourse exist: assertion, denial, question, and address. Protagoras' books were burned by the Athenians, because he made a speech, which began with the agnostic statement "About the gods I can know nothing - neither that they exist, nor that they do not exist".⁷ From recordings of other cases it is known that a transgression of common rules was often a topic for the accusation of sophists and rhetoricians; the 'freedom of speech' was always endangered, the sophists and their profession not accepted, and aggressively verbally attacked. In *Suda* we find a reference of Timaios of Tauromenion, a historian of the 4th/3rd century B.C.E., on Aristotle among the sophists. Timaios said that Aristotle "was arrogant, reckless, and headstrong [...] but not a pedantic and detestable sophist who had just locked up his precious surgeon's shop, and who besides this had forced his way into every court and onto every stage and was a glutton and epicure catering for his mouth in everything. I think that surely such language could scarcely be tolerated even from the lips of some unscrupulous knave making random accusations in a law court. Note that Aristotle was a clerk by nature, steeping his pen in intellect, from whom perhaps it was not necessary to seek anything useful, even if it is more technical and exceptionally worked out."⁸ Regarding the sophist Aristotle (*Rhetoric* 1, 1, 1355b) mentioned that the quality that makes a man a 'sophist' is not his faculty, but his moral purpose. In rhetoric the term 'rhetorician' may describe either the speaker's knowledge of the art or his moral purpose. In dialectic a man is a 'sophist', because he has a certain kind of moral purpose, a 'dialectician' in respect, not of his moral purpose, but of his faculty.⁹ Aristotle's work *On Ideas* (*Peri Ideon*) is lost. According to an entry in *Suda*, also Aspasia was a female sophist (σοφίστρια) and a *teacher of rhetorical principles* (διδάσκαλος λόγων ῥητορικῶν).¹⁰

The non-religious approach towards knowledge sophists and philosophers shared was based on the concept *sophia*. Johnstone wrote that the pursuit of Wisdom is 'at the center of the Western intellectual tradition', its 'attainment the literal ideal and end of all philosophical inquiry'. Johnstone asked how, if at all, do speech and language figure in the attainment and dissemination of wisdom?¹¹ The relationship between wisdom and speech was not only established by the connection between philosophy and rhetoric, but also included sophistry. The relationship between sophistry and rhetoric has been discussed; it depends either on definitions of these terms or on the classification of each of the members of these groups to draw a line between them. Many of the works written by sophists are contributions to rhetorical education that can also be classified as works of rhetoricians. Among the literature sophists left we find many rhetorical didactical works. While the sophists primarily worked

⁷ *Suda*, Adler number: pi, 2958.

⁸ *Suda*, Adler number: alpha, 3930.

⁹ ARISTOTLE, *Rhetoric*, transl. W. Rhys Roberts. Department of Classics, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/rhetoric.html> (accessed May 23, 2008).

¹⁰ *Suda*, Adler number: alpha, 4202.

¹¹ Christopher Lyle JOHNSTONE, "Sophistical Wisdom: Politikē Aretē and 'Logosophia,'" *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 39, n. 4 (2006): 265-89.

as teachers, the rhetoricians was a public speaker. The classic rhetorician did not intend to 'offer' wisdom; his speech always focused on a special topic. Sophists and philosophers, interested in wisdom, had similar interests and shared some to their terms; sophists in the time after Plato actually employed the same techniques in order to teach speech through stylistic principles and even the term *idea* became as term of sophistry a synonym for style. For Plato the *idea* had been always a term for an abstract level of representations of concrete phenomena. The sophists can claim to have given the *idea* for the first time a concrete field of applications: words. The Platonic view of the relation between a philosopher and rhetorician /sophist is not representative for later times. We have even among the Epicureans an example of a philosopher who changed his profession and became a rhetorician. Suetonius in *Lives of the Eminent Grammarians* (6) wrote that Aurelius Opilius first taught philosophy, then rhetoric, and last of all grammar. He followed Rutilius Rufus, when he was banished to Asia and wrote several volumes on a variety of learned topics and nine books distinguished by the number and names of the nine Muses.¹² According to *Suda*, Damophilus was both a philosopher and sophist raised by Julian, the consul of the emperor Marcus Aurelius. Damophilus was a prolific author. *Suda* writes that he has found the following of his works: *Bibliophile* in one book, *On Books Worth Purchasing*, *To Lollius Maximus*, *On the Life of the Ancients*, and many other works.¹³

