

**EPIDEICTIC LITERATURE.
A DISSERTATION. PP.
89-261**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649466887

Epideictic Literature. A Dissertation. pp. 89-261 by Theodore C. Burgess

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The University of Chicago
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EPIDEICTIC LITERATURE

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTIES OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOLS OF ARTS,
LITERATURE, AND SCIENCE, IN CANDIDACY FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

(DEPARTMENT OF GREEK)

BY
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CHICAGO
The University of Chicago Press
1902

EPIDEICTIC LITERATURE.

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WHILE the following pages attempt to give a general survey of epideictic literature, it is with certain necessary limitations. A full discussion of this important and extensive branch in all its phases and relations is far too large a theme for a single paper. I have found myself compelled to treat the subject in many parts in a cursory manner and to make what may be regarded as a somewhat arbitrary choice among the topics which it presents: to develop some of its features in considerable detail and merely to touch upon others in themselves of interest and importance. The existence of monographs on some phases of the subject has caused these to be passed over more lightly. It has seemed unnecessary, for instance, to treat anew the *πολιτικός λόγος*, consolations, the *προτροπτικός λόγος*, and some other single features which have been amply discussed by others. The absence of a special presentation of the Sophists and the *προγυμνάσματα* (see p. 108, n. 1) may seem the most considerable omission. These influential factors in epideictic history are not discussed in a separate chapter, because the most important names naturally enter here and there as individuals, and because the history of these movements as a whole has been amply treated. The early Sophists have suffered the extremes of praise and blame. In place of the disrespect in which they were held as a class has come at the present day a tendency to magnify their influence. The modern discussion starts with Grote's notable chapter and the extended argumentation which has grown from it.¹ Discussions of the important Sophistic revival which began in the

¹See Sidgwick, *Journal of Philology*, IV (1873), 288, and V (1874), 66; he continues Grote's defense and cites other writers. Cf. also statements and references in the histories of Greek literature, notably Christ (3d ed.), Croiset, Bernhardt; Gomperz, *Griechische Denker*; Dümmler, *Prolegomena zu Platon's Staat*.

first and second century A. D., and is called the New Sophistic, are very numerous.¹

Among the most interesting features of the subject are the extent of the epideictic influence and the relations of other branches of literature to this form of oratory. The chapters on Poetry, History, and Philosophy are written from this point of view, but are necessarily mere sketches, which may be made more complete at some future time in separate papers.

I have adopted the following order of topics: an introductory statement; epideictic literature and its general characteristics; the uses of the word *ἐπιδείκνυμι* in Isocrates and Plato; Isocrates' conception of oratory; a brief sketch of epideictic oratory; the general rhetorical treatment of this department of oratory, especially in Menander and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, with the main characteristics of each of the separate forms of epideictic speech recognized by these rhetoricians; a few of these forms—the *βασιλικὸς λόγος* as a special development of the *ἐγκώμιον* of a person, the *γενεθλιακὸς λόγος*, the *ἐπιτάφιος*, and *παράδοξα ἐγκώμια*—are chosen for more detailed consideration in separate chapters. These are selected because of their individual importance and because they well illustrate the range of epideictic literature. Although much has been written on the subject of the *ἐπιτάφιος*, it is difficult to find even the familiar facts about this important form in a single paper, and

¹ The literature of the subject may be found in Christ, see index; Croiset, V (1900), 547 ff.; Bernhardt, I, 509, *et passim*. Compare also W. Schmid, *Ueber den kulturgeschichtlichen Zusammenhang und die Bedeutung der griechischen Renaissance in der Römerzeit* (Leipzig, 1898); H. von Arnim, *Leben und Werke des Dio von Prusa* (Berlin, 1898); E. Rhode, "Griechische Sophistik der Kaiserzeit." in *Der griechische Roman*, 310 (2d ed., Leipzig, 1900); E. Norden, *Antike Kunstprosa* (Leipzig, 1898), see index; W. Schmid, *Der Atticismus in seinen Hauptvertretern* (Stuttgart, 1897); Blass, *Attische Beredsamkeit*, see index; Baumgart, *Aelius Aristides als Repräsentant der sophistischen Rhetorik d. zweiten Jahrh. der Kaiserzeit* (Leipzig, 1874); Kaibel, "Dionysius v. Halicarnassus u. die Sophistik," *Hermes*, XX (1885), 497-513; Wilamowitz, "Asianismus u. Atticismus," *Hermes*, XXXV (1900), 16. Cf. also numerous treatises on individual Sophists, e. g., for Philostratus, Kayser's *Introduction*; Cobet, "Ad Philostrati Vitas Sophistarum et Heroica," *Mnemosyne*, I (1873), 269-32; Volkman, "Philostraten," *Jahrb. f. Phil.*, LXXXI (1860), 702.

also something remained to be done in the way of illustrating by parallel passages its stereotyped character and of bringing the extant orations into direct connection with the requirements of Menander and Dionysius of Halicarnassus. A separate chapter is given in each case to the relations of epideictic literature to (1) poetry, (2) history, (3) philosophy.

