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The Intention of Aristotle's 'Rhetoric'

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Source: *Hermes*, 109. Bd., H. 3 (1981), pp. 326-339

Published by: [Franz Steiner Verlag](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4476218>

Accessed: 25-03-2015 20:32 UTC

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343, F 159 v. J. 342, F 160 v. J. 341, F 161, 162, 54 v. J. 340, F 56 v. J. 339, F 57 und 58 v. J. 338 – 327/5) und von diesen 8 Zeugnissen 6 von Didymos und Harp. stammen. Der Schluß, daß Androtion ab 343/2 nicht mehr als Gewährsmann angeführt wird, weil seine Atthis mit dem Jahr 344/3 endete, ist unausweichlich. Damit aber gewinnen wir das Jahr 343 als den frühesten Zeitpunkt, von dem an die Atthis abgefaßt sein kann. *Terminus ante quem* ist das Jahr 334/3, da Aristoteles bei der Abfassung der AP Androtion benutzt hat<sup>18</sup>.

Frankfurt/Main

EBERHARD RUSCHENBUSCH

<sup>18</sup> S. KEANEY *Historia* 19 (1970) 326 ff.

### THE INTENTION OF ARISTOTLE'S 'RHETORIC'

At a time when Thomas Hobbes had decided that Aristotle was »the worst teacher that ever was«, he could still say: »but his rhetorique and discourse of animals was rare«<sup>1</sup>. It may be doubted whether many today would agree with this judgment. In spite of the fact that the authority of Aristotle carries greater weight in the contemporary study of rhetoric than in any other current academic discipline, his 'Rhetoric' is little read today by non-specialists, and it has been neglected to a remarkable degree by those interested in Aristotle's thought generally or in the history of moral and political ideas in antiquity<sup>2</sup>. This neglect certainly has something to do with the low estate of rhetoric in the contemporary world. Yet it also derives in part from a very generally shared view of the 'Rhetoric' as a compendium of rhetorical materials and techniques loosely framed by a theory of the nature of rhetoric which is in the last

<sup>1</sup> JOHN AUBREY, *Brief Lives*, ed. A. Clark (Oxford 1898) I, 357.

<sup>2</sup> No modern work has yet replaced the monumental if diffuse commentary of E. M. COPE, *The 'Rhetoric' of Aristotle* (Cambridge 1877). But a new edition of the 'Rhetoric', based on a thorough reexamination of the manuscript tradition, has recently appeared (R. KASSEL, *Aristotelis Ars Rhetorica* [Berlin 1976], with 'Der Text der aristotelischen Rhetorik' [Berlin 1971]); and there are other signs that the situation may now be changing. See particularly A. HELLWIG, *Untersuchungen zur Theorie der Rhetorik bei Platon und Aristoteles*, *Hypomnemata* 38 (Göttingen 1973), with the bibliography given there (11 – 17); also J. DE ROMILLY, *Magic and Rhetoric in Ancient Greece* (Cambridge, Mass. 1975) 47 – 75. The standard history of Greek rhetoric and rhetorical theory is that of GEORGE KENNEDY, *The Art of Persuasion in Greece* (Princeton 1963). For the place of Aristotle in recent discussions of rhetoric see, for example, *Contemporary Theories of Rhetoric*, ed. RICHARD L. JOHANNESSEN (New York 1971), especially 18 – 49.

analysis unrealistic or incoherent or both. To the extent that the 'Rhetoric' is regarded as a practical handbook of rhetorical techniques, it is seen as beneath philosophic concern; to the extent that it is regarded as theory, it is measured against the Platonic discussions of rhetoric or against Aristotle's own ethical and political works and found wanting.

This view has not gone entirely unchallenged. WILLIAM GRIMALDI has insisted on the necessity of treating the 'Rhetoric' as 'philosophy' and as an integral part of Aristotle's larger theoretical or philosophic enterprise. For him, »the object of Aristotle's treatise on rhetoric is ultimately an analysis of the nature of human discourse in all areas of knowledge«; and he believes that Aristotle succeeds in reconciling apparent tensions within the theory of rhetoric itself and between the theory and its practical applications<sup>3</sup>. But apart from the fact that GRIMALDI makes larger claims for this interpretation than his narrowly focused study (which is concerned almost entirely with Aristotle's understanding of the enthymeme and related technical questions) can readily support, he does not succeed in clarifying the sense in which the 'Rhetoric' can or must be understood as a work of philosophy in any tolerably precise meaning of that term. As a result, he never adequately accounts for the peculiarly hybrid character of the 'Rhetoric' as at once a theoretical treatise and a practical handbook, and he tends to lose sight of the fact that rhetoric as a whole is treated by Aristotle himself not as a form of philosophy or science strictly speaking but as an 'art' (τέχνη) or 'capacity' (δύναμις) directed to the satisfaction of certain human needs. Above all, he loses sight of the fact that rhetoric for Aristotle is not a pursuit of purely theoretical interest but rather one of the highest practical importance for the governance of republican political orders.