This essay also aims to revive the discussion about the style as a part of rhetoric that became less important in the recent academic history of rhetoric. Poster mentioned that 'the inventional focus' of much modern rhetorical theory has tended to "relegate figuration either, on the one hand, to the domains of literary criticism or linguistics (the heirs of ancient grammar) or, on the other hand, to an ancillary position".¹⁴ We start now to investigate details of style regarding the aspects 'what, how and why did the sophists teach and write'. Approaching the phenomenon 'style' means also to investigate the categories the sophists and rhetoricians used for the establishment of stylistic structures of speaking. Stylistic principles were codified in their works assuming that style was taught and could be learned. It seems to be an absurd result of contemporary scholars that despite the existence of principles the commonly accepted opinion about the sophists was, as described by Cassin and Wolfe, that their doctrines and the shared intellectual attitude of the main Greek sophists were considered to be a "philosophy of verbal reasoning lacking solidity or seriousness."¹⁵ Cassin and Wolfe call the set of doctrines or teachings associated with sophists '*sophistike*'. Since a term like *sophistike technē* never have become popular and the majority of the sophists produced works entitled *rhetorike technē*, we can see here the common source of principles both sophists and rhetoricians shared.

¹² Tranquillus C. SUETONIUS, "*Lives of Eminent Grammarians and Rhetoricians*", transl. Alexander Thomson. Project Gutenberg, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/6398/6398.txt> (accessed May 23, 2008).

¹³ *Suda*, Adler number: delta, 52.

¹⁴ Carol POSTER, "Being, Time, and Definition: Toward a Semiotics of Figural Rhetoric," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 33, n°. 2 (2000): 116-36.

¹⁵ Barbara CASSIN; Charles T. WOLFE, "Who's Afraid of the Sophists? Against Ethical Correctness," *Hypatia* 15, n°. 4 (2000): 102-20.

The *Idea* in Sophistic Works.

Principle Categories for Style Principles in the Work of Sophists

The categories for stylistic principles of sophistic books and the contents of their teaching are literary and rhetorical classification. They are important, since they demonstrate how the work of a single sophist was organized. Their books and speeches serve also as the reference system including literal works and speeches of other sophists and contemporary and previous scholars.

Didactical Writings and Lectures of Sophists and Rhetoricians

McAdon made an attempt to differentiate between probabilities, signs, necessary signs, *idia*, and *topoi* as materials for enthymemes.¹⁶ In argumentations enthymemes were used by logical philosophical, rhetorical, and sophistic scholars. Even though they are often as tools for fallacies attributed to sophistic writing, we must mention here that most of the sophistic writings were not dedicated to the study of fallacies. Regarding many books written by the sophists we can assume that they were composed as didactical material for teaching. Suetonius (*Lives of the Eminent Rhetoricians* 524, I) wrote about the rhetoricians in Rome that the same mode of teaching was neither adopted by all of them nor did individuals always confine themselves to the same system. Each of them varied his plan of teaching according to circumstances. They were accustomed to state their argument with the utmost clearness, to use figures and analogies, to put cases as circumstances required, and to relate facts briefly and succinctly or with greater feeling.¹⁷

Commonly used forms of didactical works of style the sophists used are:

<i>Technē Rhetorikē, Art of Rhetoric</i>	Τέχνη ῥητορικὴ
<i>Hypomnema</i> , commentaries on special topics	ὑπομνήματα
<i>Progymnasmata</i> , collections of sample texts	Προγυμνάσματα
<i>Onomasticon</i> , a collection of words for different things	Ὄνομαστικόν

Obviously each of the sophists composed his own technical handbook for his students. Also other material collected in collections of examples might have been used for the purpose of the instruction of their students. But poetical writings of sophists were exceptional cases. Both sophists and rhetoricians wrote books entitled *Art of Rhetoric* (Τέχνη ῥητορικὴ). *Suda* used the term *technē rhetorikē* instead of *technē rhetorikē*. Since many of these works were mentioned besides the name of their authors in *Suda*, we can conclude that each of the teachers used his own work. We know no work called *Sophistike Technē* serving for learners as an introduction to sophistry. Thus, we can assume that a sophist taught either relying on rhetorical works or purely orally. In *Suda* Pollux of Naucratis is mentioned as a sophist who taught in Athens under the emperor

¹⁶ Brad McADON, "Probabilities, Signs, Necessary Signs, *Idia*, and *Topoi*: The Confusing Discussion of Materials for Enthymemes in the Rhetoric," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 36, n°. 3 (2003): 223-48.