The closing chapter gives a list of the more prominent epideictic orators with dates and representative works. The names of some writers whose literary product as a whole would class them elsewhere are introduced here on account of some single epideictic composition. No attempt is made to include all of the Christian writers or those of the Byzantine period. Krumbacher's *Geschichte der byzantinischen Literatur* may be conveniently consulted for this period, which was one with very considerable epideictic production.

I take this opportunity also to express my great indebtedness to Professor Paul Shorey, of the University of Chicago, at whose prompting this work was undertaken, and to whose inspiration and kindly criticism any value it contains may be largely assigned. Professor G. L. Hendrickson, of the University of Chicago, has also made most helpful suggestions and has placed me under obligations by his discriminating criticism.

Introduction.

Since the time of Aristotle a large body of Greek oratory has been classified under the title "epideictic." The term, as we shall see (pp. 97 f.), was used to some extent before his day, but not with the definiteness of application which Aristotle's *Rhetoric* gave to it.

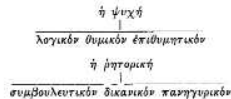
Like many other rhetorical terms among the Greeks, the word *ἐπιδεικτικός*¹ held at different times or at the same time quite

¹ I use the word "epideictic" in referring to this branch of literature, although the terms "panegyric" and "encomiastic" were also used by the Greek rhetors; cf. Philodemus, I, cols. 30, 32, pp. 212, 213, Sudhaus; Hermogenes, Spengel, *Rhet. Gr.*, II, 405, *et passim*; Diog. Laert., VII, 42; Aristides, Sp. II, 502, 17; Alexander, son of Numenius, Sp. III, l. 10; Menander, Sp. III, 331, 8; Theon, Sp. II, 61, 22; Nicolaus Sophista, Sp. III, 449, 13, l. 20. Cf. also the Latin *genus laudativum, genus demonstrativum*.

different meanings; to generalize, it had its stricter and its loose and more inclusive application. Aristotle is the earliest and most important authority for the former. His triple division of oratory¹ (*Rhet.*, I, 3, 1 and 3) is based upon the attitude of the hearer. He is necessarily either a *θεωρῶς* or a *κριτής*. The *κριτής* has some real interest at stake and is expected to make a decision, as in the case of one who listens to a legal argument or a speech in the assembly. The *θεωρῶς* is so named from the analogy of the theater, where the audience are mere spectators and entertainment is the chief purpose. He looks upon an oration chiefly as a display of intellectual ability, and this attitude of mind on the part of the auditor distinguishes the epideictic branch of oratory from the others. Aristotle's definition was adopted by other writers and was long employed.²

A more inclusive use of the term "epideictic" may be found even before Aristotle in the works of Isocrates,³ who placed under it symbouleutic oratory as well.⁴ Cicero does not confine the epideictic class to oratory. History also belongs here.⁵ Quintilian's references to history and poetry (X, 1, 28, 31, 33) seem to associate them with this division.

¹ Doxopater, *Walz. Rhet. Gr.*, II, 90 ff., gives three explanations of the triple division of oratory: one mythical, Hermes in bestowing the oratorical gift made the division; one from the poets, who used the three forms in writing of gods and men; one historical, by which the present division may be traced back to the beginnings of rhetorical study in Sicily. The three branches correspond to the divisions of man's nature, thus:



See *Walz, Rhet. Gr.*, II, 73, 80, 121, 133.

² Cf. Philodemus, I, p. 32 = Suppl., p. 18, Sudhaus; Alexander, Sp. III, 1; Menander, Sp. III, 331; Nicolaus Sophista, Sp. III, 483, 13; 450, 2; Quintil., III, 4, 6; III, 7, 1; III, 8, 7, 63; *Auctor ad Herenn.*, I, 2, 2; Cic., *De Inv.*, I, 6, 7; *De Orat.*, I, 31, 141.

³ The use of the word *ἐπιδείκναι* in Isocrates and his ideal of oratory are discussed in some detail on pp. 97 ff.

⁴ Compare Nicolaus Sophista, Sp. III, 484, 2 ff. ⁵ See *Orat.*, 37 and 207.

Hermogenes includes all literature except distinctively legal and deliberative oratory. After claiming Plato as the perfect example of an epideictic writer in prose, he adds that Homer, though a poet, is equally to be classed as epideictic, and that poetry, as a whole, should be placed under this division (Sp. II, 405, 7 and 21; 408, 15 ff.).¹ Menander in his treatise *περὶ ἐπιδεικτικῶν* recognizes this larger definition of the word, since he illustrates the word *ῥῆμος* from poetry or prose indifferently. He closes his discussion of this epideictic form with the statement that his rules are such as the *ποιητής*, the *συγγραφεύς*, and the *ῥήτωρ* employ in composing hymns to the gods (Sp. III, 344, 6). Among the hymns some forms are more appropriate for prose and some for poetry (343, 29).