Why did Aristotle write a 'Rhetoric'? This question is so elementary that it is rarely asked; yet the answer is by no means self-evident. It is not sufficient to say that the subject interested him. Aristotle was not in the habit of producing technical treatises or handbooks. Of the extant or attested works of the Aristotelian corpus which can be said with some assurance to be genuine, only the 'Rhetoric' and the 'Poetics' can claim to be concerned with 'arts' in some commonly accepted sense of the term. It cannot be accidental that rhetoric and poetry are precisely the arts or pursuits that had been criticized by Plato as the most powerful and dangerous intellectual competitors of philosophy in the education of political men. Regardless of the exact nature of Aristotle's relationship to Plato's attacks on rhetoric in the 'Gorgias' and the 'Phaedrus' and on poetry in the 'Republic', it seems highly probable that his

<sup>3</sup> WILLIAM M. A. GRIMALDI, *Studies in the Philosophy of Aristotle's 'Rhetoric'*, *Hermes Einzelschriften* 25 (Wiesbaden 1972) 1, 15 – 17 and passim. See also ANTONIO RUSSO, *La filosofia della retorica in Aristotele* (Naples 1962).

preoccupation with these two arts reflects a view of their practical significance which is not very different from the view of Plato. The fact that Aristotle undertook to teach rhetoric while still a member of the Platonic Academy cannot be plausibly explained with reference merely to a personal rivalry with Isocrates<sup>4</sup>. It almost certainly reflected a recognition by Plato and his pupil of the strength of the influence of the rhetorically-dominated education championed by Isocrates and the sophists and the dangers it posed both for philosophy and for politics, and of the need to provide an alternative education in rhetoric for political men that would be less subject to these dangers<sup>5</sup>.

If Aristotle's preoccupation with rhetoric in his early years was in some measure practically motivated, does it not make sense to assume that the same is true of the definitive version of his rhetorical doctrines composed during his final period in Athens? Or had Aristotle's reaction against his intellectual heritage proceeded by then to the point that he had become indifferent to these Platonic quarrels – or, indeed, had in the decisive respects joined the enemy camp? The latter, at any rate, is the widely accepted interpretation of the 'Rhetoric' first proposed by FRIEDRICH SOLMSEN in the wake of WERNER JAEGER's hypothetical reconstruction of Aristotle's intellectual development<sup>6</sup>. More precisely, SOLMSEN argues that the 'Rhetoric' actually represents an amalgam of writings from both periods of Aristotle's activity in Athens, though with a preponderance of material from the later period – and that the fact of amalgamation sufficiently explains the apparent doctrinal inconsistencies which have troubled many readers of Aristotle's treatise.

I agree with GRIMALDI against SOLMSEN that Aristotle's treatise is fundamentally coherent in doctrine and unified in structure. Yet I believe that the only way to show this in convincing fashion is by acknowledging rather than denying the existence of the anomalies and apparent inconsistencies in Aristotle's argument, and by showing that they are consistent with the

<sup>4</sup> Aristotle is supposed to have justified his lectures on this subject with the remark (parodying a line of Euripides): »It is base to remain silent and let Isocrates speak.« See Diogenes Laertius V. 3, Cicero 'De Oratore' III. 35, 141, Quintilian III. 1, 14.

<sup>5</sup> The fullest source for Aristotle's early rhetorical teaching is the hostile account of Philodemus' 'On Rhetoric' (Volumina Rhetorica, ed. S. SUDHAUS [Leipzig 1896] II, 50–64). Aristotle's lectures on rhetoric are said to have been given in the afternoon along with others that were intended for the public as distinguished from students of the school (Quintilian III. 1, 14; cf. Aulus Gellius XX. 5 and W. WIELAND, *Aristoteles als Rhetoriker und die exoterischen Schriften*, HERMES 86 [1958] 323–346). See generally A.-H. CHROUST, *Aristotle* (London 1973) I, 105–116.

<sup>6</sup> F. SOLMSEN, *Die Entwicklung der aristotelischen Logik und Rhetorik* (Berlin 1929). KENNEDY (82–83) accepts SOLMSEN's general thesis as 'certain'; but consider the detailed criticisms of R. TESSMER, *Untersuchungen zur aristotelischen Rhetorik* (Diss. Berlin 1957). Older discussions of the composition of the 'Rhetoric' have been collected in *Rhetorika: Schriften zur aristotelischen und hellenistischen Rhetorik*, ed. R. STARK (Hildesheim 1968).

intention informing the work as a whole. I shall suggest that Aristotle's argument can only be properly understood by assuming that the 'Rhetoric' is above all a practical book guided by a practical intention, or that the 'Rhetoric' is concerned less to elaborate a satisfactory theory of the nature of rhetoric than to effect a transformation of contemporary attitudes toward rhetoric. And I shall try to show that this transformation, so far from involving a radical break with the Platonic analysis of rhetoric, rather presupposes the essential correctness of that analysis.

