

## FROM ATHENS TO ROME: LYSIAS, ISOCRATES AND THE TRANSMISSION OF GREEK RHETORIC AND PHILOSOPHY

Dionysius of Halicarnassus was a close reader of Plato and his engagement with the *Phaedrus* occupies an important position in his rhetorical essays and in his treatment of Lysias and Isocrates in particular. Between Plato and Dionysius, however, were three centuries of thinking and writing about rhetoric, compiling and commenting on the works of Attic orators, speechwriters, philosophers. Hence, before looking at Dionysius of Halicarnassus' rhetorical essays, a brief overview of the reception of Lysias and Isocrates in the centuries between Plato and Dionysius is in order, so as to gain a good insight into the background for Dionysius' work and to better assess his contributions to ancient rhetorical theory.<sup>1</sup> The following overview will proceed roughly along chronological lines, focusing primarily on more substantial evidence on Lysias and Isocrates that we have from Ps. Demetrius, Philodemus and Cicero.

### 6.1 Post-Fourth-Century BCE and Hellenistic Receptions of Lysias and Isocrates

Lysias and Isocrates had very different fates in post-fourth-century and Hellenistic rhetorical criticism: on Lysias we know very little and have few papyri from that period, whereas Isocrates seems to loom large in common perception about Hellenistic education, philosophy and rhetoric.<sup>2</sup> Research into

<sup>1</sup> For a recent acknowledgement of the need for a more thorough examination of the Hellenistic context for Dionysius' work, see the 'Introduction' to de Jonge and Hunter (2018), 23.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. Jebb (1876a), 16 who calls him the 'prophet of Hellenism'; Burk (1923), 204.

Hellenistic oratory and rhetoric is growing, but it is also a complicated field due to lack of evidence on rhetorical activity from that period.<sup>3</sup> Polybius, of course, is a major source for Hellenistic history and speechwriting, but he by no means aims to record rhetorical theory and does not mention Lysias and Isocrates in his work.<sup>4</sup>

### *Lysias*

Even though Diogenes Laertius' records suggest that Lysias (and his family) had a relatively lively afterlife in Academic circles (see above, Chapter 1.2.), we know very little about the reception of his works and persona from the fourth century to the first century BCE. We do have papyri of Lysias' corpus, but they are very few and in general offer inferior readings in comparison to the existing manuscript tradition.<sup>5</sup> With the exception of the treatise by Ps. Demetrius (more below), whose dating is continuously controversial, Lysias seems to disappear almost completely from our records after the fourth century BCE. Indeed, before his renaissance in the first century BCE there are only two relatively obscure references by Peripatetic philosophers to a Lysias that may potentially have something to do with the famous Lysias of the fourth century BCE. Clearchus of Soloi, a disciple and close confidant of Aristotle, uses the name 'Lysias' for a character in his dialogue *On Sleep* (Περὶ ὕπνου), but the significance of this choice of name, and in fact the overall interpretation of Lysias in the dialogue, remain unclear.<sup>6</sup> The second Peripatetic to mention

<sup>3</sup> See most recently Kremmydas and Tempest (2013) with bibliography.

<sup>4</sup> Wooten (1974) argued that there was an overwhelming influence of Demosthenes during the Hellenistic period that could be discovered from close reading of Polybius' works. Kremmydas (2013), 160 has recently challenged this view. Looking at Polybius' references to Demosthenes, it is striking, however, that most passages refute Demosthenes' position on Philip. The name Isocrates is mentioned three times in the *Histories* (in 31.33.5.5, 32.2.5.1 and 32.3.6.1), but Polybius' discussion indicates that he seems to have had some other Isocrates, a certain γραμματικός, in mind.

<sup>5</sup> Carey (2007), x; Indelli (2000).

<sup>6</sup> The relevant section is in fragment 8, lines 19–25 in Tsitsiridis (2013).

Lysias is Ariston of Ceus,<sup>7</sup> who deals with the character type εἰρων (‘dissembler’) in fragment 21m and in one of the examples uses both Phaedrus and Lysias. There is clearly a strong Platonic influence lurking behind this passage, as in most (Peripatetic) treatises of this particular character type,<sup>8</sup> and commentators have found parallels for this character depiction in Plato’s *Gorgias*, *Phaedrus* and *Euthydemus*. In any case, it is difficult to say what significance this reference has, other than to show that Lysias – and the Platonic portrayal of Lysias in particular – might have had a relatively interesting afterlife in philosophical circles, of which we know, unfortunately, frustratingly little.

### *Isocrates*

The reception of Isocrates in that same period is a completely different matter. Even though none of the works of his students have survived and we do not have other works that offer direct engagement with Isocrates’ writings, we can suppose a relatively broad Isocratic influence from the fact that we have many papyri from this period, indicating that he must have been widely read at least in Hellenistic Egypt.<sup>9</sup> We also hear from various secondary sources about the importance of his school and the success of his students. Isocrates’ influence on the Hellenistic period, and particularly on Hellenistic historiography, has been a very controversial topic, which in itself is not the focus of this overview. However, in the course of revisiting some of the sources, it will emerge that Isocrates

<sup>7</sup> I am following the numeration and the text from the newest edition of Ariston in Fortenbaugh and White (2006).

<sup>8</sup> There was a strong tradition of equating Socrates with εἰρων. For a more thorough discussion of this character type, see Knögel (1933), 34–9.

<sup>9</sup> See also Morgan (1998), 99 for Isocrates’ important presence in schooltext papyri. In schools, Isocrates seems more widely read than Plato, Herodotus and Thucydides, thus remaining the only more ‘theoretical’ figure in the list that also includes Homer, Euripides, Demosthenes and Menander (see 97). Kremmydas (2013), 150–4 persuasively argues for seeing Isocrates as an important influence in Hellenistic forensic and epideictic oratory. Given the few theoretical works on rhetoric at the time, it is indeed plausible, as Kremmydas argues, that rhetorical education was achieved primarily through imitation.

seems to have been less influential than he appears, for example, in the account of Werner Jaeger,<sup>10</sup> and at the same time more influential than argued by some contemporary historians.<sup>11</sup>

From the scattered evidence, it seems that we can speak of Isocrates' influence in four main areas: (1) theater, (2) historiography, (3) language and style, and (4) political philosophy.

The most problematic of these four categories is Isocrates' connection to the first, the tragedians: there is a tradition according to which Astydamas and Theodectes, the foremost tragedians of the fourth century BCE, were pupils of Isocrates.<sup>12</sup> The evidence that Xanthakis-Karamanos invokes in support of her claim that 'Isocrates [...] seems to provide a link between rhetorical development and fourth-century dramatic poetry' relies entirely on the *Suda* and on a comparison with, and stylistic evaluation of, the fragmentary evidence of the contemporary dramatists.<sup>13</sup> This is not entirely persuasive: the later tradition in literary criticism that was motivated to identify teacher–pupil relationships among earlier writers might well have imposed this framework and created a thematic link between the writers without much concern for historical reality. Hence, the importance and influence of Isocrates on tragedy cannot be maintained with much confidence.

One seems to be on firmer ground in historiography.<sup>14</sup> Debates on this issue focus on the so-called Isocratean school of history, and argue that Theopompus (of Chios) and Ephorus, who were apparently writing in Isocratean style, were not only instructed by Isocrates to write history, but also told what kind of history they should write.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore,

<sup>10</sup> Jaeger (1945), 46: 'Today as of old, Isocrates has, like Plato, his admirers and exponents; and there is no doubt that since the Renaissance he has exercised a far greater influence on the educational methods of humanism than any other Greek or Roman teacher.'

<sup>11</sup> My reading of Isocrates' influence on Hellenistic thought comes very close to a recent evaluation of Isocrates in historiography by Marincola (2014).

<sup>12</sup> Xanthakis-Karamanos (1979), and (1980), 60–1; more recently Hall (2013).

<sup>13</sup> Xanthakis-Karamanos (1980), 60–1, where the teacher–pupil relationship is supported by references to *Suda* (s.vv.) α 4264, α 4556, θ 138.

<sup>14</sup> Jebb (1876a), 13 and 72 makes very confident claims about this association.

<sup>15</sup> E.g. Laqueur (1911), 345; Cartledge (1987), 67.

even though none of their works actually survive, some scholars have gone on to suggest that both Theopompus and Ephorus wrote a moralizing history which was imbued with rhetorical decorations and distortions of historical truths, thus following what some have taken to encapsulate 'Isocratean' ideology.<sup>16</sup> Recent scholarship has, rightly, pointed to the extremely scarce evidence to support these broad claims and has questioned whether Isocrates had any associations with history writing at all.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, Isocrates never wrote history himself nor can we glean from his writings any programmatic views about historiography. As Marincola has rightly emphasized in a recent article, however, history itself was an important topic for Isocrates and provided material and inspiration for his teachings and writings.<sup>18</sup> Given that Isocrates had regarded his school as an educational center that prepared students for careers in a variety of different fields, such may well have been also his reception and influence on later writers. In other words, even though he did not author works of history himself, his philosophy, attention to writing, traditions and cultural memory might well have been very inspirational for historians.

In any case, even if we reject the view that Theopompus and Ephorus were exercising Isocratean political thought or philosophy in their histories, this does not change the fact that they were *perceived* already in antiquity as part of the Isocratean school and that almost all our existing evidence on Isocrates from the fourth and the third centuries connects the Isocratean school (whatever this might mean) overwhelmingly with historians: a fragment of Callisthenes of Olynthus (Fr. 44.2–5 *FGrH* 124) recounts Isocrates' failed attempt to call for peace in the latter's letter to Philip. Two of Ephorus' fragments, preserved in the lexicon of Harpocration, mention Isocrates, and are used as a source for explaining (or providing an

<sup>16</sup> Cicero and Dionysius of Halicarnassus seem to associate history writing with Isocrates' school mostly due to the Isocratean style that was apparently imitated by both writers (Theopompus and Ephorus). Cf. D. H. *Letter to Pompeius* 6, Cicero *De oratore* 2.13.57, Quintilian 10.1.74.