¹⁷ Tranquillus C. Suetonius, "*Lives of Eminent Grammarians and Rhetoricians*", transl. by Alexander Thomson, Project Gutenberg, <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/6398/6398.txt> (accessed May 23, 2008).

Commodus and composed *Onomasticon*, informal discourses or talks, declamations, an *Epithalamium to Caesar Commodus*, a *Roman Speech, Trumpet, or Musical Contest*, *Against Socrates*, *Against the People of Sinope*, a *Panellenic Speech*, an *Arcadian Speech*, and other works.¹⁸

The Greek term *idea* (*eidon*) was a sophistic expression for speech style. We can trace this category back to Plato, but sophists employed this term for the style of speech; many books about this topic are entitled *About Ideas*. *Schemata* are speech figures, and the *idea* indicated the type of speech that indicated how figures should be used. Aelius Harpocration was a sophist who wrote *On the Apparent Examples of Ignorance in the Orators* (Περὶ τῶν δοκούντων τοῖς ῥήτορσιν ἡγνοῦσθαι), *Hypotheses to the Speeches of Hyperides* (ὑποθέσεις τῶν λόγων Ἑπερίδου), *On the Falsity of Herodotus' History* (Περὶ τοῦ κατεψεῦσθαι τὴν Ἡροδότου ἱστορίαν), *On Order in Xenophon* (Περὶ τῶν παρὰ Ξενοφῶντι τάξεων), *On the Art of Rhetoric* (Περὶ τέχνης ῥητορικῆς), and *On Types of Style* (Περὶ ἰδεῶν).¹⁹ The sophist Basilicus wrote *On the Figures of Diction* (Περὶ τῶν διὰ τῶν λέξεων σχημάτων), *On Rhetorical Preparation* (or *On Practice*) (Περὶ ῥητορικῆς παρασκευῆς ἧτοι περὶ ἀσκήσεως), and *On Paraphrase* (Περὶ μεταποιήσεως) besides other works.²⁰

Speeches

We can distinguish between the following forms of speeches:

Declamation	<i>Melete</i>	Μελέτε
Informal discourse	<i>Lalia</i>	Λάλια
Informal discourse	<i>Dialexis</i>	Διαλέξις
Panegyric speech	<i>Logos panegyricos</i>	Λόγος πανηγύρικος
Praise of thing or person	<i>Encomion</i>	Ἐγκώμιον

The sophist Aspasius of Byblos was a contemporary of Aristides and Hadrian. Aspasius wrote *On Byblos*, *On Figured Issues* (Περὶ στάσεων ἐσχηματισμένων), declamations (Μελέται), *Arts* (Τέχναι), commentaries (Ἑπομνήματα), and informal discourses (Λάλια), an *Encomium of the Emperor Hadrian* (Ἐγκώμιον εἰς Ἀδριανὸν τὸν βασιλέα) and *encomia* of other persons.²¹ The technical advice regarding the style of speeches was not the only assignment of a sophist as a teacher. Also critical commentaries about speeches were commonly written. We know from *Suda* that Aelius Sarapion was a rhetorician in Alexandria. Sarapion wrote *On Mistakes in Declamations*, lectures in seven books, *Panegyric on the Emperor Hadrian*, *Speech in Council to the Alexandrians*, *Whether Plato was Right to Expel Homer from the Republic*, and an *Art of Rhetoric* besides other works.²²

Pagan religious activities could be performed by a sophist. *Suda* narrates that Claudius Aelianus from Praeneste in Italy was under Hadrian a high-priest and

¹⁸ *Suda*, Adler number: pi, 1951.

¹⁹ *Suda*, Adler number: alpha, 4013.

²⁰ *Suda*, Adler number: beta, 159.

²¹ *Suda*, Adler number: alpha, 4203.