### I.

The Socrates of Plato's 'Gorgias' had criticized rhetoric on two grounds: it is not a true 'art' based on knowledge and capable of giving a reasoned account of its own operation, but merely a certain facility deriving from familiarity and experience – a 'knack' (τριβή); and it is not directed toward improving those with whom it deals, but merely toward pleasing or flattering them to the ultimate advantage of the speaker. Rhetoric and sophistry are sham arts which together tend or attempt to usurp the place of the true art of politics<sup>7</sup>. In the 'Phaedrus', however, Plato had appeared to be open to the possibility of an improved rhetoric which would not be exposed to such objections. A true art of rhetoric, Plato there suggests, would be one based on genuine knowledge of the matters it is concerned with rather than mere familiarity with 'the probable' (τὸ εἰκός) as understood by the ignorant multitude; in addition, it would have available a knowledge of the human soul which would enable it to persuade more effectively, and perhaps also to serve as an instrument of moral improvement rather than of mere flattery<sup>8</sup>.

The very fact that Aristotle appears to acknowledge that rhetoric is or can be an art in the strict sense of the term is frequently taken as showing that he has already broken with the Platonic view in the decisive respect. How one ought to read the account of rhetoric provided by Socrates in the context of the highly polemical discussion of the 'Gorgias' is not a question that can be taken up here<sup>9</sup>; but it is too often forgotten that the Plato of the 'Phaedrus' appears much more inclined to entertain the claim of rhetoric or of the right kind of rhetoric to be considered an art<sup>10</sup>. As regards the second of Plato's

<sup>7</sup> 'Gorgias' 463 a – 465 e.

<sup>8</sup> 'Phaedrus' 269 a – 274 b (the suggestion that rhetoric can inculcate 'virtue' occurs at 270 b 7 – 9). On Plato's view generally see HELLMIG 24 – 42, 72 – 105.

<sup>9</sup> Consider the interpretation offered by Quintilian (II. 15, 23 – 32).

<sup>10</sup> At the same time, it should perhaps not be too quickly assumed that rhetoric is simply an art for Aristotle. According to Quintilian (II. 17, 14 = Aristotle fr. 69 ROSE), Aristotle argued against the view that rhetoric is an art in the dialogue 'On Rhetoric or Gryllos', which was apparently composed at the time that he was lecturing on rhetoric in the Academy (see the account of CHROUST, II, 29 – 42). In the 'Rhetoric' itself, Aristotle limits himself to the remark

criticisms, it is usually held that one of Aristotle's primary concerns in the 'Rhetoric' is to vindicate rhetoric as a morally and politically respectable pursuit. »Rhetoric is a counterpart to dialectic«, Aristotle tells us at the very beginning of the book. Rhetoric is evidently not, as Plato had seemed to suggest, a 'counterpart' to sophistry<sup>11</sup>: not an unscrupulous appeal to the passions and the uninformed opinions of the mass but the reasoned presentation of reasonable arguments appears to be the core of rhetoric as Aristotle understands it. Characteristically, Aristotle rejects the definition of rhetoric as the 'artificer of persuasion' that was associated with Isocrates and the sophists. For Aristotle, the proper 'function' (ἔργον) of an art of rhetoric is not to persuade but to »see the available means of persuasion in each instance« (ἰδεῖν τὰ ὑπάρχοντα πιθανὰ περὶ ἕκαστον, 1355 b10–11). Rhetoric is to be viewed, it seems, less as a practical art than as a kind of science. What is crucial is to attain a proper understanding of the possibilities of persuasion in a given situation; whether the speech constructed in accordance with this understanding has any effect on its audience is an incidental consideration from the point of view of rhetorical art strictly speaking.

However, Aristotle's argument is not without its ambiguities. In fact, it is precisely on this fundamental point that the 'Rhetoric' is regularly charged with contradiction and incoherence. It is above all in the first chapter of the 'Rhetoric' that Aristotle stands forth as a defender of the respectability of rhetoric, in theory if not in practice. He begins by upbraiding the authors of previous handbooks of rhetoric for their failure to discuss the only truly artful part of rhetoric: »For proofs are the only artful thing [ἔντεχνον], the rest is supplementary; but they say nothing about enthymemes, the body of the proof, and instead concern themselves with what is outside the matter at hand; for slander and pity and anger and such passions of the soul do not concern the matter at hand, but rather the judge« (1354a 13–18).

that »it is possible to examine the cause of people succeeding through familiarity or chance« in speaking persuasively, »and all would agree this is the work of an art« (1354 a 9–11). But he does not say that the causes of persuasive speech are uniformly susceptible to being taught as an art, and it is conceivable that the most effective causes of persuasive speech are in fact not susceptible to being so taught. In the third book, we discover that of the parts of rhetoric 'delivery' (ὑπόκρισις) has »very great power« in spite of the fact that »being skilled in delivery belongs to nature and is lacking in artfulness« (1404 a15–16); and that while metaphor is the »most powerful« of the elements of style, metaphorical invention »cannot be learned from another« or is a natural talent (1405 a 4–10; cf. 'Poetics' 1459 a 5–8). One should at least consider the possibility that rhetoric for Aristotle is finally less an art properly speaking than a non-teachable 'knack' which derives from natural talent and 'experience' or familiarity rather than knowledge. Cf. Plato 'Phaedrus' 269 d, Cicero 'De Oratore' II, 57, 232, Quintilian II, 17, 1–15, 19.