<sup>17</sup> Flower (1994), contra Natoli (2004). <sup>18</sup> Marincola (2014).

exegesis of) certain Isocratean words.<sup>19</sup> The testimonia of Anaximenes, the rhetorician and historian who has been considered as the author of the *Rhetoric to Alexander*,<sup>20</sup> refer to an engagement with Isocrates' work, but we do not have any explicit mention of Isocrates in Anaximenes' fragments nor in the rhetorical treatise that has come down under his name.<sup>21</sup> Philochorus, another important fourth-century historian of Athens and a source for Dionysius of Halicarnassus, refers in his fragments to Isocrates and recounts, among other things, a story about Plato rejecting the opportunity to have a statue erected in his honor in the manner of Isocrates.<sup>22</sup> Finally we have Demetrius of Phalerum, a philosopher and a historian, date Isocrates' death in a fragment.<sup>23</sup> Much later, Dionysius of Halicarnassus connects Timaeus (late fourth- and third-century BCE historian) with Isocrates and counts him among the many unsuccessful imitators of Isocratean style.<sup>24</sup> All those brief snippets taken together highlight Isocrates' role as a teacher (rather than simply stylist or rhetorician) and, in the case of Philochorus, as head of a philosophy school rivaling the famous ones by Plato and Aristotle.

The third and second centuries BCE, despite providing even patchier information about Isocrates, boast two important sources that indicate the importance of Isocrates for the period: Hermippus of Smyrna (or the Callimachean), a grammarian and a historian, who was mostly known for his work on ancient biographical tradition,<sup>25</sup> and Hieronymus, the philosopher. Athenaeus, Dionysius of Halicarnassus and Harpocration all claim that Hermippus wrote books about Isocrates and, importantly, a separate book *On the Pupils of*

<sup>19</sup> 'ἀρχαίως' and 'Μαντινέων διοικισμός'.

<sup>20</sup> Against his authorship, see Chiron (2002).

<sup>21</sup> Even though there are no explicit references to Isocrates, Chiron (2002) has argued in his edition of the *Rhetoric to Alexander* that there are strong Isocratean influences ('global influence') in the work (cxxxix–cxlviii).

<sup>22</sup> The fragment is preserved as FGrH328 F59. The background of this anecdote is surely a later perception of school rivalries in Athens, but quite possibly also the anecdote about Lysias offering a speech for Socrates who then rejects it as not fitting. A good recent commentary on this fragment is Harding (2008), 155–7.

<sup>23</sup> Mandilaras (2003), 1.258–9. <sup>24</sup> D. H. *Deinarchus* 8.

<sup>25</sup> Hermippus of Smyrna is quoted after Bollansée (1999a).

*Isocrates*.<sup>26</sup> A recent commentator on Hermippus has suggested that the ‘Hermippean material was firmly entrenched in the literary tradition concerning the fourth-century rhetoricians’ and that ‘more of it may be thought to persist, albeit completely anonymously, in the still extant works’. Bollansée points out an important detail – that Hermippean material plays a crucial role in the establishment of the tradition of Isocrates’ numerous and important pupils.<sup>27</sup> As Cooper and Bollansée have both argued, Hermippus’ approach to Isocrates was similar to the way he aimed to create a biographical continuity between philosophers through the idea of διαδοχή (succession).<sup>28</sup> Hermippus seems to have applied the same approach to Isocrates and other contemporary orators/rhetoricians. Or perhaps it is worth considering the possibility that Hermippus had not, contrary to what Bollansée and Cooper suggest, treated Isocrates as a rhetorician, but rather as a philosopher-rhetorician? Such a reading would indeed offer a better explanation for two important things: first, his attempt to create a professional heir and succession for Isocrates would make sense as a comparison to other philosophers and teachers (it might have been felt to be a badly needed *desideratum*), and second, this would help better explain why he does not really mention orators in his works. Hermippus mentions Demosthenes, for example, only in fragments preserved in the book on Isocrates’ pupils, and there does not seem to have been a separate treatise on him.

Engels has discussed in greater detail the school of Isocrates and concludes that based on our current information it is difficult to find any clear-cut political, rhetorical or even generic link that would connect all those names who have been

<sup>26</sup> FGrHist 1026 T14a (= Athenaeus 13.592d), T14b (= Hypothesis of Isocrates speech two), T15a (= Dionysius of Halicarnassus *Isaeus* 1.2) T15b (= Harpocration in Suda I 620 s.v. Isaios), T15c (= Athenaeus 8.342c), T15d (= Athenaeus 10.451e). Bollansée (1999a), 21 argues that the first book on Isocrates was probably written in one book, but that the second was probably published in three books.

<sup>27</sup> Bollansée (1999a), 85.

<sup>28</sup> Engels (2003), 183 n. 30 suggests that Hermippus inherits from Phainias the method of organizing the treatise on Isocrates’ students around the idea of succession.

listed among Isocrates' students.<sup>29</sup> If we take seriously the ending of Isocrates' *Panathenaicus*, which stages a dialogue with one of his students who holds evidently different political views from Isocrates himself (12.200–65), we might wonder why should we expect Isocrates' students to exhibit similar political belonging, especially in the context of political turmoils and the geographical breadth of the Hellenistic empire.<sup>30</sup> Cooper and Bollansée have both instead suggested that Hermippus' motivation for emphasizing Isocrates and creating the idea of rhetorical 'succession' might have been entirely detached from the political/philosophical implications of rhetoric, and was purely an idea to map the history of Attic prose and its development.<sup>31</sup> For this, I find little evidence, especially since all preceding snippets and fragments on the reception of Isocrates in the fourth and post fourth century BCE have pointed clearly to his appreciation as a teacher and head of a philosophical school. Excellence of prose and emphasis on writing were definitely an important part of Isocratean education and seem to have remained so also in the reception of his work and influence in later periods. However, given the wide spread of his works, our evidence does not seem to support the claim that Isocrates became valued for Hermippus simply as a stylist of Attic prose.

Hieronymus of Rhodes offers us another perspective on the reception of Isocrates in the third century BCE. A philosopher, he is also interested in rhetoric and criticizes Isocrates for his style which makes his speeches ineffective in delivery.<sup>32</sup> Mirhady has suggested that this fragment also contains an implicit criticism of Isocrates' pedagogical work. Indeed, even

<sup>29</sup> Engels (2003), 192–3.

<sup>30</sup> This would also apply for Isocrates' immediate students, for he was known to have taught also outside Athens and for a politically very diverse audience.

<sup>31</sup> Cooper (1992); Bollansée (1999a), 89–93.

<sup>32</sup> A recent discussion of Hieronymus' engagement with Isocrates is Mirhady (2004), who argues that Hieronymus' condemnation of Isocrates' style had an important *Nachleben* in the works of Dionysius of Halicarnassus and, possibly, also in Philodemus. Hieronymus talks about Isocrates in fragment 38A–B (White), collected in Fortenbaugh and White (2004). Dionysius of Halicarnassus discusses Hieronymus in *On Isocrates* 13.



if Isocrates was loud and clear about not having engaged in forensic speechwriting,<sup>33</sup> his famous works are nevertheless composed as speeches. Furthermore, if Kremmydas' argument is to be followed that rhetorical education at the time was probably based primarily on imitation,<sup>34</sup> it is easy to see why Isocrates – one of the most widely read authors of the Hellenistic period – would be criticized. In any case, Hieronymus' interest in Isocrates seems to be further evidence that suggests that Isocrates might have been a far more important focus for the third-century theoreticians for oratory and rhetoric than other famous fourth-century practitioners of rhetoric/oratory (e.g. Demosthenes). Hieronymus' complaints that Isocrates' work is not fitting for imitation also seems to suggest a context where advocates of Isocrates' writing would perhaps argue the other way around and aim to compose speeches for delivery that are inspired by Isocratean prose. One might speculate that because of the wide readership that Isocrates' works enjoyed, it is possible that he also started to become increasingly valued for providing a paradigm of a kind of oratorical style. A style that is sophisticated, complex and difficult to access and imitate without advanced school instruction. In other words, Isocrates, the teacher and philosopher, may have started to occupy a place in people's minds within the canon of Attic oratory and taken as a representative of style. Most of first-century BCE criticism, starting with Dionysius of Halicarnassus, will work very hard to rectify this misunderstanding of Isocrates as an example of style and bring back his contributions to philosophy and education.

Lastly, an area where Isocrates might have been of importance is the discourse of kingship and its implications for political philosophy. However, even if the debates about different ways of life – the contemplative versus the practical – still seem to have had some currency in philosophical discourses after Aristotle (e.g. Cicero *Att* II.16.3), it is not clear whether

<sup>33</sup> This is of course false, for we have his early forensic speeches. What Isocrates means is that his reputation came from his teaching and philosophy career.

<sup>34</sup> Kremmydas (2013), 152.

Isocrates was in any way considered part of the debate. Isocrates is mentioned by two fourth-century BCE philosophers, Praxiphanes and Speusippus. Praxiphanes is reported to have written a work that depicts Plato (ὁ φιλόσοφος) as a friend of Isocrates (Ἰσοκράτει φίλος ἦν) having a discussion about poetry in Plato's country house, and thus thematizing the intriguing relationship between Isocrates and Plato.<sup>35</sup> Speusippus' letter to Philip II is overtly hostile against the Isocratean school and propagandistic in favor of Plato. The context of its writing has been debated,<sup>36</sup> but it is clear that the writer of this letter had Isocrates' *To Philip* in mind and, with an aim to diminish Isocrates' importance in Philip's court, also serves as good evidence for the political influence of Isocrates and his school at the end of the fourth century BCE. In other words, Isocrates was seen as a legitimate rival by Academic philosophers and we can thus infer that he had a politically appealing vision of philosophy to offer to rulers.

Scholarly evaluation of Isocrates' possible contributions to political philosophy (as to philosophy more generally) has been harsh. With regard to the later Hellenistic period, for example, Schofield argues that most of what we know of the Hellenistic discourse on kingship seems to have very little philosophical ambition and that the almost total absence of information about the contents of the works written on this topic at that period suggests 'that a Stoic or Epicurean work on kingship was not the place to look for major or distinctive statements on issues of philosophical importance, but only for variations on stock themes inherited from *To Nicocles* and similar writings'.<sup>37</sup> Isocrates seems to have been an important role model for those writing on kingship, and Schofield's discussion of Aristeas and Philodemus confirms this: according to him, the few sources that we do have discussing kingship show resemblance to the Isocratean *To Nicocles*, in that they map out the duties of a king and mention various spheres of

<sup>35</sup> Fr. 11 in Wehrli (1969), 96.

<sup>36</sup> The most recent, and persuasive, account is Natoli (2004).