²² *Suda*, Adler number: sigma, 115.

sophist nicknamed 'honey-tongued' or 'honey-voiced'.²³ *Suda* states that Potamo of Mitylene, a son of Lesbos, was both a rhetorician and sophist in Rome under Caesar Tiberius. Potamo wrote *On Alexander of Macedon*, *Annals of the Samians*, *Encomium of Brutus*, *Encomium of Caesar*, and *On the Perfect Orator*.²⁴ The counterparts of the praising *encomia* are speeches directed against fictive or real persons. This type of speech was a very common form of sophistic speech. An example of this kind mentioned by *Suda* is a work of Aspasius of Ravenna, a pupil of the critic Demetrianus, who practiced as a sophist under Alexander, son of Mamaea. Aspasius attended the classes of Pausanias and Hippodromus and worked as a sophist in Rome. Aspasius wrote *Against Those who are Fond of Slander*, *Against Ariston*, and miscellaneous discourses.²⁵

For legal rhetoric both *declamatio* and *controversia* employed imaginative inventions used for fictive cases. Suetonius (*Lives of the Eminent Rhetoricians* 524, I) noticed that formerly the rhetoricians used the Greek term *syntaxeis* and later preferred the expression *controversiae* (*controversiae*) for fictitious cases or cases in trials.²⁶ Since the 1st Sophistic a differentiation between artificial, professional and scholarly activities didn't exist. *Suda* writes regarding Antiphon of Athens called 'word-cook' (Λογομάγειρος), one of the early sophists, that he was a diviner, an epic poet, and a sophist.²⁷ Another entry in *Suda* for Antiphon refers that no one was recognized as his teacher. Antiphon was the leader in the judicial style of oratory after Gorgias and the teacher of Thucydides.²⁸ In works of Christian sophist we find similarities to the sophistic writings of the pagan culture using speeches directed against other persons from a religious perspective directed to the pagans. The art of preaching or writing sermons also developed under the influence of rhetorical knowledge. Milovanovic described the declamation as a fictitious speech on a popular stock theme had been developed in schools of rhetoric as a means of practicing the rules of forensic oratory; this means was the system of the *staseis*. A subset of those stock themes was concerned with school life in general. A declamation was not expected to be based on real events.²⁹

Literary Forms of Sophistry. Eclectic Literature and the Style of a 'Mixed Genre'

Unusual topics and themes and the 'grande style' in bombastic forms and sizes are characteristic features for literary sophistic works. Athenaeus' *Deipnosophists* represents the bombastic form implementing literary sources in a fictive dialogue. The form of the dialogue containing quotations of other sources results in a literary piece in the Style of a 'mixed genre' with elements of a lexicon, a dialogue, and fictive narrative.

²³ *Suda*, Adler number: alphaiota, 178.

²⁴ *Suda*, Adler number: pi, 2127.

²⁵ *Suda*, Adler number: alpha, 4205.

²⁶ Tranquillus C. SÜETONIUS, *Lives of Eminent Grammarians and Rhetoricians*.

²⁷ *Suda*, Adler number: alpha, 2744.

²⁸ *Suda*, Adler number: alpha, 2745.

²⁹ Celica MILOVANOVIC, "Sailing to Sophistopolis: Gregory of Nazianzus and Greek Declamation," *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, 13, n° 2 (2005): 187-232.

Small Forms of Sophistic Writing: Descriptive Poetical Narratives

Poetical narratives as romance and fable and short historical and biographical writing are typical representative forms for sophistic literature. Often details are described in an ornamental way.

Detailed description of objects or persons; it is also used as a school exercise	<i>Ecpbrasis</i>
The epigrams are small poems describing a person or object	<i>Epigrammata</i>
Descriptions of visual objects	<i>Imagines</i>

An example for the *imagines* is the work *Imagines* written in the family of sophists named Philostratus. According to *Suda*, Philostratus, son of Philostratus, a sophist from Lemnos, was among the sophists of the second class in Athens and in Rome under the emperors Severus and Philip. Philostratus wrote declamations, *Erotic Letters*, *Images* in four books, i.e. descriptions, *Market-Place*, *Heroicus*, informal discourses, *Goats, or On the Pipe*, a *Life of Apollonius of Tyana*, *Lives of the Sophists*, epigrams, and other works.³⁰ In *Suda* is another Philostratus, the son of Nervianus, mentioned, who was the nephew of the second Philostratus of Lemnos and also a sophist. Philostratus was a pupil and son-in-law of the second Philostratus who wrote *Images*, *Panathenaicus*, *Troicus*, *Paraphrase of Homer's Shield*, and five declamations. Some also attribute the *Lives of the Sophists* to him.³¹ The *Imagines* are a collection of short essays describing poetically mostly myth-themed paintings. They are a work that demonstrates the change from the abstract *idea* of sophistry in a collection of stylistic forms to the *imago* are a literary form for the description of pictures.