<sup>11</sup> 'Gorgias' 465 c 4–5. At 465 d 7–e1, Plato calls rhetoric the 'counterpart' (ἀντίστροφος) to cookery.

Current rhetoricians, in their concentration on swaying their audience by appealing to the passions, have failed entirely to grasp the proper objects of the rhetorical art, and they have acted in a way that can only be described as morally and politically reprehensible. A forensic rhetoric that appeals directly to the passions of the judges is prohibited in well-governed states, and rightly so, according to Aristotle: »One ought not to pervert the judge by inducing him to feel anger or pity or fear – this is as if one were to make crooked the measure one intended to use« (1354a21 – 26). The primary concern of the orator should rather be the truth of the matter under consideration, or probabilities which approach strict or scientific truth as closely as possible given the uncertainties inherent in the matters with which rhetoric deals. »For the true and what is similar to the true belong to the same capacity to see, and at the same time men are by nature sufficiently directed to the true and for the most part hit on the truth« (1355a14 – 17). While the orator should be able to prove both sides of an issue, it remains the case that »the things that are true and naturally better are more susceptible to reasoned argument [εὐσυλλογιστότερα] and more persuasive, generally speaking« (1355a36 – 37).

As Aristotle proceeds, however, this picture is, to say the least, substantially qualified. In the second chapter, where he undertakes to define rhetoric again »as if from the beginning« (1355b23 – 24) and to set forth the elements of the rhetorical art in a systematic way, we learn that there are three types of 'artful proofs' (ἐντεχνοὶ πίστεις): those connected with the 'character' of the speaker, those involved in »disposing the hearer in a certain way« by affecting his passions, and those provided in the speech itself »through demonstrating or appearing to demonstrate«. Proofs from the character of the speaker, like the demonstrative proofs or enthymemes referred to previously, had been neglected by professional rhetoricians, Aristotle notes, in spite of the fact that »character affords, so to speak, the most decisive proof«. As for proofs from passion, Aristotle remarks only that »it is with a view to this alone that the current authors of handbooks undertake to treat the subject« (1356a1 – 20). Arguments – arguments on the facts of the matter alone – are then evidently not enough. Rhetoric must indeed appeal to the passions. Indeed, rhetoric must be able to appeal to the passions in more serious and systematic fashion than had previously been the case. For as we learn in the second book of the 'Rhetoric', the study of the passions, far from being a merely ancillary element of rhetorical education, is central to it. Aristotle follows the lead of the Plato of the 'Phaedrus' in anchoring rhetoric to a systematic – though not fully theoretical – study of psychology<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> Aristotle's reliance on Plato in this respect is emphasized in the detailed discussion of HELLWIG (178 – 250). That the psychological knowledge required of the student of rhetoric is not theoretical or scientific in the strict sense is, however, relatively clear: the definitions of the

Nor is this all. If Aristotle's concession to the passions permits one to wonder whether for him men are indeed »by nature sufficiently directed to the true«, it will later appear that the orator's audience is of such a kind as to be »incapable of surveying many things at once or of reasoning at length«, so that he is compelled for practical purposes to base his arguments immediately on »matters of common opinion« (ἐνδοξα, 1357 a 2 – 13). Indeed, »the whole business of rhetoric looks toward opinion« (ἄλλης οὔσης πρὸς δόξαν τῆς πραγματείας τῆς περὶ τὴν ῥητορικὴν, 1404 a 1 – 2): not truth but opinion – and opinion in the first instance of ordinary men or 'the many' – is the element of rhetoric. And precisely because truth or right cannot always prevail against opinion by its intrinsic persuasive force, rhetoric must admit to its arsenal, as it appears, not only arguments that are genuine conclusions from probable premises but also arguments that are only 'apparent' – that is, actually false – conclusions from such premises (1400 b 34 ff.; cf. 1356 a 1 – 4, 35 – b 4). It is with every sign of repugnance that Aristotle introduces into the 'Rhetoric' the subject of 'apparent enthymemes' or rhetorical fallacies: men were justly disgusted with Protagoras' claim to be able to »make the weaker argument the stronger«, we are told, for an argument of this kind is »a lie, not a true but an apparent probability, and exists in no other art but rhetoric and eristic« (1402 a 22 – 28). Yet he introduces it nonetheless; and if he intends expertise in proofs of this kind to be used only to expose the fallacies of less scrupulous opponents<sup>13</sup>, it must be said that this intention is hardly communicated in an emphatic manner. In the last analysis, it would seem, rhetoric for Aristotle has at least as much in common with eristic or sophistry as it does with dialectic.