<sup>37</sup> Schofield (1999), 743.

regal conduct or interest, but offer neither theoretical discussion of the different forms of government and their comparative merits, nor any defense of kingship as the best institution. Indeed, given the fact that Isocrates' works are so richly attested in papyri (in particular his *To Demonicus*, *To Nicocles* and *Nicocles*),<sup>38</sup> thus indicating that he was very widely read across the Hellenistic empire, we would expect that Isocrates was influential for Hellenistic thinking about monarchy. However, while we see that he was read, our scarce evidence from that period does not indicate that Isocrates had also inspired theoretical engagement with political philosophy.<sup>39</sup>

Given the extremely volatile political environment after Alexander and the emergence of rather unstable Hellenistic kingdoms,<sup>40</sup> it is perhaps not altogether surprising that the works of Isocrates (and especially those with a focus on kingship, like *To Nicocles*) would find particularly wide readership. What exactly were the contexts in which Isocrates was read and whether or how it translated to other aspects of the socio-cultural milieu in the Hellenistic world, is very hard to tell. It is tempting to think that Isocrates' appeal rested in his advocacy of panhellenic unity that was based on a mobile understanding of education: through *paideia*, everybody could become cultured Greeks, and therefore members of the elite. But it is also possible that due to his wide appeal on a pedagogic and ideological level, Isocrates was read in some quarters as a paradigm for prose writing and, as a consequence, that his style of writing may have been imitated in schools. If so, this would explain the fierce opposition we see in later literary critics and rhetorical theorists to the influence of Isocrates. Even though his style of writing (and philosophy) was never intended as a sample of public speech, he seems to have found

<sup>38</sup> See here the extremely valuable collection of Isocrates' papyri with commentaries in Adorno et al. (2008).

<sup>39</sup> For a recent interesting contribution to Isocrates' influence on Hellenistic and Roman writers, in particular on the importance of Isocrates' shaping of Athenian ideology, see Canevaro and Gray (2018).

<sup>40</sup> Walbank (1981), chap. 2.

followers and imitators precisely in those quarters. The result was probably pretentious prose that was looked down upon by later teachers of rhetoric and philosophy.

## 6.2 Ps. Demetrius on Lysias and Isocrates

Before we come to the first-century BCE criticism, there is one final important source for the reception of Lysias and Isocrates to discuss – Pseudo-Demetrius. The general and growing consensus about Ps. Demetrius' *On Style* is that it was written sometime in the second or the first century BCE, thus preceding Dionysius of Halicarnassus,<sup>41</sup> and that it presents us with a unique resource for post-Aristotelian stylistic criticism and rhetoric. Scholars have already paid attention to the similarities of various linguistic theories in the works of Dionysius and Ps. Demetrius,<sup>42</sup> but there has not been comparable interest in looking at their use of rhetoricians. Both Lysias and Isocrates have a place in this work and in both cases Ps. Demetrius' discussion sheds valuable light on the critical ideas about these writers that were probably floating around between the fourth and first centuries BCE. It is important to bear in mind that when Ps. Demetrius uses ancient authors as examples of certain styles, he does not divide the styles between the writers, as we will see in Dionysius of Halicarnassus, but instead draws examples for one particular style from a variety of different authors. Ancient authors, in Ps. Demetrius' conception, rarely write in only one style, but often display features of a variety of different modes of writing.

### *Ps. Demetrius on Lysias*

Ps. Demetrius mentions Lysias explicitly in three passages: first, in the introduction to the elegant style and charm

<sup>41</sup> Chiron (2002); de Jonge (2008), 40; Innes (1995), 312–21. Of recent commentators, Marini (2007) is an exception and argues for a date in the first century BCE. Her arguments have been contested, persuasively in my view, by de Jonge (2009).

<sup>42</sup> See especially de Jonge (2008), who points throughout his discussion to similarities and differences between Ps. Demetrius' and Dionysius' views of language and composition.

(χάρις, §128), second in relation to plain style (§190), and thirdly in the discussion about wit (§262). I will briefly review these references in more detail.

Paragraphs 128–89 of Ps. Demetrius' *On Style* tackle the elegant (γλαφυρός) style, which he describes as speech with charm (χαριεντισμός) and a graceful lightness (ίλαρός). He then continues the discussion by referring explicitly to charm (χάρις), rather than the elegant (γλαφυρός) style, and goes on to divide χάρις into two larger categories: the poetic χάρις, which is more imposing (μειζων) and dignified (σεμνότερος), and a more ordinary χάρις, which is closer to comedy and resembles jests (σικῶμμα).<sup>43</sup> Lysias is evoked as an example of the latter kind and Ps. Demetrius quotes a few examples from Lysias to illustrate the 'comic' χάρις.<sup>44</sup> The critic is eager to pin down further what he means by χάρις and distinguishes between a χάρις that emerges from the content (πρᾶγμα) and that which results from style (λέξις). The examples of the content that give rise to χάρις are marriage songs and 'everything Sappho wrote' (ὄλη ἡ Σαπφοῦς ποίησις). Its counterpart, λέξις, is expressed less explicitly. The examples seem to suggest that there are two kinds of stylistic devices an author can use to create charm: first, personification (133), and secondly, the use of contrasting tone, so as to add a lighter pitch to an otherwise gloomy topic (134). Ps. Demetrius considers the latter to be the

<sup>43</sup> Grube (1961), 52–6 suggests that the notion of χάρις might connect Ps. Demetrius with Demetrius of Phaleron, who, according to Diogenes of Laertius, had written works entitled *περὶ πίστεως*, *περὶ χάριτος* and *περὶ καιροῦ*. Due to the apparent overlap of critical terminology it is quite plausible indeed that these critics might have been relatively close in time. The actual dating of Ps. Demetrius is not really essential for my argument, for most recent discussions indicate that Ps. Demetrius is best understood as having participated in the critical context in which Dionysius' essays were written, whether belonging chronologically to the literary culture before Dionysius and thus illustrating the preceding ideas to which we see him responding, or showing a contemporary perspective on the ideas that were also formative for Dionysius – in both cases Ps. Demetrius provides a useful perspective against which to evaluate Dionysius' essays and contributions to rhetorical theory and criticism.

<sup>44</sup> One of the examples quoted here is also evoked, with minor changes, in the later passage (§262) that focuses on wit in particular. Compare §128: ἤς ῥᾶον ἂν τις ἀριθμήσειεν τοὺς δδόντας ἢ τοὺς δακτύλους (fr. 430 Carey) with §262: ἤς ῥᾶον ἦν ἀριθῆσαι τοὺς δδόντας ἢ τοὺς δακτύλους.

most effective kind of χάρις (ἔστι καὶ ἡ δυνατωτάτη χάρις) and one which most depends on the writer (μάλιστα ἐν τῷ λέγοντι), for it requires skill to demonstrate that in a topic ‘hostile to charm’ (πολέμιον χάριτι) ‘playfulness is possible’ (ἀπὸ τῶν τοιούτων παίζειν ἔστιν).

Within Ps. Demetrius’ discussion of χάρις, Lysias’ writings seem to belong to the type of χάρις that is created through style rather than the subject matter (as in Sappho). Even though it is never spelled out explicitly, Lysias might also be counted among those writers whom Ps. Demetrius praises for being able to create a lighter tone in somber topics (the example he uses is drawn from Homer), for even with all the seriousness of the forensic genre, Lysias’ speeches also demonstrate that it tolerates some lightness and wit. Ps. Demetrius, having categorized the various usages of χάρις in literary criticism, goes on to dedicate most of the discussion of the elegant style to schematizing ways in which χάρις can be created in literature. What is curious, however, is that despite having initially introduced Lysias among the first authors in the context of χάρις, Lysias is not mentioned in any of the following examination of different kinds of χάρις. He simply seems to prefer to use Xenophon and Plato (for prose), Sappho (for lyric poetry) and Sophron and Aristophanes (for mime and comedy). It might be, but this is difficult to say with more certainty, that Ps. Demetrius’ tepid interest in Lysias reflects the contemporary perception of the importance of this orator for literary criticism and rhetoric, where he was popular enough to be mentioned briefly as an example of χάρις, but had not yet become as securely connected with the ‘canon’ of classical writers or as exclusively associated with χάρις as we see in Dionysius below.

In §190 Ps. Demetrius briefly quotes an example from Lysias’ speech *On the Murder of Eratosthenes* (Lysias 1), but does not discuss the speechwriter again in the context of plain style. His examples of plain style are taken from Homer, Xenophon and Plato. Lysias is mentioned one more time, in §262, where he discusses how an element of playfulness, otherwise associated with the elegant style, can actually contribute

to the forceful style. The example Ps. Demetrius uses is the same he used in the first Lysias passage when he discussed the elegant style. In itself this is not surprising, for the playful element that Ps. Demetrius is concerned with here is the same he was discussing in the context of elegant style earlier. Overall, despite the fact that Lysias plays a minor role in Ps. Demetrius' work, we can nevertheless glean from his discussion, however brief, that Lysias is associated primarily with wit and simplicity. Given the influence of Lysias on later literary criticism and in particular for his influence on plain style, it is important to notice that the speechwriter's own charm was probably not much appreciated in the centuries before the first century BCE.

### *Ps. Demetrius on Isocrates*

Ps. Demetrius serves as a valuable intermediary source also for the reception of Isocrates, who is mentioned explicitly in four passages:<sup>45</sup>

- 1 In §12, when he discusses two different kinds of period, he refers to the works of the Isocrateans (τῶν Ἰσοκρατέων ῥητορειῶν), Gorgias and Alcidas as examples for the compacted style (τῆς ἐρμηφείας ἢ μὲν ὀνομάζεται κατεστραμμένη).

<sup>45</sup> Ps. Demetrius' lack of interest in Lysias and Isocrates is apparent when the few references made to these orators are compared to the number of instances where Plato and Aristotle are discussed in the work. Overall, Ps. Demetrius explicitly evokes Plato seventeen and Aristotle twenty-one times in *On Style*. Passages from Plato are used to exemplify many different stylistic features throughout the spectrum of the different styles (Plato is referred to in §5, §37, §51, §56, §80, §181, §183, §205, §218, §228, §234, §266, §288 (twice), §290 (twice), §297). Ps. Demetrius refers to his *Republic* (5.2, 205.2), *Phaedo* (288.1), *Protagoras* (218.1), *Menexenus* (266.1), and apparently also to the Platonic letters (228.5, 234.5) which he seems to consider, along with Aristotle's, as the best examples of the epistolary genre. In addition to using Aristotle as an example for style (especially in chapters on letter writing, §§223–35), Aristotle is also used in *On Style* to systematize and structure the work as a whole (Ps. Demetrius refers to Aristotle explicitly in §11, §28, §29, §34, §34, §38, §39, §41, §81, §97 (twice), §116, §128, §144, §154, §157, §223, §225, §230, §233, §234). It is, thus, no surprise that references to Aristotle occur in the beginning of a theme (e.g. in §38 which starts the topic of 'grand style') or throughout to guide the discussion and focus it on specific points (e.g. in §11 when defining the period). Thus, Plato and Aristotle are used as theoretical guidelines to good stylistic writing, and are regarded as practical models for students.