Biographical and Historical Writings

Early historical writings by sophists were a result from their close relation to contemporary emperors. Many writings about Alexander the Great written in Alexandria have been lost. These writings, partly written by sophists under the Ptolemies, had the function to glorify the emperor and founder of the dynasty. At least the first kings among the Ptolemies considered support of the flourishing literature in Alexandria a means to increase their prestige and aimed to show in this way the prosperity of their kingdom. Here sophists could work relatively freely. On the contrary, state employed and private professors of rhetoric were commonly employed in Rome, Athens, and Constantinople. A sophist who wrote historical works mentioned by *Suda* is Nicagoras, the son of the rhetorician Mnesaeus. Nicagoras was an Athenian sophist who lived in the reign of the Caesar Philip. His books include *Lives of Famous People*, *On Cleopatra in Troas*, and an *Embassy Speech to Philip the Roman Emperor*.³² Bemarchius of Caesarea in Cappadocia was a sophist who wrote the acts of the emperor Constantine in ten books besides various declamations and discourses.³³ Heliconius was a sophist of Byzantium who wrote a *Chronological*

³⁰ *Suda*, Adler number: phi, 421.

³¹ *Suda*, Adler number: phi, 423.

³² *Suda*, Adler number: nu, 373.

³³ *Suda*, Adler number: beta, 259.

Epitome from Adam to the Time of Theodosius the Great in ten books.³⁴ *Suda* mentions that Ulpian of Emesa was a sophist who wrote *Traditions of Emesa, of Heliopolis, of Bosphorus, and About Many other Peoples*, progymnasmata, and an *Art of Rhetoric*.³⁵ Procopios of Caesarea in Palestine was a rhetorician and sophist who wrote a *Roman History* about the wars of Belisarius the patrician and actions in Rome and Libya. Procopios lived in the reign of the emperor Justinian, was employed as Belisarius' secretary, and accompanied him in all the wars and events he recorded. Procopios also wrote another book, the *Anecdota*, on the same events. The book of Procopios called *Anecdota* contains details about abuse and mockery of the emperor Justinian and his wife Theodora and of Belisarius and his wife.³⁶

Letters

According to *Suda*, Hadrian of Tyre was a sophist and a pupil of Herodes who flourished in the reign of Marcus Antoninus. As a teacher Hadrian was in Athens a rival of the rhetorician Aristides. Hadrian was also a practicing sophist in Rome and a secretary who was responsible for the correspondence of Commodus. Hadrian wrote declamations, *Metamorphoses* in seven books, *On Types of Style* in five books (Περὶ ἰδεῶν λόγου ἐν βιβλίοις ε), *On Distinctive Features in the Issues* in three books (Περὶ τῶν ἐν ταῖς στάσεσιν ἰδιωμάτων ἐν βιβλίοις τρισίν), letters and epideictic speeches, *Phalaris*, and *Consolation to Celer*.³⁷ The sophist Aristocles of Pergamum lived in the reign of Trajan and Hadrian. Aristocles wrote an *Art of Rhetoric* (Τέχνη ῥητορικῆ), letters (Ἐπιστολαί), *On Rhetoric* in five books (Περὶ ῥητορικῆς βιβλία ε), declamations (Μελέται), *To the Emperor*, and *On the Distribution of Gold*.³⁸ Ausonius was a sophist who wrote letters and certain other works addressed to Nonnus.³⁹ Especially pagan sophists and Christians used the letter as a way to spread their writing.

Style as Tool of the Communication Concept of the *Idea*

How could the sophists communicate between the different sciences and arts? They communicated with ideas in types or forms collected in stylistic principles that were commonly known and shared not only among them, but also among the youth they educated. The word *idea* became a part of the Latin thesaurus due to the Platonic concept of *ideas* as depiction of an archetype.⁴⁰ According to Liddell and Scott, *idea* was used as descriptions of a form by Pindar and Aristotle. It meant the look of a thing opposed to its reality or a kind, sort, or nature in Herodotus' work. In Platonic writings *eidos* was used for

³⁴ *Suda*, Adler number: epsilon, 851.

³⁵ *Suda*, Adler number: omicron, 9119.

³⁶ *Suda*, Adler number: pi, 2479.

³⁷ *Suda*, Adler number: alpha, 528.

³⁸ *Suda*, Adler number: alpha, 3918.

