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RHETORIC AND PHILOSOPHY IN THE AGE OF THE SECOND SOPHISTIC. REAL CONFLICT OR FIGHT FOR CONTROVERSY?

The tension between the two dominant educational disciplines, rhetoric and philosophy, has been a phenomenon of much relevancy in ancient literature ever since the time of Plato. The question of the problematic relationship between the two professions in the era of the so-called Second Sophistic has received much scholarly attention recently, nevertheless, some questions still remain unanswered. This article discusses to what extent, if at all, any strict boundaries exist between rhetoric and philosophy of this era. The evidence material includes mainly the works of Roman representatives of the Second Sophistic movement – Apuleius, Aulus Gellius and Marcus Cornelius Fronto; the Platonic corpus and works of Greek authors are used, as well, to complete the image. These suggest that if there actually is any sign of antagonism between the two disciplines, it has to be perceived as highly artificial and under the influence of the contemporary requirements. The need to provoke a reaction could be another strong motivation of these texts, since any kind of controversy was crucial to the self-presentation of anyone who pursued a career in rhetoric or philosophy. Eventually, there are aspects indicating that rhetoric and philosophy cooperated to anchor the position of the privileged elite as opposed to the new threat of democratization of educational institutions.

Key words: rhetoric, philosophy, Second Sophistic, *παιδευμένοι*, *grammatici*

The phenomenon of the first centuries AD, the so-called Second Sophistic, typically described as the age of revival of oratory and public speaking, in general, was also the time when the two most prominent ancient means of education – philosophy and rhetoric – reassessed their place in society. When examining various aspects of the contemporary society and literature, one cannot avoid asking the question of the relationship between the two disciplines.

The traditional view¹ still supported by most of the scholars is that from the time of Plato, there was a conflict between rhetoric and philosophy and

¹ This attitude seems to be implied indirectly by the scholars' selection of topics,

that the tension between the two disciplines was still present also in the late antiquity. Most recently, scholars begin to realize that in this era there is a strong tendency towards a blending of the two, e.g. Bowersock (2002) argues that though in the late antiquity philosophy and rhetoric did not contend to such an extent as in the time of Plato, there still was a strong opposition towards mutual blending of the two at the time; whereas Anderson (2003: 134f.) admits that “the two professions were never totally divorced from one another, either socially or intellectually”. Nevertheless, Karadimas’ (1996) strong focus is on the controversy between philosophy and rhetoric, whereas he does not even hesitate to exclude any possibility of their mutual overlapping. These diverse opinions confirm that it is a tricky business to make conclusions about anything concerning the question of the relationship between the two professions.² It seems that, whether the stress is put on the mutual blending of the two or conversely on the conflict areas and mutual invectives, the two professions are very often seen as antagonistic or at the least, competing with each other. Therefore, the arguments promoting the existence of a conflict between philosophy and rhetoric are still considered stronger than eventual counter-arguments.

The arguments to support the “well-known” animosity between Plato and the sophists which is considered to be the beginning of a long-standing controversy between philosophy and rhetoric, are most frequently drawn from Plato’s dialogues. As in the case of Socrates’ words in Plato’s *Gorgias*:³

ὁ ῥητορικὸς ... οὐκ εἰδώς, τί ἀγαθὸν ἢ τί κακὸν ἐστὶν ἢ τί καλὸν ἢ τί αἰσχρὸν ἢ δίκαιον ἢ ἄδικον, πειθὼ δὲ περὶ αὐτῶν μεμηχανημένος ὥστε δοκεῖν εἰδένααι οὐκ εἰδὼς.

Here, Socrates refutes the usefulness of the study of rhetoric by saying that rhetoricians have no idea what is good or bad; therefore, they cannot teach others how to live properly, which should imply that only philosophy can

approaches and points of view, as in Anderson (2003) and Bowersock (2002). The same approach is also discernible in Griswold (2012).

² Moreover, the classification of the representatives of the Second Sophistic as orators, sophists or philosophers is also problematic due to often misleading accounts in the works of ancient authors. Stanton (1973: 350ff.) questions the criteria of classification – should we base our interpretation on Philostratus’ portrayal in *Βίοι Σοφιστῶν*, or some other external source, or rather on how the intellectuals of the era classified themselves? Eshleman (2008: 395ff.) suggests that each of Philostratus’ reports has to be analysed critically, as his standards of evaluation were highly artificial and influenced by his personal academic commitments. The whole work, therefore, has to be regarded primarily as a text meant to promote and present Philostratus himself.