- 2 In §29, which focuses on assonance and brings as examples the antitheses of Isocrates and Gorgias, who make use of assonance for imposing grandeur on the composition.
- 3 In §68, where he discusses an element otherwise considered as the trademark of Isocratean prose, the avoidance of hiatus. He claims that there are two extremes, Isocrates and his followers who avoid any clash of vowels (Ἰσοκράτης μὲν γὰρ ἐφυλάττετο συμπλήσσειν αὐτά, καὶ οἱ ἄπ' αὐτοῦ), while others admit everything that happens to occur (ἄλλοι δὲ τινες ὡς ἔτυχε συνέκρουσαν καὶ παντάπασιν). Ps. Demetrius advises his reader, in an unsurprising move coming from a Peripatetic sympathizer, to follow the middle way.
- 4 Hiatus is also the reason Isocrates is mentioned once more in this work. In §299 Ps. Demetrius claims that 'smoothness of composition, of the kind particularly used by the Isocrateans (οἱ ἄπ' Ἰσοκράτους), who avoid any clash of vowels, is not well suited to forceful speech (δεινὸς λόγος)'.

What is perhaps striking in Ps. Demetrius' discussion of Isocrates in *On Style* is that he is often mentioned either as a member of a stylistic movement/trend (together with Gorgias and Alcidamas) or associated with a group of followers, the Isocrateans. This group will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter on Philodemus, who refers to them relatively frequently. Compared to Philodemus, their presence is clearly less marked in Ps. Demetrius, but these few instances in *On Style* suggest that Isocrates seems to have had devoted and vocal followers, whether the author has in mind immediate students of Isocrates or later followers who identified themselves as the 'Isocrateans'.<sup>46</sup> Ps. Demetrius' use of Isocrates also suggests that, whatever his reception in philosophical circles, Isocrates also accumulated following, either for his general style or its specific features (hiatus, sentence structure), in stylistic and rhetorical circles.

Overall, despite the fact that Ps. Demetrius has clearly only lukewarm interest in Lysias and Isocrates, *On Style* nevertheless casts an interesting perspective on the two writers. For the first time we see Lysias associated in a programmatic work on

<sup>46</sup> I do not think we can tell from the way Ps. Demetrius discusses the 'Isocrateans' whether he has Isocrates' pupils and contemporaries or later followers in mind, or indeed both.



rhetorical style with plain style, charm and wit, and Isocrates linked strongly to literary stylists, showing that his writings were probably increasingly used, at least in some quarters, as examples of an oratorical style to be imitated. Aside from the reception of Lysias and Isocrates, however, Ps. Demetrius' use of critical terminology – as we will see in the following chapter – is very close to that of Dionysius of Halicarnassus.<sup>47</sup>

### 6.3 The Reception of Lysias and Isocrates in Cicero and Philodemus

Philodemus and Cicero were both prolific writers whose works reveal a great deal about their intellectual environment and enable us to access sources not otherwise available to us. They were both active around the same time (from early to mid first century BCE) and we know that Cicero was at least familiar with Philodemus' works as he alludes to him in his *In Pisonem* (70).<sup>48</sup> Despite Philodemus' Epicureanism, which Cicero opposes, he receives a more positive treatment from Cicero for his engagement with rhetoric, a topic otherwise spurned by the 'orthodox' Epicureans.<sup>49</sup> The following discussion will be focused strictly on the treatment of Lysias and Isocrates in the context of their works. We will be looking mainly at Philodemus' *On Rhetoric* and Cicero's *Orator*, *Brutus* and *De oratore*.<sup>50</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Ps. Demetrius defines vividness, for example, in §209: γίνεται δ' ἡ ἐνάργεια πρώτα μὲν ἐξ ἀκριβολογίας καὶ τοῦ παραλείπειν μηδὲν μηδ' ἐκτέμνειν. He returns to the definition in §217: γίνεται δὲ καὶ ἐκ τοῦ τὰ παρεπόμενα τοῖς πράγμασι λέγειν ἐνάργεια, οἷον ὡς ἐπὶ τοῦ ἀγορικοῦ βαδίζοντος ἔφη τις. Compare with the wording of D. H. in *Lysias* 7: ἔχει δὲ καὶ τὴν ἐνάργειαν πολλὴν ἡ Λυσίου λέξις. αὕτη δ' ἐστὶ δύναμις τις ὑπὸ τὰς αἰσθήσεις ἄγουσα τὰ λεγόμενα, γίνεται δ' ἐκ τῆς τῶν παρακολουθούντων λήψεως. See more below in next chapter.

<sup>48</sup> Gigante (1995), 29–38 more generally on Cicero and Philodemus. Gaines (2001) puts forth an interesting argument in favor of seeing a close intellectual connection between Cicero and Philodemus; Wisse (2001) is, however, more convincing in his reply and cautions us about some of the details of Gaines' suggestion.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. Griffin (2001), 96 for caveats in reading too much into Cicero's praise of Philodemus. A celebrated treatment of the Epicurean attitudes to politics is Momigliano (1941). More recent accounts are Roskam (2007) and Fish (2011).

<sup>50</sup> The *Rhetoric* is one of the best preserved and most secure texts of Philodemus, and the standard critical edition is still Sudhaus (1896). Dorandi (1990) is a helpful

Despite making several references to Isocrates, Philodemus' *On Rhetoric* and the role of Isocrates in that work have not elicited much scholarly discussion.<sup>51</sup> The most extensive and by now almost canonical treatment of this topic is an article by Hubbell from 1916, which argues that there was something of an 'Isocratean revival' in early first-century BCE philosophy and criticism and that Philodemus' numerous references to Isocrates in *On Rhetoric* are critically replying to this newly found fascination for the orator.<sup>52</sup> In Hubbell's thesis, Isocrates is treated by Philodemus as a stylist and an exponent of sophistic rhetoric (more on this term below), a field that according to the Epicurean is incapable of preparing the young for a successful career in public and private life. Hence, studying Isocrates is a waste of time for those interested in such matters. This interpretation has provided the backbone of most (if not all) scholarly approaches to this topic: Isocrates is exclusively viewed as a stylist whose influence – Philodemus allegedly argues – on education is (or ought to be) negligible. There are, however, some problems with this interpretation. First, there is a question about sophistic rhetoric as an only rhetorical art form, and second, Hubbell may not be representing the popularity of Isocratean works and education adequately so that a better understanding of the context might also shed new light on the complicated textual fragments.

overview of the potential content of the individual books of the *Rhetoric* and the distribution of papyri within the books. There are several relatively recent discussions on new papyri, individual rolls and interpretations of specific passages of the *Rhetoric* (e.g. Erbi (2012) with bibliography), without challenging the broad outline of the work explained by Dorandi (1990) or the text as established by Sudhaus (1896).

<sup>51</sup> The following section has greatly benefited from conversations with David Blank and I'm extremely grateful for his patience and generosity with which he endured my cross-examination on Philodemus' possible engagement with Isocrates and Aristotle. All remaining errors are mine only.

<sup>52</sup> Hubbell's central thesis has been further elaborated, but not substantially challenged, by Indelli (1994) and Di Matteo (1997). In Philodemus' other works, Isocrates is mentioned as an influence on Andromenides in his *On Poems* 1. See Janko (2000), 148–51. Andromenides was, according to Janko, most probably a Peripatetic even though he appears to have been influenced by Isocrates (F 18 of Andromenides is allegedly taken from Isocrates' *Panegyricus* 10).

Let us first start, however, with laying down some groundwork of what we know about rhetoric among the Epicureans and in Philodemus in particular.

According to the Epicurean tradition, the philosopher should avoid getting involved with public life, and thus also with the study of rhetoric for the purposes of public life.<sup>53</sup> Epicurus' own relationship to rhetoric is open to speculation,<sup>54</sup> though it is clear from Philodemus that some Epicureans regarded rhetorical training to be beneficial for the philosopher 'as an aid to literary composition'.<sup>55</sup> Epicurean rhetoric has sometimes been divided into three separate categories, sophisticated (σοφιστική), rhetorical or judicial (ῥητορική) and political rhetoric (πολιτική), thus terminologically different from, though thematically similar to, the tripartite Aristotelian division into epideictic, forensic and deliberative rhetoric.<sup>56</sup> A closer examination of Philodemus' *Rhetoric* makes this claim unsustainable: Philodemus does not think that rhetoric can be meaningfully divided into three genres.<sup>57</sup> Instead, we ought to regard these three categories as differences in 'rhetorical speaking' and not strictly as three separate genres of rhetoric.<sup>58</sup> The more fundamental difference emerges rather between art and non-art, between the goals of the types of rhetorical speaking (i.e. persuasion or instruction).

Whatever the disagreements otherwise, most critics agree that Philodemus treats only sophisticated rhetoric as an art,<sup>59</sup>

<sup>53</sup> On Epicurean views of politics, see for example Scholz (1998), 251–314 and Brown (2009) with further bibliography.

<sup>54</sup> DeWitt (1954), 47 goes as far as to suggest that Epicurus himself might have been a teacher of rhetoric.

<sup>55</sup> Hubbell (1916), 411.

<sup>56</sup> Hubbell (1916), 409. It is not entirely clear from Hubbell's discussion what is exactly the distinction between the Aristotelian and Epicurean scheme of three types of rhetoric. Hubbell seems to treat it as a mere difference in terminology rather than content, and translates the Epicurean terms back into the more familiar Aristotelian ones (e.g. in sentences like 'σοφιστής means an epideictic orator', 409).

<sup>57</sup> For example, *Rhet.* IIa, PHerc. 1674 col. 58.8 ff. <sup>58</sup> Gaines (2003).