³⁹ *Suda*, Adler number: alpha, 4460.

⁴⁰ Charlton T. LEWIS; Charles SHORT, *A Latin Dictionary*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879; Project Gutenberg, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.04.0059%3Aentry%3D%2321342> (accessed May 23, 2008).

a types, class, kind, sort, or species. As a Greek word *idea* was used by Cicero. In the Latin language Seneca used the term. (Sen. Ep. 58 med.) *Idea* was especially in rhetoric a literary form employed since the time of Isocrates.⁴¹ According to Liddell and Scott (online entry 'idea'), as a term for the style of a writer or speaker in expressions like 'Platoic style' or 'style of Demosthenes', it was used in the time of Hermogenes by Syrianus in his commentary of Hermogenes' work.⁴² Stafford and Herrin mentioned this commentary for *On Forms of Style (Peri Ideon)* of Hermogenes.⁴³ *Suda* mentions that Hermogenes' *On Forms of Style (Peri Ideon)* was commonly known in Byzantine time and used as a standard textbook in schools of rhetoric. *On Forms of Style* separates between types (*ideai*) of style of clarity (*sapheneia*), grandeur (*megethos*), beauty (*kallos*), rapidity (*gorgotes*), character (*ethos*), sincerity (*aletheia*), and force (*deinotes*) according to Burton's *Silvae Rhetoricae*.⁴⁴ Hermogenes' *On Style (Peri Ideon)* represents a body of literature Rutherford called 'idea-theory'.⁴⁵ Even *Suda* noticed that Hermogenes' *Art of Rhetoric* was very famous and used by other rhetoricians and sophists. *Suda* narrates that Hermogenes lived in the time of the emperor Marcus Aurelius and had great natural talent. Hermogenes was lacking his wisdom at the age of about 24, when he went out of his mind and did not know himself. When he was 18 or 20 Hermogenes had already written an *Art of Rhetoric*, *On Issues*, *On Types of Styles* in two books, and *On Coele Syria* in two books. Philostratus of Lemnos in his descriptions of the sophists says about Hermogenes that his reputation as a sophist was even acknowledged by the emperor Marcus who was delighted by his informal discourse and amazed by his improvisation.⁴⁶ The sophist Aphthonius wrote a commentary on Hermogenes' *Art of Rhetoric* and *progymnasmata*.⁴⁷ Also Menander of Laodicea was a sophist who wrote a commentary on Hermogenes' *Art of Rhetoric* and Minucianus' *progymnasmata* besides other works.⁴⁸

In the 1st century C.E. Demetrius in *On Style* separated four types of style consisting of the elevated style, the elegant style, the plain style, and the forcible style. Among the figures of speech Demetrius mentions hiatus, metaphor, simile and imagery, onomatopoeic or coined words, allegory, brevity, aposiopesis, indirect and harsh-sounding expressions, and epiphoneme and poetical color in prose.⁴⁹ Obviously some of these figures like metaphor, sim-

⁴¹ Henry George LIDDELL; Robert SCOTT, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940; Perseus Project, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.04.0057%3Aentry%3D%2349818> (accessed May 23, 2008).

⁴² Henry George LIDDELL; Robert SCOTT, *An Intermediate Greek-English Lexicon*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1889; Perseus Project, <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/cgi-bin/ptext?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.04.0058%3Aentry%3D%2315683> (accessed May 23, 2008).

⁴³ Emma STAFFORD; Judith HERRIN, *Personification in the Greek World From Antiquity to Byzantium*, (Aldershot [e.a.]: Ashgate, 2005), 86.

⁴⁴ "Hermogenes", "*Silvae Rhetoricae*", ed. by Gideon O. Burton, Brigham Young University, <http://rhetoric.byu.edu/Primary%20Texts/Hermogenes.htm> (accessed May 23, 2008).

⁴⁵ Ian RUTHERFORD, *Canons of Style in the Antonine Age: Idea-Theory in its Literary Context*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, 104.

⁴⁶ *Suda*, Adler number: epsilon, 3046.

⁴⁷ *Suda*, Adler number: alpha, 4630.

⁴⁸ *Suda*, Adler number: mu, 590.

⁴⁹ DEMETRIUS, *On Style*, transl. W. Rhys Roberts, Peitho's Web, <http://classicpersuasion.org/pw/demetrius/index.htm> (accessed May 23, 2008).

ile and imagery, and onomatopoeic words were dedicated to quasi-visual phenomena of language.