³ Pl. *Grg.* 459d.

meet these expectations. In another famous dialogue *Protagoras*,⁴ Plato describes the well-known orator as an impostor alluring young men to follow him, while his disciples are seen as enchanted fools comparable with animals bewildered by the sound of Orpheus' voice. As a matter of fact, these passages are written very suggestively, using all the rhetorical equipment to support the intended image.

But Plato himself provides us with a lot of evidence, which refutes these interpretations, or at least completes the overall view on the issue. The evidence supporting the idea of co-existence of the two therefore cannot be ignored – see e.g. another passage from the very same dialogue,⁵ where Socrates makes use of the old Homeric words and tries to persuade Protagoras to cooperate, saying: *σύν τε δύ' ἐρχομένω καί τε πρὸ ὁ τοῦ ἐνόησεν*, suggesting that the two professions should go together to pursue the common goal, that is to find the truth.⁶ Moreover, he very often uses sophistic methods to promote his own ideas and he does not avoid rhetorical embellishment, at all. The accounts of later ancient authors have to be taken into consideration, too. These demonstrate that they were not unaware of the putative incongruities in Plato's works and realized that the relationship between rhetoric and philosophy could not be further from black and white. In a work ascribed to Dionysius of Halicarnassus,⁷ a Greek teacher of rhetoric in Augustus' times, the author mentions Isocrates and Plato right next to each other, labelling both of them sophists. Moreover, in the same treatise he emphasizes that Plato himself paid a lot of attention to the stylistic quality of his works, referring to the well-known Plato's notebook with various versions of his *Πολιτεία*.⁸ Philostratus in the early 3rd century AD denies that Plato hated sophists:

*οὐδὲ ὁ θεσπέσιος Πλάτων τοῖς σοφισταῖς ἐβάσκηεν, εἰ καὶ σφόδρα ἐνίοις δοκεῖ τοῦτο, ἀλλὰ φιλοτίμως πρὸς αὐτοὺς εἶχεν.*⁹

⁴ Pl. *Prt.* 315a–b.

⁵ Pl. *Prt.* 348c–d.

⁶ Notice that Diogenes Laertios in his *Βίοι καὶ γνῶμαι τῶν ἐν φιλοσοφίᾳ εὐδοκμησάντων* (9.8.51–3) in one place speaks about Protagoras as one of the eminent philosophers who was the first to introduce the Socratic method of discussion; in another place, however, he calls him a sophist (9.8.56).

⁷ D. H. *Rh.* 25. For an in-depth discussion of Dionysius' views on literature and linguistics, see de Jonge (2008).

⁸ The same story is preserved in Quint. *Inst.* 8.6.64.

⁹ Phil. *Ep.* 1.73.

On the contrary, he respected them and eagerly emulated them, while being perfectly capable of adopting literary forms of the sophists and beating Gorgias, Protagoras or Hippias at their own tricks. After all, we should follow the example of Aelius Aristides here and not regard every Plato's word as an absolute truth. As he says, "it is right to respect the ancients but unworthy to be scared by them, unless we want to honour those famous for their ideas more than the ideas themselves".¹⁰ He goes even further and calls Plato a mere "slanderer",¹¹ and states that philosophy must not be dishonoured on the account of unjust men who claim to be philosophers, the same with oratory.¹² Plato also has to be perceived as any other member of the educated elite¹³ naturally denigrating his competitors, not an isolated castigator of sophistry. The supposed conflict between Plato and the first sophists stands on a very unsteady ground; consequently, also the conflict between rhetoric and philosophy could be considered rather a rivalry between the two most influential educational institutions/methods of the time – Plato's Academy and Isocrates' first academy of rhetoric in Cius,¹⁴ i.e. between sophistic *logos/mythos* and Socratic dialogue.¹⁵

But the most compelling arguments for the "conflict theory" usually arise from the correspondence of Marcus Aurelius and his former teacher Fronto. The famous passage, in which the young successor to the throne rejects the study of rhetoric on behalf of the more respectable philosophical studies, is frequently mentioned:

*Nam quod scribendum dedisti, ne paululum quidem operae ei, quamvis otiosus, dedisti ... Aristonis libra ... ostendunt, quantum ab his melioribus ingenium meum relictum sit, nimis quam saepe erubescit discipulus tuus sibi que suscenset, quod viginti quinque natus annos nihildum bonarum opinionum et puriorum rationum animo hauserim.*¹⁶

¹⁰ Aristid. *Or.* 2.11.