<sup>59</sup> Philodemus himself records (in Books 1 and 2 of the *Rhetoric*) the various (and fierce) disagreements on this topic among the Epicureans themselves, all of whom draw their arguments from first-generation Epicureans. Philodemus' argument against Epicurean opponents teaching in Cos and Rhodes is detailed in IIb, PHerc 1672.

for it is the only form of rhetoric that is following certain principles of composition which apply to the majority of cases, and which produces ‘a result that is beyond the power of those who have not studied it’.<sup>60</sup> In the first book of the *Rhetoric*, Philodemus says that ‘sophistic rhetoric is an art (τέχνη) concerned with display pieces (ἐπιδείξεις)’ (Sudhaus 1:122.29). In other words, sophistic rhetoric seems rather similar to what we would call (after Aristotle) epideictic oratory. For Epicureans it is the only form of rhetoric that is a proper τέχνη and thus the only kind of rhetoric that could be actually studied. Both judicial and political rhetoric are used in the context of politics and they both depend mostly on practice and experience.<sup>61</sup> Hence, since neither of the two is based on general rules that we can all have access to, they cannot be studied. Indeed, Philodemus argues that the ability ‘to speak in assembly and court comes from practice and observation of political events’ (Sudhaus 1:121 XXI.35–XXII.7).<sup>62</sup> In other words, these two categories, ‘artistic’ rhetoric and ‘political’ rhetoric, do not overlap in their usage or practice, because they have fundamentally different structures and different goals. Hence, an aspiring politician or public figure should not be advised to attend a rhetorical school, for example, because it will only educate him in the art of sophistical rhetoric which encompasses (what some might call) philosophy, literature, composition and language. The rhetorical schools will not, however, be able to prepare the young for ‘real life’ debates and affairs in politics.<sup>63</sup>

It is less clear what exactly is the proper domain relevant to sophistic rhetoric. Given that it requires a grasp of some set of

<sup>60</sup> *Rhetoric* IIa.1674.38.2–18 (Blank 2003): νοεῖ- | ται τοῖνον καὶ λέγεται | τέχνη παρὰ τοῖς Ἑλλη- | σιν ἕξις ἢ διάθεσις ἀπὸ | παρ[α]τηρή[σ]εω[ς] τινῶν | κοινῶν καὶ [σ]τοιχειω[ν]- | δῶν, & διὰ πλειόν[ων] δι- | ἠκεῖ τῶν ἐπὶ μέρου[ς], κα- | ταλαμβάνουσα τε καὶ συντελοῦσα τοιοῦτον, | οἷον ὁμοίως τῶν μὴ | μαθόντων <οὐδεῖς>, εἴ[θ’] ἔστη- | κότως καὶ βεβ[αί]ως [εἶ- | τε στοχαστι[κῶς].

<sup>61</sup> Gaines (2003), 217 with further discussion.

<sup>62</sup> Unfortunately I have not been able to access Federica Nicolardi’s new 2018 edition of the first Book of the *Rhetoric* (covering Sudhaus 1:1–12).

<sup>63</sup> Hubbell is assuming that this is the entire ambition of an Isocratean school, that is to produce politicians and public speakers.

general principles related to thought and composition, and given that it seems to be understood primarily in connection with praise and blame,<sup>64</sup> it is possible that we ought to think here beyond simple display speeches and instead consider the possibility that the associated discipline we should be thinking of is philosophy.<sup>65</sup> This suggestion is strengthened by the fact that Philodemus himself had apparently composed a book on praise,<sup>66</sup> though we do not know more about the content of this work. Whatever the implications of this possibility for Epicurean philosophy, it is surely true that a somewhat more positive evaluation of sophistic rhetoric in the context of philosophy might also cast a different light on Philodemus' treatment of Isocrates, who seems to be explicitly associated with sophistic rhetoric and is mentioned several times throughout the work.

Philodemus argues, for example, that Isocrates' works reveal themselves to have been composed 'not without method' (οὐ- | κ ἀμε|θόδως),<sup>67</sup> and that he must have possessed some kind of knowledge even though he himself denies it.<sup>68</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Sudhaus I:217 and I:213–14.

<sup>65</sup> Gaines (2003), 217. The same is carefully suggested by Blank (2009), 233.

<sup>66</sup> Sudhaus I:219.

<sup>67</sup> No: 1672.9.7 (Blank 2003): καὶ τῶν [λεγον] | λ[ε]γ[όν]των ἑοῦς Ἰσοκράτειος | [λόγους καὶ τοὺς ὁμοίους οὐ]10 [κ ἀ]με|θόδως καὶ χεῖδιά[ε]ι[ς]θαι καὶ | γράφεται κατ' ἄρκρον [γ' ἐ]λεγκ[τ]ικόν ἐστι τὸ δοκοῦν | [Ἐπι]κούρωι τέχνην οὐκ εἶναι | καλὴ ἰαπ[ι]σθῶν πειστικῆν |15 [πάντων] μηδὲ πλεοναζόν[των] καὶ τὸ τοῦ οὐ ῥη[το]ρικοῦς | ἐνίο[τ]ε μᾶλλον πει[θ]εῖν | [τῶν] ῥητορικῶν καὶ τὸ [του] | τοῖς θορ[ύ]βοις ἤτο[ν] π[ε]ριπε[ι]20 π[τ]ε[ι] | [ν] τοὺς πανηγ[υ]ρικοὺς | καὶ τῆ[ν] τεχνολογία[ν] καὶ τῆ[ν] αὐτῶν οὐδὲν [δ]εῖν | [τ]ε[ι]κ[τ]ικὸν καὶ ὀνομα[ζ]εῖν τὸν [το]λ[μα]χῶν μὴ [καὶ] τῆ[ν] 25[χρηνη]. Cf. Sudhaus I.127 xxvii.23, which seems to express a similar idea.

<sup>68</sup> Sudhaus II.122, fr. 4: [...] [καὶ] λέγουσι | τὸν Ἰσοκράτην καὶ τὸν Γοργίαν καὶ τὸν Λυσίαν | ὁμολογεῖν οὐκ ἔχειν ἐ-|πιστήμην. Ἀπιθάνως | δὲ λέγεται καὶ ἀδυνά-|τως, ἐπειδὴ τεχνικά τε | ἐπιτηγέλλου[το] εἶναι καὶ | διδάξαι ἄλλους, καθά-|περ καὶ παρὰ Πλάτωνι | Γοργίας. Ὁ δὲ Ἰσοκράτης | καὶ τέχνας καταλ[ι]π[ο]-|μεν[ος] ἄλλοι τε πολλοὶ | σοφιστὰι [βα]σιμαστή[ν] | αὐτῆν εἶναι τ[έ]χνην [ἀ-|ποφα]ίνονται, [...]. Philodemus seems to be talking here of knowledge in a different sense (i.e. knowledge of composition and methods of writing) than what Isocrates had claimed in the *Antidosis* (185) not to possess (i.e. detailed knowledge of things in the world, especially those that end up being of little relevance to actual everyday life). It is also interesting that Philodemus claims Isocrates wrote technical treatises. This is a very controversial claim and it was argued above that it is indeed very unlikely that Isocrates would have written technical treatises on rhetoric or philosophy, at least in his mature period. It may be possible that he wrote technical treatises around the same time he was active as a *logographos*.

Isocrates is hence understood as a practitioner of sophistic rhetoric and he is in some passages also explicitly called a sophist, contrasted to orators and statesmen like Pericles, Demosthenes and Lycurgus (Sudhaus II.97.10 and II.233.11). Here we need to bear in mind that the term ‘sophists’ may have had a somewhat broader application for Epicureans and Stoics than simply evoking the group of fifth-century intellectuals we know from Plato. Indeed, for Epicureans sophists are any kind of intellectual opponents, both within and outside the Garden.<sup>69</sup> They are therefore credited with philosophically challenging arguments, which might nevertheless be (and mostly are) wrong and have to be refuted. However, sophists are philosophical opponents to Epicureans and as such associated with things more important than mere oratory. Isocrates is referred to as a sophist in just these circumstances and contrasted in a few passages to representatives of other philosophical schools.

In the fourth book of the *Rhetoric* (Sudhaus I.147–8 Col. 11), for example, Philodemus appears to say that the term ‘philosophy’ used in Isocratean discourses denotes a broader sense of intellectual pursuit, and as such stands in contrast to the narrower practice of philosophy we find among the Peripatetics and the Stoics.<sup>70</sup> Furthermore, when discussing

<sup>69</sup> Diogenes Laertius 10.26 refers to disagreements among Epicureans, where some (Epicureans) are called sophists by ‘true Epicureans’. See also Long (2018), who persuasively argues for a more sophisticated influence of sophistic thought on Epicurean political philosophy than thus far granted.

<sup>70</sup> Hubbell (1916) reads the plural form Ἰσοκρατικῶν here and elsewhere as referring to a group of followers of Isocrates. It is not clear that this is what is intended and it also overtly contradicts a passage elsewhere in Philodemus (Sudhaus I.153.14), where he says that either no one at all or two or three were disposed in a similar way (ὁμοιοτρόπως διετέθησαν) to Isocrates. In other words, rather than seeing a sect of Isocrateans suddenly emerging and occupying an important place in Philodemus’ discussion, I think it is safer to assume that plural forms refer to the works of Isocrates, that he had been treated as an authority on questions of educational aspects of philosophy and rhetoric continuously since the fourth century BCE and as such is an expected personality to be discussed by Philodemus on the topic. I want to thank Stephen Halliwell for his helpful suggestions about Philodemus and the supposed ‘Isocrateans’ and David Blank for his insights on the matter.

The idea that the term ‘philosophy’ has gotten too narrow in philosophical schools has found support also in later writers, who were on the fringe of

the famous anecdote about how Aristotle got involved with rhetoric (as a response to Isocrates, whose dominance in the field he wanted to crush), Philodemus comments that unlike Aristotle who stooped down from philosophy to rhetoric, Isocrates at least moved on to things more important and beautiful than rhetoric: εἰ πρότερον ἐδίδασκεν αὐτήν, ἐπὶ τὴν ἡσυχιωτέραν καὶ δαιμονιωτέραν ὥσπερ εἶπε φιλοσοφίαν, ἀποχωρεῖν (Sudhaus II.60.7–12).<sup>71</sup> Two important observations are in order. First, even though one might get the sense from this and other references to Isocrates that the latter might have been recognized by Philodemus (and perhaps also by some other Epicureans) as a philosopher, we should approach such suggestions with caution. Isocrates never was a ‘proper’ philosopher in Epicurean/Philodemean terms and thus remains an opponent (and a sophist) to true Epicureans. However, he is contrasted here positively to Aristotle and hence regarded as someone who possessed an art and had some business with philosophy and someone who might have had at least the good intuition of recognizing philosophy (even

philosophy and rhetoric. See, for example, Cicero (*De oratore* III. 60) and the notion of ‘true philosophy’ in D. H.’s *Isocrates*.

