

Review: *Pseudo-Longinus, Pseudo-Aristides, Anonymous Seguerianus, Apsines. Three Greek stylistic treatises and two rhetorical treatises from the period of the Roman Empire*, introduction, translation and commentary by Henryk Podbielski. Preface and scientific editing by Krzysztof Narecki. Published by Towarzystwo Naukowe KUL, John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin, Lublin 2016, pp. 619.

The present volume introduces Polish readers to three theories of Greek stylistics and two complete rhetorical textbooks in the spirit of the Second Sophistic which functioned in school rhetoric before Hermogenes' *Art of Rhetoric*¹ was constituted as a canonical work. The theories were created and widely used during the period of the greatest prosperity of rhetorical art which was the basis of humanistic and civic education in the Roman Empire. They are invaluable monuments of stylistics and applied rhetoric which derived from over five centuries of Greek rhetorical theory and practice. Therefore, not only do they have the value of a document and a direct historical testimony concerning the character and meaning of rhetorical art for the culture of speech and shaping civic attitudes in the first centuries of the Roman Empire, but also – as noticed by Michel Patillon, an excellent publisher of these texts and an outstanding researcher perfectly oriented in the research trends of contemporary linguistics, stylistics and rhetoric – they can be an inspiration for the development of contemporary theoretical and applied linguistics, stylistics and rhetoric, due to their richness and originality of the presented doctrines. Apart from the treatise *On the Sublime* by Pseudo-Longinus, which was previously translated into Polish twice: in 1823 by Józef Kowalewski and in 1951 by Tadeusz Sinko as *O górnosci*, the remaining four works have not been translated into Polish before. It is their first translation and the first comprehensive presentation in Polish, which enables wide range of recipients – interested in theoretical and practical aspects of style and public speaking – to use the works due to their scholarly analysis and historical and literary commentary. Therefore, it is relevant to briefly present the aforementioned works and treatises.

¹ Polish translation: Hermogenes, *Sztuka retoryczna*, trans. & ed. H. Podbielski, Lublin 2012.

First, a short explanation concerning the new translation and scholarly analysis of the treatise *On the Sublime* (Περὶ ὑψους [*Peri hypsous*]). As mentioned above, the work was translated into Polish two times already: in 1823 and in 1951. The latter translation with a brief introduction by professor Tadeusz Sinko has served two generations of Polish people for over sixty years now. During this period the treatise, which had been in the centre of interest of philologists and culture scholars in Europe and around the world since its Renaissance translation into Latin by Fulvio Orsini, has had a number of new editions, insightful comments and scholarly analyses, all of which broadened the understanding of its aspects and meaning for modern culture. It is worth recalling here the great role of the treatise in the shaping of Europe's modern aesthetic sensitivity which can be compared only to Aristotle's *Poetics*. The treatise, which is dedicated to an individual student: Postumius Florus Terentianus, a Roman patrician, as the so-called ὑπόμνημα [*hypomnēma*], that is, "a diary" or "commentary" (Latin *commentarius*), was not in "public circulation" and was preserved in one severely damaged medieval manuscript (the 10th century) and several later copies of the manuscript. Great interest and popularity were provided only by the modern editions: first by Francesco Robortello (*Dionysii Longini rhetoris praestantissimi Liber, De grandi, sive sublimi orationis genere*, Basel 1554), then by Paulus Manutius (*Dionysii Longini De sublimi genere dicendi*, Venice 1555), followed by Franciscus Portus (*Dionysii Longini De grandi, sive genere orationis*, Geneva 1570); but, above all, by Fulvio Orsini's Latin translation which preceded these editions. Because it was neither quoted nor commented upon in antiquity, Pseudo-Longinus' treatise only owes its understanding to the modern reception, especially the late-Renaissance, classicist and neoclassical. To a large extent, the reception was influenced by the extremely popular French translation and analysis by Nicolas Boileau, which was published for the first time in 1674² and until 1772 had eighteen editions. Previously read in the original or faithful Latin translation, the treatise was of interest mainly to the teachers of scholastic rhetoric and was treated as a textbook of rhetorical style. Its free translation into French and interpretation of the sublime as the most important literary and aesthetic idea proposed by Boileau made every theoretician of art and literature in the eighteenth-century France and England take a position regarding this idea – either accept or reject it. This is undoubtedly the merit not only of the extraordinary features of the work and

² *Traité du sublime*, traduit par Nicolas Boileau, Paris 1674.

the translator's literary talent, but even more of the sense of translator's epoch and the ability to adjust his translation and interpretation to that spirit. In the preface to his translation, Boileau explicitly reveals the adopted strategy when he says that he follows the rules of translation, but does not stick blindly to the original text. His aim, hence, is not to simply translate Pseudo-Longinus' text, but to give the public a treatise *On the Sublime* which would be useful to them.