¹¹ Aristid. *Or.* 2.77.

¹² Aristid. *Or.* 2.259.

¹³ For further information on Aelius Aristides' view on Plato's dialogues, see the detailed study of Flinterman (2000–2001: 132ff.). Cf. also Maximus Tyrius' *Dissertationes* dealing with the literary quality of Plato's works.

¹⁴ Prusias on the Sea.

¹⁵ Of course, this would be too flattening to say about all of Plato's work, even though Isocrates probably was the one who first provoked Plato to express his own ideas in writing. However, it has to be stated that Plato moved on and found a way of his own. The complete history of the "conflict" is already sufficiently discussed by Kasulke (2005) in the first part of his study focusing on the supposed conflict between Marcus Aurelius and Fronto.

¹⁶ Fronto, *ad Marc. Caes.* 4.13, in Hout (1988: 67); in Haines (1919: I.214). The numbering differs in various editions of Fronto's correspondence; in this paper I use E.

Nevertheless, Kasulke (2005) convincingly shows that Marcus Aurelius still continued with the study of rhetoric and heard a lot of lectures of famous sophists,¹⁷ despite his increased interest in philosophy after he turned twenty-five (in 146 AD). Moreover, it has to be stated that a reversal to the other discipline was a typical phenomenon of the 2nd century AD, a *topos* used as a means of self-posture, not an evidence of any controversy between philosophy and rhetoric. To demonstrate this, let us have a look at Aulus Gellius' account of the practice in his *Noctes Atticae*.¹⁸ In one of the chapters, a renowned philosopher Taurus castigates a young man for turning from the pursuit of eloquence to the study of philosophy. However, he does not disapprove the fact itself, but the motivation and defence of the act – i.e. young man's justification that it was commonly done:

*At ille non ibat infitias fecisse, sed id solitum esse fieri defendebat turpitudinemque delicti exemplorum usu et consuetudinis venia deprecabatur.*¹⁹

This indicates the wide-spread use of such transitions among students. Not to speak about the fact that Marcus Aurelius never really criticized rhetoric itself; what always concerned him were rather flattery, corrupted manners and the court life, in general.²⁰ It was not the philosophy that brought him to his distaste; it was the loathing of these practices that lead him to the arms of philosophy. Kasulke also points out that there is no severe discussion between Fronto and M. Aurelius about the value of rhetoric or its place in the educational system, that Fronto does not impeach the importance of philosophy, he only assumes that there can be no philosophy without rhetoric and criticizes M. Aurelius' neglect of rhetorical norms. Similarly, M. Aurelius does not attack rhetoric itself, he merely prefers more austere style befitting the Stoic ideas, as opposed to Fronto's embroidered rhetorical style. This is apparent in Fronto's rhetorical advice to the young emperor even after the "turning point" in 146 AD:

Hauler's numbering from the Teubner edition published in 1919; on which van den Hout based his most recent Teubner edition published in 1988, where the numbering is based on pages. I also state Haines' Loeb edition which again uses its own numbering based on sections.

¹⁷ See Fronto *ad Marc. Caes.* 2.10, in Hout (1988, p. 29); in Haines (1919; I.116), 2.11, in Hout (1988: 30); in Haines (1919: I.140).

¹⁸ Cf. Lucian's claim (*Bis. Acc.* 30ff., *Nigr.* 1–5) that he himself made the transition to philosophy, which Anderson (2003: 134f.) regards to be mere conversion from making speeches to making dialogues.

¹⁹ Gell. 10.19.

²⁰ See Fronto *ad Marc. Caes.* 2.8 (28 van den Hout, 1.136 Haines).