<sup>71</sup> See also Di Matteo (1997). In Blank (2003) the new version of this text section attributes this line as referring to Aristotle: ‘If he taught rhetoric before, he could later retire to philosophy, which he called “more peaceful” and “more divine”’ (30). As Blank himself notes (n. 71), neither ἡσυχιωτέραν nor δαιμονιωτέραν occur in our extant corpus of Aristotle, though it might have (as Blank suggests) have been used in the *Protrepticus*. In this form, they do not seem to appear in Isocrates either. In our conversation, David Blank has pointed out to me that the following section of the text seems to refer to Aristotle (as subject) and that it would on this ground make more sense to make him also the subject of the sentence under question. This is a difficult matter to decide and as far as I can see at the moment (without having had the opportunity to look at the fragment), Isocrates may still be referred to here for two reasons. First, Isocrates narrates himself the way he has come to write his philosophical works and seems to suggest in some of his narratives that he has progressed into philosophical activity and has explicitly stayed away from the political or overtly oratorical activity. We do not find such direct engagement with this topic in Aristotle. Secondly, as suggested below, I think Plato’s *Phaedrus* might have been an important influence on, and authority for, Philodemus’ apparent preference for Isocrates (and the narrative of his progressing to philosophy) over Aristotle. I hasten to say that this means nothing about Philodemus’ views of Isocrates and I do not think that Isocrates would qualify for Philodemus as a philosopher. However, it might have been sweet for Philodemus to criticize Aristotle (with the use of his former teacher Plato) by suggesting that even his most fierce enemy, Isocrates, was more philosophical than Aristotle.

if this was not the true Epicurean philosophy).<sup>72</sup> Perhaps the most plausible and least committed reading of this section would be something like this: Philodemus really focuses here on attacking Aristotle and for that, it was convenient to use Isocrates, who had been cast in the history of the philosophical and rhetorical tradition as his fiercest opponent, as more philosophical than Aristotle. The emphasis, therefore, was probably not on Isocrates being a philosopher, but rather that Aristotle was so non-philosophical that *even* Isocrates was more of a philosopher than Aristotle. Secondly, it is very plausible that a comparison involving Isocrates with another intellectual and philosopher (here Aristotle) that concludes favorably to the former is explicitly drawing on the final part of Plato's *Phaedrus*. This complements well the previous reading: even though recognizing that Isocrates was not a 'proper' philosopher, he does linger at the fringes of the philosophical tradition and thus has 'some' philosophy and there is 'some' merit to his works. Predicting his progress to philosophy, as Socrates does in the *Phaedrus*, seems to have become a particularly poignant aspect in the reception of Isocrates. Hence, it is rather plausible that Philodemus is drawing, rather cleverly, on the authority of Plato's *Phaedrus* to play the figure of Isocrates (as more consistently committed to philosophy) against Aristotle who is attacked fiercely throughout the book. This may mean many different things, but perhaps most

<sup>72</sup> That much is granted also by Sudhaus (1893), 561 ('Philodem erkennt ihn [Isocrates] ausdrücklich als Philosophen an') whose authoritative description of this passage has remained instrumental for later evaluations of Isocrates' treatment by Epicureans. Sudhaus' argument is taken over and elaborated, for example, in Hubbell (1916), 407–8. They both argue that Isocrates receives a devastating assessment by Philodemus, because by denying sophistic rhetoric legitimate application in the political sphere, Isocrates' ambitions to educate future political leaders are demonstrated to have been fundamentally false. Isocrates might have disagreed with the assumption lurking behind Hubbell and Sudhaus, namely that his school prepared young people only for a political career, and would have probably argued that he trained his students for a variety of careers, or more precisely, for the kinds of careers they were best fitted for. This all does not mean, of course, that Philodemus did not criticize Isocrates. For the purposes of my argument, however, I only want to highlight that Philodemus seems to have considered Isocrates relevant as a philosopher of rhetoric and education and not simply a stylist and prose writer, as Hubbell in particular seems to insist.



importantly for the present discussion this passage indicates that – unsurprisingly – Plato’s *Phaedrus* has remained an important reference text for conversations about the true meaning and application of rhetoric. Furthermore, the Platonic image of Isocrates who is progressing to philosophy and thus has more relevant contributions to make to rhetoric and philosophy is emerging from those much later accounts of Isocrates, thus maintaining a continuity of his presence in philosophical conversations about philosophical and rhetorical education.

While Hubbell suggests that Philodemus’ engagement with Isocrates indicates a resurgence of his importance in the first century BCE, we have thus far seen that Isocrates’ presence in Hellenistic education seems to have been ubiquitous. It is of course true that we have lacunose evidence of rhetorical theory from the Hellenistic period and cannot say much with certainty about the importance and relevance of Isocrates’ work for the more theoretical engagements with philosophy and rhetoric in that period. However, the abundance of Isocratean papyri from Hellenistic Egypt strongly bolster the possibility that he was widely read, if not highly inspirational for theorists and philosophers, in the periods leading up to his explicit emergence in rhetorical criticism in the first century BCE. Even though Isocrates was surely not a mainstream thinker to be discussed in philosophical schools in the context of metaphysics or epistemology, it is likely that he demanded attention in the context of rhetoric and education more generally. If that is true, then Philodemus (and other Epicureans) are not simply grappling with a new emerging group of Isocrateans, but rather engaging with an important authority on the question of rhetoric and its function in philosophical education.

### *Cicero and Isocrates*

On the Roman side of the debate we find Cicero, who has already been mentioned as a possible supporter of some of Isocrates’ views and their appeal for a broader understanding

of philosophy. Cicero's interest in and use of Isocrates as a source for his own philosophical/rhetorical program has proven to be a difficult topic to tackle because, despite several apparent thematic affinities in their work and Cicero's occasional praise of Isocrates as a master and teacher of eloquence, Cicero's works contain very few direct indications or explicit statements that he was drawing in any substantial way on Isocrates' philosophy.<sup>73</sup> This has led scholars to suppose that the praise of Isocrates in some passages of Cicero's work is intended to evoke Cicero's debt to Isocrates as his model of style and prose writing.<sup>74</sup> Laughton and Weische have rightly drawn attention to the fact that in passages where Cicero mentions Isocrates, his writings and style are not really admired as models for 'real' (courtroom) oratory.<sup>75</sup> Instead, Isocrates is primarily revered as a teacher (*magister*) of rhetoric or educator of aspiring public intellectuals.<sup>76</sup> Indeed, the idea of merging rhetoric and philosophy into one mutually supportive discipline seems to characterize, in a very broad sense, the preoccupations and intellectual program of both Cicero and Isocrates. Cicero's *De oratore* (but also his *De republica*), a work inspired (in his own words) by Aristotle and Isocrates,<sup>77</sup> is perhaps one of the most ambitious

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Solmsen (1941a) and (1941b) for a critical assessment of our abilities to conclude anything more certain about the Isocratean tradition of rhetoric.

<sup>74</sup> E.g. Jebb (1876a), 73, Sandys (1885), xxii, Blass (1892), 212–13. Hubbell (1913), 17–40 collects and discusses the passages where Cicero mentions Isocrates. Hubbell's work is also one of the first attempts to look at the Isocratean influence in Cicero's thought rather than style.

<sup>75</sup> Laughton (1961), Weische (1972), 165. In one instance, Cicero explicitly claims to have written a work in Isocratean style: Cicero writes to Atticus that he had written a commentary (*commentarium*) in Isocratean style (i.e. using his 'perfume-box') mixed with some Aristotelian features (*Letter to Atticus* II.1.1). The context seems to suggest, as Laughton argues, that Cicero emphasizes this aspect precisely because of the uniqueness of the composition rather than reflecting on his usual writing practices. Posidonius was apparently so put off by this style of writing that he did not want to write on the same subject himself.

<sup>76</sup> E.g. in *De oratore* II.10 where Isocrates is referred to as *pater eloquentiae* (also III.59), or later in *Brutus* (32) where the Isocratean school came to be regarded as the house of eloquence of all Greece. This last idea is also repeated in *Orator* (42).

<sup>77</sup> *Ad familiares* I.9.23. Fantham (2004), 16–17 points out that this particular letter, written in 54 BCE just after having finished *De oratore*, was 'almost certainly circulated to a wider readership and serves as a political apologia'. Thus Cicero's

examples of this endeavor. Regardless of the similarities in the broad outline of their programs, the comparison between Cicero and Isocrates falls apart as soon as one sets out to examine their works in more detail. Cicero neither acknowledges Isocrates' influence upon his philosophical thought nor does he tell us more precisely where in the outlook of his works the Isocratean inspiration might lie. I argue that this incongruity is mainly due to Cicero's own philosophical affiliation with Academic skepticism that operated with a very specific understanding of the notion of philosophy and left little room for an Isocratean broader definition of the concept, however it may have otherwise fitted Cicero's own philosophical, rhetorical and political agendas. Cicero does acknowledge the 'pre-Socratic' broad notion of philosophy, when he writes in *De oratore* that

*is eis qui haec quae nos nunc quaerimus tractarent, agerent, docerent, cum nomine appellarentur uno quod omnis rerum optimarum cognitio atque in eis exercitatio philosophia nominaretur, hoc commune nomen eripuit, sapienterque sentiendi et ornate dicendi scientiam re cohaerentis disputationibus suis separavit.* (III.60)

the people who discussed, practiced, and taught the subjects and activities we are now examining bore one and the same name (because knowledge of the most important things as well as practical involvement in them was, as a whole, called philosophy), but he robbed them of this shared title. And in his discussions he split apart the knowledge of forming wise opinions and of speaking with distinction, two things that are, in fact, tightly linked.<sup>78</sup>

I take this passage to be, on the one hand, a reference to the general aim and ideal of Cicero's program of joining the disciplines of philosophy and rhetoric, and on the other, a reflection on the contemporary challenges to traditional interpretations of philosophy with its implications for the perception of the wise and honorable men in society. Cicero cannot go back to the fourth century BCE and ignore the way philosophy had since become institutionalized and used in the context

mention of his two influences, Aristotle and Isocrates, functioned more like an open manifesto about the philosophical and rhetorical outlook of his program.

<sup>78</sup> I follow here the translation and comments in May and Wisse (2001).

of philosophical schools and education. Thus, whenever Cicero mentions philosophy, he is talking from the perspective of his own philosophical affiliation – Academic skepticism. The fact that Cicero is not simply a neutral historian of philosophy, but rather affiliated with, and trying to prove his importance within, a specific philosophical institution also means that on a philosophical level there remains a significant distance between him and Isocrates.