Especially the philological works about Homer must be mentioned here in the context of sophistry as a cultural phenomenon, since philological works have some aspects with the works of the sophists in common. For example *glossae* and *lexica* for uncommon words or themes are regarding their focus on style and specific words used by a single author closely related to sophistry's interest in uncommon words. Homer was the most important source for investigating poetry by the use of figures of speech. According to *Suda*, the Alexandrian writer of epic poems Apollonius lived as a contemporary of Eratosthenes, Euphorion, and Timarchos in the reign of Ptolemy Euergetes. Apollonius was Eratosthenes' successor in the directorship of the library in Alexandria. The commentator of his *Suda Online* entry mentions that *Suda* or its source seems to have confused Apollonios the poet with the later character 'Apollonios the Compiler' named in P.Oxy. 1241.⁵⁰ In another entry of *Suda* Apollonius 'Dyscolus' of Alexandria is mentioned as father of Herodian, the technical writer. Apollonius was a grammarian who wrote two rhetorical works, *On the Division of the Parts of Speech* in four books and *On the Syntax of the Parts of Speech* besides grammatical and philological works about Homer like *On the Verb, or Rhematicos* in five books, *On the Formation of mi-Verbs, On Nouns, or Onomasticos, On Nouns according to Dialect, On the Nominative Case of Feminine Nouns, On Paronyms, On Comparatives, and On Dialects - Doric, Ionic, Aeolic, Attic, On Homeric Figures, On Fabricated History, On Modifications of Forms, On Necessary Accents, On Skewed Accents, On Prosodies* in five books, *On Letters, On Prepositions, On Didymus' Pitbana, On Composition, On Words with Two Spellings, On the Word 'tis', On Genders, On Breathings, On Possessives, and On Conjugation*.⁵¹ Dio of Prusa, a sophist and philosopher, is one of the most famous sophists who wrote books about Homer and other classical authors from a perspective of a rather free reception of classical authors. Dio used common types of speeches we already mentioned above. Dio wrote *Is the Cosmos Perishable?, Encomium of Heracles and Plato, In Defence of Homer Against Plato* in four books, and *On the Virtues of Alexander* in five books. *Suda* closes this entry with the notice that this man even attacked Homer for falsifying his record of the Trojan War.⁵² Even though poetical production of sophists is rather untypical, classic authors became the subject of their speeches; Dio's works are a good example. The most accepted poet was Homer and his work was the authority of later poetry; Homer's works was a guarantee that Greek pagan mythology in written form was memorized and contributed in this way to the common cultural heritage. The sophistic reference to Homer had a similar effect.

⁵⁰ *Suda*, Adler number: alpha, 3419.

⁵¹ *Suda*, Adler number: alpha, 3422.

⁵² *Suda*, Adler number: delta, 1240.

The Idea of the Sophistic Works in its Cultural Context

Why were sophists important for the culture of antiquity? The historiography of late antiquity, as Ando critically stated, is based on popular indices of continuity, change, and decline to particular systems of moral and aesthetic evaluation.⁵³ Rhetoric is one of these systems and the 'decline of rhetoric' is a common topos in the historiography of rhetoric especially for the time after the 17th century. The sophistic movement as a part of rhetoric crossing the borders of Greek and Roman homeland and spreading all over the Mediterranean is an indicator for the continuity of sophistry and Greek culture. Sophistry guaranteed the continuity of cultural values in a common language and the education in common forms of discourse dominated by the Greek and Roman culture. The fact that sophists often worked for embassies also should be mentioned here; but even the single traveling sophist crossing borders and performing speeches in urban social settings guaranteed both continuity and exchange of knowledge. Style as an intertextual linguistic structure in a means of both oral and written communication, i.e., language, enabled the reader or hearer/viewer to receive the message in recognizable structures; the memory (*memoria*) is the corresponding area in rhetorical theory. The teaching of commonly shared stylistic principles was a concern of the *idea* of sophists, as we can see in many of their didactical writings. Style was concretely bound to the existence of words and its effectiveness in society resulted in the demand of teachers for sophistry and a variety of places and institutions for the performance of sophistry. It is an economic response regarding the need of such an education, when contemporary scholars narrate that such an activity was paid. On the contrary, philosophers could not claim such practical efficiency. The continuity of sophistic teaching and writings in Constantinople and its adaptation in Christian Europe in the Middle Ages and in Arab philosophy are actually reasons to ask for a change of the cultural context in times of continuity of sophistic values and practice. Sophists were among the first who developed a historical perspective of events of the past and offered writings of historiography beyond the level of the *encomium* of a person, the speech type sophistic historical writing derived from.