*Cetera omnia tibi in eloquentia expolita et explorata sunt: scis verba quaerere, scis reperta recte collocare, scis colorem sincerem vetustatis appingere; sentiis autem gravissimis abun<das> ...*²¹

If there indeed was any conflict between Marcus Aurelius and Fronto, it was the conflict between different approaches to rhetoric, not between rhetoric and philosophy.

Other examples of conversions to the other discipline, various invectives and defences, either of oratory or philosophy, are sometimes added, too. These were frequent in late antiquity, but we have to keep in mind that they were usually rhetorical exercises highly influenced by the contemporary requirements, often meant to provoke any reaction of an opponent; therefore, they cannot be used as the sources of any predictive value on the matter of the relationship of philosophy and rhetoric. This is exactly what Karadimas (1996) does, when he examines the conflict between the two professions on the grounds of Aelius Aristides' *To Plato*, in *Defence of Oratory* (*Or.* 2–4) and Sextus Empiricus' invective against the rhetoricians called Πρὸς ῥητορικούς. Even if we ignored the reasons previously stated, there is still a fifty-year gap between the two works, which means that Sextus Empiricus' treatise cannot be regarded as an immediate reaction to Aelius' defence. Kasulke (2005: 17f.) rightly states that “terminologische Abgrenzungen der Berufsgruppen, Bekehrungen, offen ausgetragene Konflikte bzw. Debatten” have to be always taken into consideration when dealing with these sources.

Although no inexpugnable arguments can be found completely for or against the “conflict theory”, my aim is to demonstrate that there is an entirely diverse controversy behind the supposed and often exaggerated conflict between philosophy and rhetoric. In the times of Roman Republic, so-called *grammatici*, teachers who usually provided Roman citizens with the rhetoric training necessary for the civil life, had no big influence in the society, though their role in the education of young men was indispensable and only the richest families could afford to pay them. The possession of as good a teacher as possible was regarded the mark of social status of the elites and these slaves kept very strong bonds to a particular family even after gaining their freedom. However, already since the first century AD, the portents of a new revolution started to occur in the educational

²¹ Fronto *de Eloq.* 4.8–9, in Hout (1988: 148–51); in Haines (1919: 1.78–9). See also *de Eloq.* 4.5, Hout (1988: 146; in Haines (1919: II.72), in which Fronto considers Marcus' neglect of rhetoric to be a typical manner of the young who desert the study because of its tediousness, not due to any noble goals. Cf. M. Aurelius' thanksgiving (*Med.* 1.7) to the philosopher Quintus Rusticus for not letting him be led astray by empty theories and rhetorical exercises.

system, very much influencing the status of the educated elite. Suetonius informs us about the situation in *De grammaticis* where he speaks about the development of literary studies in Rome from the times when being a *grammaticus*²² was not a thing regarded honourable enough²³ up to the era of famous grammarians of poor origin winning their fame by teaching rhetoric. These educated *liberti*, so to speak “self-made men”, started to challenge the values of old aristocratic elites who claimed exclusive approach to the highest degree of education for themselves. When an edict was issued against *rhetores Latini* in 92 B.C., it was nothing else than the attempt of the representatives of old manners to limit the approach to elite education. Aulus Gellius, the 2nd century representative of educated elites *par excellence*, refers to three such incidents in Roman history, starting with the *senatusconsultum* in the consulship of C. Fannius Strabo and M. Valerius Messala (161 B.C.) issuing the expulsion of rhetoricians and philosophers from Rome, then the edict restraining activities of professional rhetoricians issued by Cn. Domitius Ahenobarbus and L. Licinius Crassus in 92 B.C. (stated below) and eventually, Domitian’s decree given in 89 AD, according to which the philosophers should be driven out of Rome:

... homines, qui novum gens disciplinae instituerunt, ad quos iuventus in ludum conveniat; eos sibi nomen inposuisse Latinos rhetoras ... Haec nova, quae praeter consuetudinem ac morem maiorum fiunt, neque placent, neque recta videntur.²⁴

The adjective *novum/nova* is of crucial importance in this edict, as anything new was viewed as a threat by the aristocratic elites who had no interest in any change of educational practice.²⁵ Yet, in the time of Second Sophistic, thanks to the newly educated professionals, also lower classes started to have access to a substantial degree of education, which subsequently enabled the faster advancement on the social scale. Moreover, these teachers started to exercise bigger influence on the system of education, often establishing professional schools of their own and teaching for high

²² In wider sense, *grammaticus* (originally called *litteratus*) was a teacher who instructed the student how to speak and write properly, but in the narrower sense the term was used to denote professional (= paid) teachers of lower rank usually teaching the elementary, artless skills to the less prominent students, writing commentaries, grammatical precepts etc.; often with pejorative nuances. See “grammaticus”, *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*.