It has been noticed in scholarship before that Isocrates' importance, however great it may have been for his earlier approach to rhetoric and philosophy, seems to decrease in Cicero's later works as he becomes more and more involved with institutionalized philosophy.<sup>79</sup> And indeed, when it comes to identifying his prime influences, Cicero says in the *Orator*, one of his last works dedicated to rhetoric from 46 BCE: 'I confess that whatever ability I possess as an orator comes, not from the workshops of the rhetoricians, but from the spacious grounds of the Academy. Here indeed is the field for manifold and varied debate, which was first trodden by the feet of Plato' (12: *fateor me oratorem, si modo sim aut etiam quicumque sim, non ex rhetorum officinis, sed ex Academiae spatiis exstitisse. Illa enim sunt curricula multiplicium variorumque sermonum, in quibus Platonis primum sunt impressa vestigia*). Despite the important position of Demosthenes and Isocrates in this work,<sup>80</sup> Cicero makes it clear from the beginning that his biggest debt and intellectual affiliation remains to the Academic school. As Cicero's own admission shows, his appreciation for Isocrates requires most defense among his fellow intellectuals (*Or.* 40). As a stylist, Isocrates' works are not appropriate for public performance; as a philosopher he remains outside all existing respectable schools and is not part

<sup>79</sup> Too (1995), 237 discusses one aspect of Cicero's changed approach to Isocrates and sees his increased detachment from him exemplified in the former's association of Isocrates with Gorgias. Gildenhard (2007), 153–4 notices this change in terms of Cicero's conscious (political) move to prioritize philosophy over oratory in his later works.

<sup>80</sup> See the recent excellent analysis of this work, and the position of Isocrates and Demosthenes in particular, in Dugan (2005), chap. four.

of the philosophical canon proper. To bolster his own confidence in relying on Isocrates for inspiration for rhetorical education and – in particular – for the idea of writing, Cicero turns to an undoubted authority: Plato's *Phaedrus*.<sup>81</sup> Cicero quotes the last sections of Plato's dialogue (from 279a), where Socrates utters the famous prophecy that Isocrates will aspire, once he grows up, to greater things (than the Lysianic rhetoric), 'for nature has implanted philosophy in the man's mind' (41: *inest enim natura philosophia in huius viri mente quaedam*).<sup>82</sup> Cicero claims to be following Socrates and Plato in having a high regard for Isocrates and he argues that while the epideictic rhetoric (*epidicticum genus*), which Isocrates is presumably taken to represent, is not appropriate in real-life rhetoric (42), it is an important step in rhetorical education, because 'eloquence receives nourishment from this until it later takes on color and strength by itself' (42: *sed quod educat huius nutrimentis eloquentia ipsa se postea colorat et roborat*; cf. 37–8). Hence, while Isocrates is not to be followed and emulated by fully developed orators or statesmen, he remains an important cornerstone and signifies a particular stage in the rhetorical-philosophical education.

<sup>81</sup> With regard to the general influence of Plato's *Phaedrus* on Cicero, Görler (1988) argues that this dialogue is an important subtext for the first book of *De oratore*. It may be that one of the reasons for Cicero's particular interest in the *Phaedrus* at that time, i.e. in the 50s BCE, was its subject matter – rhetoric and its relationship with philosophy. Indeed, this interest in the *Phaedrus* at that period seems to be paralleled, as one might expect, with the importance of Plato's *Gorgias*, which expresses arguments against rhetoric that elicited response from anyone seriously interested in the position of rhetoric in society. This view finds support also in Quintilian (*Inst.* 2.xv.29), who uses *Phaedrus* as a source for a positive definition of rhetoric. *Phaedrus* is evoked twice in Cicero's late works for its philosophical contribution: in *Tusc. Disp.* 1.53 Cicero mentions the immortality of the soul from Socrates' palinode as an inspiration for his views on the soul expressed in *De republica*; in *De finibus* 11.4 Socrates' first speech in the *Phaedrus* is invoked as an example for organizing and commencing a serious philosophical argument. There are several references to *Phaedrus* also in Cicero's *Orator* (14, 39, 41), but as I will be suggesting below, there is probably a different reason for the use of the *Phaedrus* in this particular work.

<sup>82</sup> Contrary to many modern critics, Cicero reads the praise in this passage literally: he reminds his readers that Plato wrote this prophecy when Isocrates was already in the middle of his career and claims that Plato, a contemporary and a critic of all rhetoricians, admires of all rhetoricians only him, Isocrates (*hunc miratur unum*).

There is also the political dimension. Cicero might have found Isocrates, among others, an interesting model for the ‘deep’ political layer of rhetoric and oratory. Since Isocrates was himself not active as a politician, but makes it clear through his works that he exercised significant impact on Athenian politics through his teaching and discourses, he remains a fascinating example for anyone struggling to assert themselves overtly in a public and political context. Isocrates’ political encomia of princes and men of power might have been particularly instructive in this context.<sup>83</sup> Indeed, the proximity to power that this kind of writing suggests might have been particularly seductive to Cicero when banned from active political life and confined to observing and commenting on contemporary politics without being able to intervene in any other way than through his writings.<sup>84</sup> However, since Cicero does not explicitly talk about Isocrates’ influences on the political considerations of his career, these observations – though attractive – are bound to remain speculative. In the end, the overwhelming sense we get from Cicero is that despite the wide appeal and attraction of Isocrates, he was strongly enough opposed among Cicero’s intellectual circle as a legitimate predecessor and inspiration, that Cicero (in his careful progress in philosophical circles) did not feel confident enough to take upon himself a defense of Isocrates.

What we see, in sum, from the two important critics of the earlier part of first-century BCE Rome is that Isocrates continued to be talked about among critics and philosophers of rhetoric. Both Cicero and Philodemus speak of Isocrates in positive terms and react against critics who think either too little or too much of the rhetorician. In framing their respective views on Isocrates, they both refer back (Cicero explicitly and Philodemus implicitly) to Plato’s assessment of Isocrates in

<sup>83</sup> Weische (1972), 165–6 argues that this is where Isocrates’ real influence on Cicero ought to be examined. Rosillo López (2010) discusses Cicero’s writing to rulers from the perspective of the loser.

<sup>84</sup> Goldenhard (2007), 51 n. 184 makes a compelling argument about how Cicero conceived writing philosophy as an active engagement with his contemporary politics.

comparison with Lysias: Isocrates has potential for philosophy though he is not there yet. As we will see below, the Atticist movement will re-evaluate the debate about classical rhetoric and the role of Isocrates and Lysias in it. While Lysias will gain dominance for the first time after a long period of dormancy, Isocrates continues to be championed as providing a crucial theoretical axis for the interpretation and application of Greek rhetoric.

*Philodemus and Cicero on Lysias*

While Isocrates looms large in Philodemus' discussion of rhetoric and education, Lysias occupies by contrast a negligible position in the *Rhetoric*. He is mentioned only once (Sudhaus II.122.3) alongside Gorgias and Isocrates, where Philodemus argues that all these three have a method or possess an 'art' in writing.<sup>85</sup> Philodemus' choice of the three is intriguing, but given that the overall context of the passage is sophistic rhetoric, it is very plausible that Lysias figures in the list for his funeral oration.<sup>86</sup> Lysias did not merit more attention as a representative of sophistic rhetoric, because other than the funeral oration he was associated neither with epideictic speeches nor with teaching or education more generally. He was a representative of courtroom oratory and, as such, not relevant for Philodemus' discussion of rhetoric as an art. The lack of further references to Lysias in Philodemus' work suggests not only that Lysias (contrary to Isocrates) was not a particularly relevant writer for Philodemus, but also that he was not prominent within the critical circle at the time when

<sup>85</sup> In other fragmentary works of Philodemus, the name Lysias occurs in his *Socratica*, 5.xxii.30 (Acosta Méndez and Angeli 1992), but clearly refers to the characteristic way Socrates is depicted in Plato's dialogues communicating with his interlocutors.

<sup>86</sup> Ancient authorities regarded the 'Eroticus' in Plato's *Phaedrus* as a genuinely Lysianic work, though given Socrates' ruthless analysis of this speech, revealing the lack of method used by Lysias, it is rather unlikely that Philodemus would have thought of this speech as an example of artful display of sophistic rhetoric. We know that Lysias 2 (funeral oration) was a very popular speech also during the Hellenistic period and it is therefore most plausible to take the inclusion of Lysias in this list as a tribute to the popularity of that work.

Philodemus was writing.<sup>87</sup> As a forensic or political writer, Philodemus clearly preferred Demosthenes, who was characterized as the true proponent of political rhetoric, a rhetoric that is not an art (τέχνη) and thus not teachable. Erbi has argued that the image of Demosthenes was consciously shaped by the Epicureans to fit their idea of the ῥήτωρ ἔμπρακτος.<sup>88</sup> This concept was probably developed in a polemical confrontation with the Peripatetics, who had long attempted to discredit Demosthenes and downplay his skills as an excellent orator.<sup>89</sup> Since ultimately the Epicureans were not interested in political speeches and they seem to pay attention to Isocrates as a representative of sophistic rhetoric only in so far as it is an art that might be relevant for philosophy, it also explains well why they would discard Lysias for having been relevant to neither the practical nor the theoretical domain of rhetoric that they were interested in.

Neither is Lysias a prominent figure in Cicero, at least not before the Atticist polemic explodes in critical circles sometime in the earlier part of the first century BCE.<sup>90</sup> The Atticist movement seems therefore to constitute a clear shift in the reception of Lysias. Indeed, from that moment onwards Lysias becomes once again the representative of style and of a kind of rhetoric that is concerned with (simple) style and persuasion.

Cicero might have imitated Lysias' speeches in his own early work, but due to the large number of Lysianic fragments and speeches that were probably available to Cicero, it would be in any case impossible to determine more precisely where and

<sup>87</sup> Philodemus has proven to be a valuable source for recording the views of other critics and thus for mapping the broader intellectual environment he was participating in. For Philodemus as a source for the so-called *kritikoi*, for example, see Schenkeveld (1968), Porter (1995) and Janko (2000), 120–89.

<sup>88</sup> Erbi (2008).

<sup>89</sup> Demosthenes seems to have been the battleground for rhetoric and politics in the first century BCE. I hope to address this topic at greater length elsewhere.