## II.

What precisely is the relationship between rhetoric, dialectic and sophistry? Aristotle's most extended treatment of this question – the answer to which is by no means as clear as seems to be generally assumed – occurs at several places in the first few chapters of Book I. Near the end of the first chapter, Aristotle argues that it belongs to rhetoric »to see the persuasive and the apparently persuasive, just as it is within the scope of dialectic to see the syllogism and the apparent syllogism; for sophistry is not in the capacity but in the intention [προαίρεσει], the difference being that here one will be an orator whether according to the knowledge or according to the intention, while there one is a sophist according to the intention, but a dialectician not according to the intention but according to the capacity« (1355 b 16 – 21).

passions in the 'Rhetoric' are 'dialectical' definitions which are not derived from a scientific account of soul and its relation to body (compare Rhet. 1378 a 30 – 32 and ff. with De An. 403 a 16 – b 16). <sup>13</sup> As is assumed, for example, by GRIMALDI (94 – 95).



Both rhetoric and dialectic properly incorporate a knowledge of forms of fallacious reasoning (the apparent enthymeme and the apparent syllogism respectively). The orator and the dialectician both possess the capacity or the knowledge to employ such reasoning; indeed, it is the ability to »prove opposites« which most clearly distinguishes rhetoric and dialectic from other arts or sciences (1355 a 29 – 36). In the case of dialectic, the deliberate use of fallacious reasoning is sophistry, and the dialectician who so employs it by that fact is or becomes a sophist. As Aristotle makes clear elsewhere, the concern of the dialectician as dialectician is the (probable) truth. To the extent that a dialectician departs from this concern – for example, from a desire for intellectual victory – his 'intention' is no longer that of a dialectician properly speaking but rather of a sophist<sup>14</sup>.

What, then, of the case of rhetoric? Is Aristotle's point merely the semantic one that there is no specific term to designate the sophistical orator? Is it really the case that Aristotle recognizes »a spurious fallacious branch of rhetoric, corresponding to the theory of fallacies . . . in dialectics«<sup>15</sup>? This would make sense if it were the case that for Aristotle »rhetorical discourse is discourse directed toward knowing« or toward »the demonstration of the true«<sup>16</sup>. But such a view cannot be sustained. Aristotle never loses sight of the fact that rhetoric is directed toward persuasion, or that the audience it must persuade is one that is not simply open to rational argument or to the truth. »Human nature is enslaved in many ways«<sup>17</sup>. For Aristotle, the human concern for the truth is obstructed or obscured by passion and by the opinions that are bred by passion. It is for this reason that the orator who employs apparent enthymemes does not cease to be an orator properly speaking. The use of fallacious reasoning is not a conspicuous part of Aristotle's art of rhetoric, but it is a part of it nevertheless. This is why Aristotle can say at a later point in Book I: »Rhetoric is composed of the science of analytic on the one hand and on the other of political science insofar as it is concerned with character, and it resembles in part dialectic and in part sophistical arguments« (1359 b 9 – 12). Rhetoric is the 'counterpart' at once of dialectic and of sophistry.

What is the ground of the difference between rhetoric and dialectic? Aristotle reveals it by implication in the passage just cited: while dialectic is genuinely universal in its subject matter, rhetoric is for practical purposes limited to the subject of politics. It is limited to the subject of politics precisely because its primary purpose is the practical one of persuading men in law courts and public assemblies. This practical purpose also determines the other salient characteristics of rhetoric. To paraphrase the interpretation of Aristotle's view that is provided by Alexander of Aphrodisias: rhetoric is

<sup>14</sup> Consider 'Topics' 101 a 25 – b 4, 'Soph. El.' 165 a 19 – 31.

<sup>15</sup> E. M. COPE, *An Introduction to Aristotle's 'Rhetoric'* (Cambridge 1867) 148.

<sup>16</sup> GRIMALDI 85.      <sup>17</sup> 'Metaph.' 982 b 29 – 30.

political, expository and concerned with particulars, while dialectic is universal, conversational and concerned with general questions<sup>18</sup>. Rhetoric is the method of communication of political men. More precisely, it is the method of communication of the political elite with the political mass, 'the many'; its character is determined above all by the requirements of persuading the mass. Dialectic, on the other hand, is the method of communication of philosophers. According to Aristotle, dialectic has three uses: for intellectual training, for conversing, and for investigating the principles of the sciences<sup>19</sup>. One may say that dialectic is the method of communication of philosophers both with one another and with the political elite<sup>20</sup>.

Such a view of the character and purpose of rhetoric, while not explicitly developed by Aristotle anywhere in the 'Rhetoric', appears nevertheless to be assumed by him throughout. It will have been noticed that the sophistic aspect of rhetoric is adumbrated, if not fully stated, in a passage within the first chapter. A careful reading of that chapter can leave little doubt, I think, that the view of rhetoric implied in it is essentially congruent with the view assumed throughout the rest of the 'Rhetoric'<sup>21</sup>. Aristotle does not maintain for long the sanguine notion that the average juror constitutes a standard of objective judgment with which the orator should not be allowed to tamper. It is rather the case that »it is easier to find one or a few sensible men who are capable of legislating and judging than many«, and that friendship, enmity and private interest frequently affect jurors or assemblymen in such a way that »they are no longer capable of discerning sufficiently what is true, but their judgment is clouded by private pleasure or pain« (1354 a 31 – b 11). Somewhat later, Aristotle undertakes to defend the utility of rhetoric on the grounds that, »the true and the just things being by nature stronger [χρειότερον] than their opposites«, it is a matter of blame for their supporters if they do

<sup>18</sup> Alexander, 'In Top.' I pr. (CAG II<sup>2</sup> 5, 7 – 16 WALLIES). Alexander's distinctions are not intended to be sharp ones: the orator is »particularly concerned with politics« (περὶ τὴν πολιτικὴν μᾶλλον, 5, 11 – 12) but is not in principle restricted to politics, and may deal with subjects such as medicine, philosophy and music (4, 11 – 15).