The current translation, like all subsequent translations of the treatise in the world, does not follow Boileau's strategy of complementing and „bending“ the translated text to the presupposed “idea” expected by the readers, but strives to fully understand and faithfully reflect the original thought and intention of the author. The text is commonly perceived as the most difficult and challenging ancient text for a translator due to its depth of inquiry and reflection on the art of rhetoric combined with complex artistic form. For this reason, Podbielski's translation was preceded by years of him studying the text and familiarizing himself with the extensive professional literature on the subject. The obtained knowledge was used not only during the process of translation itself and in scholarly analysis explaining disputable issues concerning the text's authorship, time of creation and characteristic features, but also in the commentary in which, apart from the reality of ancient culture, also a number of specific problems of ancient poetics and stylistics was explained. I am convinced that the huge intellectual effort and great emotional engagement of the Translator resulted in a translation which is accurate to the current state of knowledge, faithful in terms of form and content, as well as clear and meeting the readers' expectations. In order to facilitate consultation with other sources on the treatise, an extensive bibliography is provided immediately after the Introduction.

Apart from the treatise *On the Sublime*, the problems of rhetorical stylistics are discussed in this selection also in two treatises from the second century AD, entitled *On Political Style* (Περὶ τοῦ πολιτικοῦ λόγου [*Peri tou politikou logou*]) and *On Simple Style* (Περὶ τοῦ ἀφελοῦς λόγου [*Peri tou aphelous logou*]). The treatises were probably preserved because the manuscript tradition linked them to Aelius Aristides, the most eminent rhetorician of the first period of the Second Sophistic. Thanks to this attribution, as well as to great cognitive and didactic value, methodological innovation and elaborate literary criticism, the two

treatises were preserved in quite numerous medieval manuscripts and aroused great interest of the Renaissance humanists. The decline of interest in rhetoric and of its teaching in the eighteenth-century Europe meant that the two treatises were long forgotten. The exceptions include their publication in the collective edition of Christian Walz's *Rhetores Graeci*³ and Leonard von Spengel's *Rhetores Graeci*⁴. It was not until 1918 that they were briefly presented and independently published by Wilhelm Schmid in *Aristidis qui feruntur libri rhetorici*⁵. However, their rediscovery by the academia and contemporary culture took place in 2002, when Michel Patillon published a professional two-volume bilingual edition with an extensive and insightful introduction⁶. The edition contains the first comprehensive translation into modern language accompanied by analytical commentary. The texts of the treatises provided by Patillon's edition are the basis for their translation into Polish. Stylistic treatises of Pseudo-Aristides, which for a long time were undervalued, and rarely and wrongly read until their rediscovery by Patillon, constitute an important link in the evolution of the theory of style's virtues towards the transformation of virtues into stylistic "characters" or "ideas" (ἰδέαι [*ideai*]). Without this link it is impossible to fully understand the genesis and the functioning of the "idea of style" doctrine created and formulated by Hermogenes as a tool for literary criticism and stylistic didactics. Literary criticism used in these treatises to describe the features of Demosthenes' (vol. 1) and Xenophon's (vol. 2) style draws the attention of modern researchers of ancient texts to the aspect which should not be neglected, namely that the "sophists" are the authors of this criticism. They themselves are the authors of literary texts and for them the analysed texts are simultaneously model texts and the subject of "rivalry/competition" as well as „imitation". They offer modern theorists of style such reading of texts which enriches and sharpens one's own reflection on contemporary theories.

The present volume includes also Polish translations and scholarly analyses of two complete textbooks on school rhetoric. The older textbook, dating back to the second half of the second century AD, was well known to numerous commentators of Hermogenes' and

³ Vol. 1-9, Stuttgartiae et Tubingae 1832-1836.