<sup>90</sup> A good discussion of the Atticist and classicist movements is Gelzer (1979); for a more recent discussion of the beginnings of the Atticist movement in particular see Wisse (1995) and (2001). Cicero's position is persuasively discussed in Wisse (1995) who argues that the Atticist movement had essentially Roman origins.



how Lysias was emulated.<sup>91</sup> Cicero's later appreciation for Lysias is directly related to the trends of contemporary literary criticism and especially to the rise of the Atticists who had apparently condemned Cicero's elaborate prose, comparing it with the simple Lysianic style that reigned supreme in these circles. This provoked Cicero's response, and his discussion of Lysias in the *Brutus* and *Orator*, works which are our primary sources for the Atticist criticism, is rather polemical. Cicero is quick to praise Lysias' style, but his expressed admiration is often followed by comments or comparisons which hinder Lysias' emergence as a single and unique representative of the Attic style. In the *Brutus*, for example, Lysias is acclaimed as a 'writer of extraordinary refinement and elegance, whom you might almost venture to call a perfect orator' (35: *egregie subtilis scriptor atque elegans, quem iam prope audeas oratorem perfectum dicere*), only to be reminded in the next sentence that 'the perfect orator and the one who lacks absolutely nothing you would without hesitation name Demosthenes' (*nam plane quidem perfectum et quoi nihil admodum desit Demosthenem facile dixeris*).<sup>92</sup> This passage, which continues to point out Lysias' excellent qualities, shows also Cicero's own fine compositional skill and boasts a highly rhetorical sentence structure, full of double negatives (e.g. *nihil acute inveniri potuit [...] quod ille non viderit*, etc.).

Perhaps the most striking analysis of Lysias' writing style follows his comparison with Cato (*Brutus* 63–4), where Lysias' style is described by reference to the human body: Cicero establishes first that Lysias, like Cato, is sharp (*acutus*), fine (*elegans*), witty (*facetus*) and brief (*brevis*), and then turns to his followers who 'cultivate a lean rather than a copious habit of body' (*qui non tam habitus corporis opimos quam gracilitates consecretur*), and admire slenderness (*tenuitas ipsa delectat*). Lysias' style as a whole is more of a meagre type (*verum est*

<sup>91</sup> Weische (1972), 164 argues that Lysias' simple style was probably useful for Cicero in constructing specific sections of speeches (e.g. narrations or digressions), but that he was not a model that Cicero would follow consistently throughout a speech. Cf. Hubbell (1966). Though plausible, this is bound to remain a speculation.

<sup>92</sup> Cf. *Orator* 110.

*certe genere toto strigosior*) and his admirers delight in this slightness (*qui hac ipsa eius subtilitate admodum gaudeant*).<sup>93</sup> This develops and adds another layer to the ancient reception, starting from Plato's *Phaedrus*, of Lysias' writings as witty, simple and persuasive.<sup>94</sup> It is plausible that in this description Cicero's attitude to Lysias is somewhat preconditioned by the proximity of this language of Lysianic smallness and slenderness with Hellenistic literature and its emphasis on the small and fine (λεπτός) – attributes of the Callimachean poetics that Cicero viewed with contempt.<sup>95</sup>

Cicero makes two further interesting comparisons that are worth spelling out in this context. In the *Brutus*, Cicero points out that Lysias started out his career with (theoretical) writings on rhetoric (48: *Lysiam primo profiteri solitum artem esse dicendi*), but upon realizing the superiority of Theodorus, he abandoned the art (*artem removisse*). Cicero says he is relying in his report on Aristotle, but it must have been one of his lost works, for we do not find any such statements in Aristotle's existing corpus.<sup>96</sup> Either way, Cicero's reliance on Aristotle shows that the latter also seems to have corroborated the view (analyzed in Chapter 1) of Lysias as an 'anti-theorist' or as someone inept for abstract or theoretical thought. He makes another illuminating comparison in his *Orator*. When discussing the role of humor in oratory, Cicero concedes that

<sup>93</sup> With this vocabulary of thinness and finesse, which is here associated with Lysias and contrasted to the powerful and heavy (*gravis*), the latter of which is presumably conceived as a characteristic of the style Cicero is trying to cultivate, Cicero seems to be trying to assimilate Lysias with the representatives of Hellenistic literature and their emphasis on the small and fine (λεπτόν). Bowersock (1979), 63. Cf. Gelzer (1979), 28.

<sup>94</sup> It is true, of course, that the 'Eroticus' is ruthlessly mocked for its structure and content, but even though it fails as a real philosophical argument, Phaedrus' own perception of the speech indicates that it was successful and persuasive as a piece of rhetorical or paradoxical argument.

<sup>95</sup> On Cicero's views of Hellenistic poetry and Callimachus, see Knox (2011). For the reception and use of Hellenistic literature in Rome more generally, see the discussions in G. O. Hutchinson (1988), 277–354, Cameron (1995), 454–83, and Hunter (2006). J. I. Porter (2011) offers an intriguing discussion of λεπτότης in Hellenistic aesthetics.

<sup>96</sup> Jahn (1908), 42 claims that Cicero is using here Aristotle's τεχνῶν συναγωγή (fr. 125 Gigon).

‘whatever is witty and wholesome in speech is peculiar to the Athenian orators’ (90: *quoniam quicquid est salsum aut salubre in oratione id proprium Atticorum est*) and plays the Greek orators against each other according to this characteristic. Lysias is mentioned first as having enough of wittiness, Hyperides is judged to be equal to Lysias, but Demades as having excelled them all. Demosthenes ‘is not witty so much as humorous’ (*non tam dicax fuit quam facetus*). Cicero explains: being witty requires sharper talent (*acrioris ingenii*), being humorous ‘greater art’ (*maioris artis*). This statement places Cicero at the center of the φύσις/τέχνη debate that Peripatetics and Epicureans were having about the orators and Demosthenes in particular. Cicero associates Demosthenes with, and appreciates him for, the rhetorical τέχνη (contra Epicureans), while Lysias is evoked as an example of talent and admired both by the Atticists and Cicero for his wit. The previous discussion on Philodemus indicated exactly the reverse: Lysias (and his funeral oration in particular) was an example of art, whereas Demosthenes was an example of talent and experience. What does that mean? Besides making comments about Attic orators, these passages also indicate that the tradition of rhetoric and its classical representatives were all conceived as useful political tools that were now being reinterpreted and used by critics and philosophers for their own different agendas. Rhetoric had thus far not developed a stabilized and solid tradition that would have fixated the interpretation of the orators in a specific framework. Indeed, Plato’s *Phaedrus* had thus far offered some thoughts about how to think about orators and speechwriters, but the first-century BCE critics and philosophers were now eagerly starting to create that missing theoretical axis for rhetorical education that would incorporate orators and teachers of rhetoric that had become so meaningful for the subsequent constructions of Greek identity and culture.

It is clear that in the Roman context, too, more is at stake than simply the right kind of style. It is about cultural capital. When Cicero turns to discuss the Atticists’ preferences, his tone is particularly critical, even if his admiration for Lysias

is the more straightforward. In his *Brutus* Cicero accuses the Atticists of having willfully chosen one example, Lysias, from a variety of different and equally illustrious examples of Attic eloquence. According to Cicero, these Atticists regard meagreness, dryness and general poverty, provided it has polish, urbanity and fineness, as the characteristics of Attic style (285). Yet there are more examples of Attic writing than simply Lysias. In the *Orator*, Cicero argues that the Atticists champion the man who ‘speaks in rough and unpolished style, provided only that he does so elegantly (*eleganter*) and plainly (*enucleate*)’ (28). He questions again their grounds for considering this style the only one appropriately labeled as Attic. Cicero turns to Lysias and agrees that ‘the Attic manner of speech belonged to Lysias, that most charming (*venustissimus*) and exquisite (*politissimus*) writer (who could deny it?)’ (29), but adds that Lysias should not be praised for his plain and unadorned style, but rather for the fact that ‘he has nothing strange (*insolens*) or wanting in taste (*ineptus*)’. This is clever and exemplifies well Cicero’s general aim to demonstrate that the Atticists have not sufficiently understood their own principles and models that they advocate.

Plato’s *Phaedrus* is explicitly present in Cicero’s thinking through the rhetorical canon and his own relationship to the orators. Within the context of the Atticist controversy and having to defend his own writing, Cicero must have particularly enjoyed invoking the passage from Plato’s *Phaedrus*, which compares Isocrates with Lysias. Despite its explicit aim to champion Isocrates as an important figure for rhetorical teaching,<sup>97</sup> we might perhaps notice a victorious undertone in Cicero’s translation of the *Phaedrus* (*Orator* 41: ‘He seems to me to possess greater talent than to be judged by the standard of Lysias’ speeches’; [*Isocrates*] *maiore mihi ingenio videtur esse quam ut cum orationibus Lysiae comparetur*),

<sup>97</sup> As far as I can tell, the ironical reading of Isocrates in the *Phaedrus* is not ancient. Plato’s praise seems to have been understood as genuine and Cicero’s own detailed discussion of that scene (*Orator* 41–2) indicates that we can set aside as irrelevant for the time being the possibility that Plato might have been ironical in his comment on Isocrates.

which enables him to appeal to Plato as an authority for his praise of Isocrates and, implicitly, for his lower regard of Lysias. It also seems to work particularly well for Cicero that Lysias, the model for plain Attic style, had apparently also been an inspiration for Hegesias of Magnesia, the ‘chief’ representative of the Asianist style, who was deeply despised by the Atticists. Cicero does not miss the opportunity to point this out in his *Orator* (226), as if to suggest that following one extreme (the Lysianic plain style) might inevitably lead to advocating the other extreme (the Asianist style). Cicero indicates, therefore, that Lysias was a rather more nuanced representative of rhetoric and with the authority of Plato (and Plato’s *Phaedrus* in particular) he implicitly indicates some possible issues in Lysias’ thought that may be relevant for those who are completely taken by the writer.

As we saw also in the case of Isocrates, Plato’s *Phaedrus* offers itself as a crucial authoritative text for conceptualizing ancient Greek rhetoric and negotiating the position of its participants (Lysias and Isocrates) for a contemporary audience. Despite the messiness of the tradition, as long as philosophers and critics are drawing on this influential dialogue, we are never too far from constructing a view of rhetoric through the two opposing sides: the Lysianic and the Isocratean. While Isocrates seems to have had a strong hold in education and rhetoric from the fourth century BCE onwards, he was certainly not a mainstream philosopher and, as such, his views on philosophy and rhetoric did not gain currency in the tradition of Greek philosophy that was transmitted primarily through various philosophical schools. Lysias on the other hand seems to have been preserved in the fringes of rhetorical tradition largely due to his epideictic speech (funeral oration) and his presence in Plato’s *Phaedrus*. In other words, by the time we come to Dionysius of Halicarnassus, the larger framework of the rhetorical tradition is heavily drawing on that Platonic dialogue, even if the specific roles of Lysias and Isocrates in it are not always conceptually clear or well understood.