<sup>19</sup> 'Topics' 101 a 25 – b 4.

<sup>20</sup> Aristotle indicates that the second use of dialectic applies to conversations with 'the many' ('Topics' 101 a 30 – 34; cf. 'Rhet.' 1355 a 26 – 29); but he appears to understand this term in contradistinction to the philosophic elite (»the wise« – cf. 'Topics' 100 b 21 – 23) rather than to the political elite. The distinction between a 'demonstrative' class (the philosophic elite), a 'dialectical' class (the political and theological elite) and a 'rhetorical' class (the people) is prominent in Islamic Aristotelianism; see, for example, Averroes, Decisive Treatise 19 – 21 MÜLLER (Medieval Political Philosophy, ed. R. LERNER and M. MAHDI [Ithaca 1972] 180 – 181).

<sup>21</sup> It may be added that SOLMSEN'S view (213 ff.) that the first chapter is a survival of Aristotle's youthful lectures on rhetoric is in any case intrinsically implausible: Aristotle's revision of an introduction can be expected to have been the first order of business in any reworking of old material. Cf. HELLWIG 107 – 108, who attempts to account for the 'ideal' view of rhetoric presented in this chapter as a 'Gedankenexperiment'.

not prevail. But this is to suggest that the true and just things are not always stronger than their opposites in fact, or that there are indeed circumstances under which rhetoric must be able to »make the weaker argument the stronger«. Furthermore, it is not knowledge in the strict sense but 'common matters' (τὰ κοινά) which must serve as the basis for persuasion, for there are men whom it is impossible to instruct through an argument that accords with knowledge or science; these men are, it would seem, most men, or 'the many' (1355 a 21 – 29). To repeat, rhetoric must take its bearings from probability as ordinary men conceive it, or from common opinion.

In chapter 1, Aristotle defines the function of rhetoric as »seeing the available means of persuasion in each instance«. This definition is criticized by Quintilian on the ground that it »embraces nothing other than invention, which, without delivery [*elocutio*], does not constitute oratory [*oratio*]«<sup>22</sup>. Aristotle himself was not unaware of this difficulty. In the third book of the 'Rhetoric', he does justice, if reluctantly, to the importance of style (λέξις) in oratory and of delivery (ὑπόκρισις) as a subdivision of style. As he puts it there, delivery in particular is rightly considered a vulgar matter: »the just thing is for the contest to be joined on the basis of the facts alone, so that everything apart from demonstration is superfluous; all the same, this has great power . . . on account of the depravity of the audience«. Because »the whole business of rhetoric looks toward opinion« or toward appearances (πρὸς δόξαν), delivery must be made a concern of the student of rhetoric – not as a matter of right, but as a necessity (1403 b 35 – 4 a 8). Aristotle indicates that the importance of delivery for oratory is a relatively late development, connected with the political corruption caused, as it seems, by the gradual democratization of Greek or Athenian political life – that is, by the increasing predominance in politics of 'the many' at the expense of the educated elite<sup>23</sup>. Yet he does not for that reason deny delivery, or style generally, a place in the art of rhetoric as such. It is finally the 'necessity' of persuasion and nothing else which defines for Aristotle the nature of rhetoric.

<sup>22</sup> Quintilian II. 15, 13.

<sup>23</sup> That the text at 'Rhet.' 1403 b 34 – 35 indeed speaks of »the depravity of the regimes [πολιτειῶν]« (the reading of the mss.) and not »the depravity of the citizens [πολιτῶν]« (the conjecture of SPENGLER, adopted by ROSS) has been argued by M. LOSSAU, *μοχθηρία τῶν πολιτειῶν und ὑπόκρισις*. *Zu Arist. 'Rhet.'* 3, 1, 1403 b 33 f., *RhM* 114 (1971) 146 – 158. It has sometimes failed to be recognized (as, for example, in the translations of J. H. FREESE and of DUFOUR and WARTELLE) that Aristotle's remark at 1403 b 18 – 22 refers not to the argument of the 'Rhetoric' itself but to an actual historical development: in the beginning – that is, prior to the rise of extreme democracy and the coincidental development by Gorgias of a rhetorical style heavily dependent on poetry (1404 a 20 – 28) – what was sought in oratory in the first place was »what comes first by nature, the facts themselves and how persuasiveness can be derived from them«.