²³ Suet. *Gram.* 1: *Grammatica Romae ne in usu quidem olim, nedum in honore ullo erat...* See also Sen. *Con.* 2 praef. 5: *...turpe erat docere quod honestum erat discere.*

²⁴ Gell. 15.11.

²⁵ For further information on the educational traditions created in the time of Roman Republic, see Corbeill (2001: 261ff.).

prices. Therefore, their status at this time was in fact already very far from dishonourable, although the social stigma of humble origins still survived in preserved texts of elite authors.²⁶ What was challenged here was not only the restricted access to the highest degree of education as the means of securing social status, but also the whole aristocratic way of life, the concept of Ciceronian *otium litteratum*.²⁷ The significance of this concept is emphasized by Ker (2004: 216f.), who points out that “there was a strong tendency to see a person’s use of time as an indicator of his or her moral and social identity”. For a good gentleman, it was essential to spend his free time by intellectual activities, and the more ivory-towered they were, the more prestige they brought. In addition, Swain (1996: 29f.) holds the language of the educated elites to be their “badge, because it particularly showed the possession of wealth and leisure”.²⁸ To illustrate this point, let us have a look at the works of prominent scholars of the time, namely Aulus Gellius, Marcus Cornelius Fronto and Apuleius.

Aulus Gellius shows only contempt when speaking about professional schooling and never fails to demonstrate his disgust with those newcomers who dare “brag” their competence as scholars.²⁹ He does not even mention any of the famous contemporary teachers, at all (e.g. Remmius Palaemon, Orbilius, Statilius Maximus³⁰ or Caecilius Epirota); on the contrary, he does not forget to promote the famous aristocratic scholars of the time as e.g. Herodes Atticus, Favorinus etc. There are no politicians or officials among his “celebrities”, only professional intellectuals, so-called *πεπαιδευμένοι*, are highlighted. All others are scorned for their lack of competence, ignorance, limited or insufficient education, excessive self-confidence or too rigid adherence to grammatical rules.³¹ Gellius’ work is full of exposure

²⁶ This paradoxical situation is well expressed in Sen. *Con.* 2 praef. 5:... *turpe erat docere quod honestum erat discere*.

²⁷ Cic. *Sest.* 45, *Tusc.* 1.5, off. 3.1–4; Sall. *Cat.* 4. For the contrast of *otium doctum* and *intemperies Trimalchionis*, see Beall (1999: 55ff.).

²⁸ See also Veblen’s (1899 [2007]) well-known sociological study *The Theory of the Leisure Class*. Although dealing with the American society in the 19th century, he applies his observations, especially the concept of the so-called *conspicuous consumption*, also to the elite circles of late antiquity. See also Bourdieu’s (1984) concept of “symbolic capital”.

²⁹ Gell. 4.1, 11.1, 13.21, 15.9, 15.11, 16.6, 16.7, 17.5.

³⁰ For the role of Statilius Maximus, the contemporary of Gellius and Fronto, in the educational process of lower classes, see Zetzel (1974: 107ff.).

³¹ This approach is foreshadowed even in Gellius’ programmatic preface to his *Noctes Atticae*, in which he lays himself out to differentiate himself from those superficially educated who are aiming at mere quantity.