⁴ Vol. 1-3, Lipsiae 1854-1856.

⁵ Lipsiae 1926.

⁶ Aelius Aristide, *Arts rhétoriques*, vol. I: *Livre I: le discours politique*, vol. II: *Livre II: le discours simple*, Paris 2002.

Aphthonius' rhetorical works. It was anonymously preserved in only one quite well known codex, namely *Parisinus gr. 1874* (the 12th century). Not until 1838 was it discovered for modern philology by Nicolas Maximilien Sidoine Séguier de Saint-Brisson who prepared its first modern edition. The manuscript became known as *Anonymus Seguerianus*, from the name of the manuscript's discoverer and first publisher. The textbook on practical rhetoric introduces students to the principles of rhetorical art in accordance with the natural process of creating subsequent parts of a speech: introduction, narration, argumentation and epilogue. Such concept of a rhetorical textbook is realised in the treatise mostly by means of quoting the existing doctrines on the given topic which were proclaimed by ancient teachers of rhetoric and recognised by the author as authoritative and original. Thanks to this fact we also have the opportunity to learn about large fragments of the lost treatises of the rhetoricians of the time: Alexander, Neocles and Harpocration. Quotations and references to the opinions of the recognised authorities are subordinated by the anonymous author to the pedagogical purpose of the textbook. They are to illustrate better the many detailed disputable problems of classical school rhetoric, to discern and to objectify them, and to help understand and assimilate them. Such subordination and realisation of the pedagogical goal is possible thanks to the Anonymous' lecture in the form of commonly accepted findings of rhetorical art which brings all elements together.

Apsines of Gadara's *Art of Rhetoric* (Τέχνη ῥητορική [*Technē rhētorikē*]) is an example of a textbook typical of the Second Sophistic and at the same time a very original work. It was also arranged according to the subsequent parts of a speech. Its author was a famous sophist and teacher of rhetoric in Athens in the first part of the third century. Treatises arranged according to the above criterion allow the use of formulas typical for each part of a speech, which is extremely important for this author who, similarly to the author of *De inventione*, arranges his textbook so as to facilitate declamatory practice and making a speech *ex tempore* by providing the speaker with means to adapt quickly to many different topics. Apsines of Gadara based his recommendations on extensive personal experience as an attentive reader and commentator on classical authors as well as as the author of popular speeches and experienced teacher of rhetorical art. It is to these facts that his treatise owes its undoubted originality. As an annex to this book, a translation and an analysis of the

preserved fragments of the original treatise *On Propositions Maintained Figuratively* (Περὶ τῶν ἐσχηματισμένων προβλημάτων [*Peri tōn eschēmatismenōn problēmātōn*]) were provided.

While presenting the works contained in this study it is impossible not to mention its scientific and literary qualities, especially the excellent translations provided by professor Henryk Podbielski. The author of the study combines scientific virtuosity with the ability to present even the most complex problems in a very simple and clear way. His introductions to the translations of individual treatises are a case in point. The introductions are complemented by helpful footnotes which are not an erudite show-off, but rather they facilitate the reader's full understanding of the text. When it comes to the translations, Podbielski's great experience and mastery must be stressed. The original Greek texts are very difficult and require not only perfect knowledge of the language of the original, but also a unique translation technique and, above all, intuition which, if not natural to the Translator, has been strengthened by the earlier frequent contact with texts on similar subjects. For terms difficult to express and translate into Polish, there is original word provided in the brackets, which makes it easier for a reader familiar with ancient Greek to grasp the essence of the expressed thought and to formulate one's own interpretation. What is more, Podbielski uses perfectly Polish rhetorical terminology, enriching it, if need be, with aptly coined new terms which will certainly enter the language soon. In conclusion, the translation is faithful, clear, natural in its final form and accessible in reception. Therefore, as can be imagined, the first Polish publication of three Greek stylistic treatises and two rhetorical treatises from the period of the Roman Empire carefully translated and analysed by professor Henryk Podbielski is a precursory work that certainly has a chance to become an inspiration for researchers not only in the field of rhetoric but also of widely understood language and culture studies.

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