The fact that the definition of rhetoric provided by Aristotle in the first several chapters of the 'Rhetoric' does not appear to leave room for the material treated in its third book has led some to argue that this book did not originally form part of the 'Rhetoric' but constituted a separate treatise<sup>24</sup>. It is true that Aristotle nowhere specifically indicates in the first two books of the 'Rhetoric' that he will later treat the matters discussed in the third. Yet is it so clear that the early definitions of rhetoric are in fact meant to exclude the two subdivisions of the art – style and order – discussed in the third book, as Quintilian as well as contemporary commentators seem generally to assume? Propriety of style certainly appears to be an integral element of »the available means of persuasion« by the fact that it supports or enhances the persuasiveness of the three kinds of proofs discussed in the earlier books (1408a10–36; consider particularly 19–20 *πιθανοῖ δὲ τὸ πρᾶγμα καὶ ἡ οἰκεία λέξις*).

### III.

Yet all of this only begs the fundamental question. The interpretation I have offered only sharpens the tension between different elements of Aristotle's argument; what must now be done is to account for this tension. Why is Aristotle's presentation of his view of the nature of rhetoric so incompletely stated and so productive of confusion and misunderstanding?

Without wishing wholly to deny the possibility of compositional anomalies, I believe the argument of the 'Rhetoric' develops as it does fundamentally because Aristotle so intended it. I believe, in other words, that Aristotle's presentation is governed by a conscious desire to emphasize what one may call the highminded view of rhetoric, while deemphasizing as far as possible or dissociating himself from those aspects of rhetoric which he considered low and potentially dangerous, yet necessary for effective persuasion. Aristotle chooses to emphasize the logical or intellectual component of rhetoric not merely because it had been largely neglected by his predecessors, but also because he regarded such an emphasis as intellectually and politically salutary. Aristotle's initial comparison of rhetoric to dialectic is misleading or provisional not only through its silence regarding the sophistic element in rhetoric, but also through its obfuscation of the connection between rhetoric and politics. Yet the provisional assimilation of rhetoric to dialectic serves the important purpose of conferring on rhetoric a dignity capable of engaging the

<sup>24</sup> There is also some external evidence for this view: the catalogue of Aristotelian works preserved in Diogenes Laertius (V. 22 ff.) seems to list our 'Rhetoric' as a work in two books, and also mentions a separate treatise 'On Style' in two books. Yet whatever the history of the third book, its authenticity and its essential congruence with the teaching of the earlier books seem no longer seriously disputed. See, for example, M. DUFOUR and A. WARTELLE, *Aristote: 'Rhétorique' III* (Paris 1972) 5–22.

attention of men of intellectual and moral seriousness, and of ensuring that such men are encouraged to view rhetoric, not as an instrument of personal aggrandizement in the sophistic manner, but rather as an instrument of responsible and prudent statesmanship.

It is above all in his handling of the question of the relation between rhetoric and politics that Aristotle reveals his intention. As he gradually makes clear in the course of the first four chapters, the assimilation of rhetoric to dialectic is intended both to dignify rhetoric and to limit it. As soon as it emerges that rhetoric is at least as concerned with the 'proofs' deriving from the orator's character and the passions of his audience as with the facts themselves and the proofs deriving from them, Aristotle informs us that »rhetoric is a sort of offshoot of dialectic and of the study of characters, which may justly be called political science [πολιτική]«. He then adds: »It is for this reason that rhetoric and those laying claim to it adopt the dress [ὑποδύεται ὑπὸ τὸ σχῆμα] of political science, partly through want of education, partly through boastfulness, partly through other all-too-human causes« (1356a 25 – 30)<sup>25</sup>. This assertion becomes less surprising as we discover that rhetoric and politics have much more in common than a concern with human character and passion. For in spite of the fact that rhetoric and dialectic are initially presented as arts or pursuits uniquely lacking a specific subject matter, Aristotle makes clear that rhetoric differs from dialectic above all by its concern with political matters. That rhetoric is susceptible of being confused with political science or of usurping the place of political science is, from Aristotle's point of view, a fact of the highest importance. When Aristotle undertakes at the end of the 'Nicomachean Ethics' to lay the foundations for a science of politics, he remarks that such a science has never been elaborated or transmitted by political men, while the sophists who claim to teach it are in fact ignorant of what it is and what sorts of things it is concerned with, for otherwise »they would not have treated it as identical with rhetoric or subordinate to it, and they would not have supposed it is easy to legislate by making collections of the most renowned laws«<sup>26</sup>. Rhetoric as taught by the sophists is a serious and dangerous rival of political science as taught by Aristotle. Worse, by encouraging the supposition that the exercise of political responsibility is easy or requires little substantive knowledge beyond rhetorical expertise itself, rhetoric as taught by the sophists tends to make men oblivious of the very need for a science of politics.

It is in the context of this rivalry between rhetoric and political science that one must consider Aristotle's attempted resolution of the problem of the

<sup>25</sup> The verbal and substantive echo of Plato's 'Gorgias' (464 c 7 – d1 ὑποδύσα . . . ὑπέδου) has often been remarked.