scenes, when Gellius or some other “truly” educated man of letters discloses a false scholar showing off his knowledge. Clearly, the purpose of these detours is to consolidate the privileged position of Gellius’ own class in the highly competitive world of professional intellectuals.³² Of course, in some cases, he could be right about the incompetence of some teachers; nevertheless, there is such a huge amount of allusions and insinuations in *Noctes Atticae* that one cannot avoid to suspect Gellius from overreacting. He often puts stress on inexperience of the “newcomers”, while using words denoting the humble origins of these men such as in “*isti novicii semidocti*”, “*turba grammaticorum novicia*”, “*de grammaticorum vulgo quispiam*”³³ etc. For him, the professional teachers are just half-educated innovators teaching “*scholica quaedam nugalia*”,³⁴ who can never compare with the truly educated members of the elite class. He approaches them always as the inferior ones, necessarily lacking taste and elegance of the elites and, despite all their grammatical precepts and dogmatic rules, unable to teach young gentlemen of his class anything decent. Vardi (2001, 52f.), points out that these “experts, who try to make their interlocutors feel like complete ignoramus, are ... dangerous to Gellius’ endeavours to encourage laymen to partake in intellectual discussions”.³⁵ It is obvious that the very specialized nature of professional teachers’ knowledge stood in sharp opposition to the aristocratic ideal of *πολυμαθία*; one should therefore be aware that the role of social prejudices and stigmatization of low origin cannot be neglected when interpreting Gellius’ reports.

For Apuleius, rhetoric is a cultural and moral project, the realization of philosophical ideals in practice, the rhetorical activities are seen as inevitably bound to the cultivation of virtue. Therefore, rhetoric has its goal in common with philosophy and the two disciplines have to cooperate to achieve that goal.³⁶ The function of rhetoric is similar to the role of painting or sculpture – it is the figurative art of illustration; similarly, philosophy too is a process of reproduction and representation.³⁷ The same holds recip-

³² For more information on Gellius’ cultural programme, see Vardi (2004: 159ff.).

³³ Gell. 16.7, 11.1, 15.9.

³⁴ Gell. 4.1.

³⁵ See also Champlin (1980: 49f.) and Stevenson (1993: 282ff.).

³⁶ Aelius Aristides goes even further in this, claiming that rhetoric is even more effective, because it teaches how to live an honourable life without being separated from the reality. Here, we could assume that there actually is some kind of conflict between the two disciplines; however, after a deeper look, it is obvious that Aelius’ critique does not aim at philosophy in general, but rather “false” philosophers, as in Apuleius and others.

³⁷ Cf. Lucian’s *Essay in Portraiture*, or his *Dream*, in which he puts eloquence higher

roccally, because philosophy serves *tam ad bene dicendum, quam ad bene vivendum*.³⁸ Therefore, everyone who wants to deal with philosophy, needs to be able to speak well. According to Apuleius, Plato himself was the best example of the symbiosis between the two professions, which provides us with another reason to challenge the traditional view on Plato as the enemy of sophistry. He speaks with admiration about the elegance of Plato's transformation of Socrates' ideas into words.³⁹ Apuleius does not see the biggest threat to rhetoric in philosophy, or vice versa. Nevertheless, he likes to scorn any pseudo-experts, especially "false philosophers"; therefore, it can be said that he shares the elitist view of Gellius. Especially in the collection of rhetorical excerpts named *Florida*, the *topos* of "false" philosophers/orators occurs very frequently, most symptomatically in fragment 7:

*Quod utinam pari exemplo philosophiae edictum valeret, ne qui imaginem eius temere adsimularet, uti pauci boni artifices, idem probe eruditi omnifariam sapientiae studium contemplant, neu rudes, sordidi, imperiti pallio tenus philosophos imitarentur et disciplinam regalem ... male dicendo et similiter vivendo contaminarent.*⁴⁰

In this piece, Apuleius expresses his wish that the study and contemplation of wisdom should be restricted only to those few carefully trained "craftsmen" and withdrawn from the hands of those who do not possess any knowledge of their own and merely imitate the true philosophers, corrupting their good name by pretending to be at the same level as them. The incompetence in speaking is here related to the bad manners and impious life, in general. That is because in Apuleius' conception, the fact itself that one cannot speak well presupposes that one does not live a decent life. Therefore, those unworthy "imitators" can never match the true *πεπαιδευμένοι*, much like Marsyas cannot win over Apollo in a parallel fragment 3. Here, Apuleius uses the well-known myth to promote the very same approach. Apollo represents the traditional intellectual elite naturally enabled to achieve the real mastery in the field, while Marsyas typifies the

than the art of sculpture, because it is more enduring and pleasing than any portrait whatsoever.