Works like *On Style (Peri Ideon)*, canons of figures of speech, and typologies of style are core elements of rhetoric and sophistry and essential for the success of the speaker and the basic subject sophists taught. Rhetoric with its impact of the types of style and figures on interdisciplinary scholarly work enabled sophists to transcend borders of knowledge. Most of the opponents speaking against the sophists were either politically or religiously motivated and accused the sophists as elements of the pagan culture in antiquity. This tendency of competition we can already see when we examine the early competition among pagan rhetoricians and sophists; actually they have never been divided in terms of their activity as a unit of speakers and teachers sharing their common codified rules in technical handbooks. In general, sophistry served as an important tool of transfer for Greek scholarship. The early sep-

⁵³ CLIFFORD ANDO, "Decline, Fall, and Transformation," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 1, n° 1 (2008): 31-60.

aration between philosophers and sophists in the time of the 1st Sophistic was not as strict as in the time of the beginning of both disciplines. Both groups now shared the common pagan heritage and in terms of their techniques they even had similarities in their roots of argumentative patterns. Taking the example of Aristotle, we can even say that this man, traditionally considered to be a philosopher, also wrote sophistic books that are actually the rare exception among the books of sophists who mainly wrote technical rhetorical works. Many persons among the philosophers of antiquity in the Mediterranean were also sophists, as we can see from the biographies of their lives in *Suda*. It was also not uncommon in a career path to change the profession from sophist to philosopher and other disciplines and *vice versa*.

Crick stated that the dividing line between rhetoric and science has traditionally been drawn "at the split between persuasion and logic".⁵⁴ Crick also mentioned that recent scholarship has blurred this border. Examining the role of the sophists we even can extend the blurred area to the professions of lawyers, state employed scholars, and political administrators and also to the poets. The necessity of style arose from the need of communicable contents and stylistic principles that guaranteed recognizable linguistic patterns. After the conflicts between rhetoricians and politics of Rome with restrictions against this discipline that came from Greece to Rome, rhetoric and sophistry had a stable position both in the education system and the political system. While in Alexandria the sophists and rhetoricians were not state-employed professors, in other cities like Rome and Constantinople the job of a professor of rhetoric was institutionalized. Sophistry was an urban and personalized phenomenon with individual actions of the single sophist. It required a public audience of educated persons or persons interested in education. Since it was in most cases of sophists not separated from other fields of studies and knowledge, it made the transfer of knowledge beyond a separated discipline in other disciplines possible. Since the sophists performed free speech, they were often in danger to say something not accepted according to social norms and practice. Even though they worked at the courts as speakers, there are also cases of sophists in conflict with customs and laws who have been accused due to the performance of their profession or the contents of their speeches and teachings.

Conclusions. The Impact of the Image on Scholarly Work

The sophists make a connection between *idea* as a technical term of rhetoric and the typology of the style principles. Using the 'idea' of the sophist here in this article refers as an image to the cliché about the sophists promoted by Plato and the abstract concept of ideas used in his philosophy. These two different concepts must be distinguished in order to see the different approaches to wisdom from the perspective of the sophists and philosophers. The impact of the image and related forms on scholarly work regarding the sophists themselves was relatively small; references to Plato's image of the

⁵⁴Nathan CRICK, "Conquering Our Imagination: Thought Experiments and Enthymemes in Scientific Argument," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 37, n°. 1 (2004): 21-41.

sophist are in antiquity relatively unimportant. Negative descriptions of sophists during this time were a result from professional competition or conflicts among different cultural groups and one among them was the one of the sophists. If we look at the image as a feature of scholarly work in antiquity we come to quite different conclusions. Visuality and typology were categories both the philosopher Plato and sophists employed. The *idea* with its very distinct meaning and function in sophistry was a part of the sophistic concepts; from the specific functions the *idea* had we can derive the importance of visuality in their theoretical writings in the area of the figures of style. The comparative study of the differentiated use of visual phenomena like the *idea* used in different antique disciplines enables us to compare their concepts. Its linguistic intertextuality and the interdisciplinarity in sophistic works are indicators for the transfer of knowledge across geographical areas and social and professional groups in antiquity.