<sup>26</sup> 'Eth. Nic.' 1180 b 35 – 81 a 17.

source and character of the knowledge proper to rhetorical art<sup>27</sup>. Fundamental to this attempt is the distinction – original with Aristotle himself, according to his own emphatic assertion (1358a 2–3) – between the 'common' and the 'specific' topics which together supply material for all rhetorical syllogisms. The common topics or 'commonplaces' belong to no single art or science; the specific topics fall within the sphere of a specific art or science such as physics or politics. The orator as orator must have a familiarity with specific topics; yet it seems he will not, and need not, possess genuine knowledge of the matters dealt with by these topics. At the same time, »in proportion as one is better at selecting these, he will inadvertently practice a science other than dialectic and rhetoric, for if he encounters first principles it will no longer be dialectic or rhetoric but the science which has the principles« (1358a 23–26). Somewhat later, in the course of his discussion of the subjects generally treated in deliberative rhetoric, Aristotle makes the following statement: »There is no need at present to seek to enumerate singly or accurately or to grasp in their specifics the things men are accustomed to consult about, or again to define these matters as far as possible in accordance with the truth, since this belongs not to the rhetorical art but to one that is wiser and more genuine [ἐμφρονεστέρα καὶ μᾶλλον ἀληθινῆ], and since much more has been granted it even now than belongs among its proper objects of study . . . But in proportion as one attempts to establish this or dialectic, not as capacities but as sciences, he will inadvertently destroy their nature in thus altering them by turning them into sciences whose objects are definite things and not only arguments« (1359b 2–16).

This statement is intended to correct the fundamental sophistic error of identifying or subordinating political science to rhetoric. Not political science but rhetoric is to be the subordinate art; it is to be subordinate because it is essentially incomplete or requires supplementation by genuine knowledge of political things. Aristotle's art of rhetoric is designed to counter the tendency of sophistic rhetoric or of rhetoric simply to emancipate itself from the tutelage of political science and to absorb and finally destroy political science. Aristotle assimilates rhetoric to dialectic or to logic in order to emphasize its purely instrumental role and its substantive incompleteness, and thereby to make rhetoric safe for politics.

The ultimate intention of the 'Rhetoric' is, then, not so much to transform the practice of rhetoric as to transform the theoretical or conceptual understanding of rhetoric by political men. Aristotle is concerned above all to show rhetoric can become an instrument of political prudence or of a political science which educates to prudence. Indeed, Aristotle's art of rhetoric can afford to incorporate sophistic or morally questionable elements precisely

<sup>27</sup> Cf. HELLWIG 79–82.

because it is finally in the service of a political science which is centrally concerned with the education of political men in moral virtue and in that variety of prudence which is inseparable from moral virtue. In this fundamental respect, Aristotle remains, I believe, an authentic expounder of the Platonic view of the nature of rhetoric. For the fundamental issue between the sophistic and the philosophic conception of rhetoric concerns not so much the morality of rhetoric as the claim of rhetoric to the status of an autonomous art or science. If Plato and Aristotle disagree in their view of the character of that science of politics to which rhetoric must be subordinated, they are in fundamental agreement on the need for such subordination<sup>28</sup>.

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<sup>28</sup> The author wishes to thank the National Endowment for the Humanities and the White Burkett Miller Center of Public Affairs of the University of Virginia for generous support in the preparation of this paper.

## DIE KRITIK DES HORAZ AN LUCILIUS IN DEN SATIREN I 4 UND I 5

*Viktor Pöschl zum siebzigsten Geburtstag*

Wer die Dichtung der Römer verstehen will, muß sich immer die Fülle der Voraussetzungen gegenwärtig halten, durch die diese Dichtung geprägt ist – die lateinische Sprache, das römische Publikum, die Vorbilder aus der griechischen Literatur, die theoretische Reflexion über das Dichten bei den Griechen, bei Philosophen und Gelehrten, schließlich auch die Ansätze zu theoretischen Überlegungen, wie sie sich bei den Römern selbst finden<sup>1</sup>. Nirgends glaubt man die Theorie in der Dichtung deutlicher und unmittelbarer zu fassen als bei Horaz, der nicht nur in der späten *Epistula ad Pisones* viele Fragen der Poetik aufgreift und auf seine Weise erörtert<sup>2</sup>, sondern auch in der Satire selbst über die Satire spricht<sup>3</sup> – ein Glücksfall, so könnte man meinen, wenn ein Autor

<sup>1</sup> Zu Lucilius, aber auch zu den Ansätzen bei anderen römischen Dichtern vgl. W. KRENKEL, Zur literarischen Kritik bei Lucilius, *WissZeitschr Rostock* 7, 1957 – 1958, ges.u.sprachw. Reihe, 249, – 282, wieder abgedruckt in: D. KORZENIEWSKI (ed.), *Die römische Satire*, Darmstadt 1970, 161 – 266; G. M. A. GRUBE, *The Greek and Roman Critics*, London 1965.

<sup>2</sup> Vgl. *BollStudLat* 1, 1971, 402 – 418.

<sup>3</sup> Zu sat. I 4 s. *MusAfr* 6, 1977/78, 15 – 20.