³⁸ Apul. *Fl.* 7.10 (I number the relevant passages according to the most recent commented edition of Apuleius' *Florida*, ed. B. T. Lee, 2005, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter; the Les Belles Lettres edition of Apulée, *Florides*, ed. P. Valette, 4e tirage 2002 can also be used as a reliable source, but this was not at my disposal). Cf. also an excellent pun *philosophi ratio et oratio* in Apul. *Fl.* 13.3.

³⁹ Apul. *Pl.* 1.3.

⁴⁰ Apul. *Fl.* 7.9–10. See also Apuleius' general advice not to be deceived by the petty resemblances of physical appearance in Apul. *Fl.* 9.1–6. For further information on the symbolic attributes of a sophist/orator or philosopher see Sidebottom (2009: 69ff.).

new coming class of professional teachers lacking the real knowledge. The imagery employed serves to accentuate the contrast even more – *teter cum decoro, agrestis cum erudito, belua cum deo* – it is unthinkable for these pairs to compete, not to say cooperate. In this context, it is no wonder that Apuleius treats *ratio* and *oratio* as the two sides of the same coin. The same conclusion as in the preceding paragraph can be drawn from this: the right to be well versed in philosophy/oratory and consequently, to teach others the same skills, should remain within the community of *παιδευμένοι*, as it always did.

Perhaps the most outright account of the contemptuous attitude towards professionals can be found in Fronto's correspondence with Marcus Aurelius:

*Omnium artium, ut ego arbitror, imperitum et indoctum omnino esse praestat quam semiperitum ac semidoctum. Nam qui sibi conscius est artis expertem esse minus adtemptat eoque minus praecipitat ... At ubi quis leviter quid cognitum pro comperto ostentat, falsa fiducia multifariam labitur.*⁴¹

According to him, it is still better to be completely uneducated than to be half-educated or wrongly educated. He explains that those who claim to be experts with the loudest voice usually end up derided and mocked when their ignorance comes to the surface. That is why striving to emulate the educated elites is pointless, however arrogant this may sound.

To conclude, I regard the flamboyant manifestations of one's membership to philosophy/oratory to be more an inseparable part of self-presentation, than an evidence of any real conflict. All those who pursued a career in *bonae artes*, always attempted to attack their opponents, but the animosity has to be considered rather an optical fallacy.⁴² The requirement to stand in opposition paradoxically implies the non-existence of any real limits between the two disciplines. However, the aforementioned texts indicate that the old prejudices are still kept alive; therefore, the status of a philosopher still remains the highest, followed by that of an orator, with a sophist at the tail. In my opinion, more emphasis should be put on the tension between the old non-professional aristocratic education and the new concept of professional, academic and specialized schooling or, if you want, between the ideal of all-embracing *πολυμαθία* as opposed to any professional specialization, between the laymen of noble origin spending their *otium* in study and intellectual discourse and the professionals of humble origin teaching to

⁴¹ Fronto *ad Marc. Caes.* 4.3, Hout 1988: 56); Haines (1919: I.1).

⁴² For the importance of self-presentation in the Second Sophistic, see Flinterman (2002: 198ff.).

make a living (*negotium*). As more and more people got access to the same level of education, the noble origin necessarily ceased to be the only marker of social status, but it was the education that still made the difference. In the time of Second Sophistic, the educational process became more layered and open to larger masses, which necessarily led to so many excessive attempts of the members of the elite to belittle the importance of professionals and to prevent those from “the outside” stand among the *παιδευμένοι*. Be it the case of a philosopher, an orator, or even a sophist, shallowness, ignorance and unfinished education was always criticized. Only the elites were regarded suited enough to be able to achieve perfect education, as they were presumed to be the only ones who possess the natural superiority befitting them to do so. After all, even nowadays the notion that the true knowledge cannot be taught in schools, but it is the matter of natural superiority is not abandoned altogether. Gellius sums this up perfectly in his advice to a friend:

*Si aut versum pangis aut orationem solutam struis ... non finitiones illas praerancidas neque fetutinas grammaticas spectaveris, sed aurem tuam interroga ... secutus non communem, sed propriam ... iucunditatem.*⁴³

The true gentleman, in his own words, should not conform to the dogmatic rules of the professional specialized schooling; he should be true to type and consult his own ear about what is to be said in any given place, as he is endowed by nature with all the skills needed to be a good orator/philosopher and consequently, also a good man.

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