An epideictic speech in its more technical sense was regarded among earlier rhetoricians as one whose sole or chief purpose

¹ A like application of the term "epideictic" to poetic compositions is found in the *Anthologia Palatina*, where the term is used in its most vague and general meaning. The epigrams classed under this title comprise Book IX (*cf.* also *App.*, chap. 3, ed. Didot, which, though of much more recent date, bears the same title). They are very miscellaneous and inclusive. The majority are real or imaginary incidents put in poetic form. A few are purely epideictic in motive, *e. g.*, IX, 521, a hymn to Dionysus; 525, to Apollo; 363, on Spring, containing the same *ῥῆμα* as Choricus; *App.*, 158, *ἑορτῶν ἑταῖρος*; *cf.* also IX, 412, and others. Some are descriptive, and many are imaginary speeches of celebrated persons; many personify animals or inanimate objects.

It seems impossible to trace the title historically. The scholiast to *Anth. Pal.*, IV, 1, indicates that Meleager's *Anthology* was alphabetical. Topical arrangement first appears in Agathias' collection. The title *ἐπιδεικτικῶν* is not among his seven headings, but apparently there was material of this nature placed under different titles, *as*: I, Dedications; II, On Statues; IV, Hortatory. Cephalas (*Anth. Pal.*, IV, 1) seems to have begun the work of classification entirely anew, furnishing the basis for that of Maximus Planudes. The scholiast (at the beginning of *Anth. Pal.*, IX) seems to interpret the title "epideictic" in a strict sense and to connect with it narrative epigrams. He says: *οὐδὲ τοῖς καλοῖσι ἐπιδίχται τὸ ἐπιδεικτικῶν ῥῆμα, ἀλλ' ἔστι καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἐπιγράμμασι θρηνοὶ καὶ ἐπισημίας ἐπιδεικτικῶν καὶ πραγμάτων γενεῶναι ἕτοιμα ἢ ὡς γενεῶναι ἀφ' ἑαυτῶν.* This would agree with the natural supposition that the term *ἐπιδεικτικῶν* was suggested by the many epigrams which would come strictly under that head, and that it then became a convenient title under which to place all those not readily classed elsewhere, and this the more easily because of the great liberty in the use of this word in its application to prose.

was display, thus agreeing with the derivation of the word "epideictic."¹ The hearer is to gain pleasure, at least, if not information.² The style is the most distinctive feature.³ This general characteristic marks out the limits of the territory naturally occupied by this division of oratory in its narrower conception. Its tendency is to exclude topics of a practical nature where the thought of the auditor centers chiefly on the subject discussed or in the argument, or where his interests are to any extent affected by the conclusions reached or implied.⁴ Since the appeal is to the emotions more than to the intellect, form is of greater importance than subject-matter. A tendency to ornament of every kind is fostered, and there is too little regard as to whether it be legitimate or not. Even truth may be disregarded in the interests of eloquence.⁵ "A pomp and prodigality of words," well-balanced periods, a style half poetic, half oratorical, are the qualities most desired. The orations which emphasize the qualities which come under this conception of the word "epideictic" are happily but a fragment of the large body of epideictic literature; yet this lower usage has stood, in the minds

¹ Cf. Anaximenes, chap. 35, init., *ὅτι ἀγάθος ἄνθρωπος ἐπιδεικτικῶς ἔπειτα*.

² Quintil., II, 10, 10.

³ Cic., *Orat.*, 61, 207; Quintil., III, 8, 7, and 63.

⁴ Compare Philodemus, I, p. 32 (Sudhaus) — Suppl., p. 18, where he approves the criticism of Epicurus that those who listen to displays and panegyrics, and the like, are not under any oath or in any hazard, and do not consider their truth or falsehood, but are charmed by the *ἥχος* and beauty of style; such things would not be endured in court or assembly.

⁵ Isocrates, *Busiris*, 4, presents as a general principle, the fact that one composing a eulogy may *invent* good qualities, and *vice versa* with one who makes a speech of detraction. Aristides (Sp. II, 505) says the encomiastic division among other things makes use of *παράλειψις* and *εὐφημία*. By the former only the praiseworthy is brought forward. *Εὐφημία* is a euphemistic way of stating facts which are in reality unfavorable to the one praised. So in the *ψόγος*, unfavorable facts are presented in a light worse than the truth (*δυσφημία*). Nicolaus Sophista (Sp. III, 481) tells the orator to call *δαίμων εὐλόγητος* and *προσηθέων*, τὸ δὲ θρόνος ἀνδρείων καὶ εὐφροσύνας, καὶ ὅλας ἀεὶ πάντα εἶπε τὸ κάλλιον ἐργαζόμενος; cf. Aristotle, *Rhet.*, I, 9, 29; Quintil., III, 7, 25; Anaximenes, Sp. I, 168, 10-13; 188, 1-10; Plato, *Phaedr.*, 267 B, 273 D, E; Isoc., *Peri.*, 8. Compare the Sophistic view of rhetoric as an "art of perversion." According to Anaximenes, this perversion of the truth belongs to all rhetoric; cf. chaps. 29 and 30.