The Rhetorical Commentary in Late Antiquity

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Abstract

This paper examines the tradition of rhetorical exegesis on technical works – namely on Hermogenes’ treatises – flourished from the third century AD onwards. A focus on the evidence preserved proves the exegetes’ preference for the commentary format and the significant similarities in the structure and arrangement of the material with other exegetical literature of the same period. Moreover, by discussing further the content and scope of these commentaries, their relationship with teaching practice will be argued.

Keywords

Rhetorical exegesis – Hermogenes of Tarsus – Commentary – Prolegomena – Neoplatonism

1 Introduction

The practice of textual exegesis, widespread in different areas of knowledge – from philology to grammar, from philosophy to medicine, from theology to law –, also concerned rhetoric, another of the key disciplines of the ancient *paideia*. The activity of interpretation performed, since the Alexandrian Age, on Attic orators, first of all Demosthenes,¹ was accompanied, starting from

¹ This production is known to us through the double channel of the scholia, transmitted by medieval manuscripts, and of the papyri, of which the most famous is the *PBerol.* 9780, that preserves the exegesis of Demosthenes by Didymus; see Gibson 2002; Harding 2006; Dickey 2007, 51–55; Ucciardello 2012, 44–45. The repeated references by Didymus to the opinion of ‘some’ (ἐνιοί) who had preceded him (*PBerol.* 9780, col. 2.2–3; 7.11–14; 11.14–17; 13.16–18) show

the III cent. AD,² by a second exegetical line, focusing on 'technical' works that conveyed theoretical notions in rhetorical matter. Quite suddenly, the interpreters committed themselves to the treatises of the famous rhetorician Hermogenes of Tarsus.³

In the early 1900s, Stephan Glöckner and Hugo Rabe laid the foundations for a better knowledge of this exegetical tradition.⁴ After almost a century of lack of interest, studies by Michel Patillon and Malcolm Heath contributed to refocus scientific debate on these texts.⁵ However, many gaps are still to be filled. First of all some of these texts are still unpublished or published only partially; with a few exceptions, they remain accessible only in the volumes of the *Rhetores Graeci*, the monumental edition of rhetorical works realized between 1832 and 1836 by Christian Walz, which shows evident limits on the plan of textual criticism.⁶ Then there are some general questions requiring further investigation, such as the origins of rhetorical exegesis and the reasons that contributed to its development, the environments where it was practiced and its aims, the forms taken and methods followed, with similarities and differences compared to the exegesis performed in other areas of knowledge.⁷

In this paper, we will first make a review of the exegetes and their works. Then we will proceed to an analysis of the internal characteristics of the exegetical production in the period between the III and VI cent. AD. Finally, we

that he was not the first to engage in the interpretation of Demosthenes' orations and that there was a more ancient exegetical activity, to be traced back to the Alexandrians.

- 2 The exegesis of orators is still widespread between the II and III cent. AD. Commentaries on Demosthenes are known among the works of Zeno of Athens, Hermogenes of Tarsus and Menander of Laodicea (see Heath 2004 and *infra*; on the ancient exegesis of Demosthenes cf. also Lossau 1964). It is significant that among the *auctores* being object of this activity of interpretation there is also an exponent of the Second Sophistic such as Aelius Aristides (see in this regard the contribution of Lorenzo Miletto in this volume).
- 3 Hermogenes lived between the II and the III cent. AD. On his biography, full of anecdotes, see Patillon 2009, VII–XVIII.
- 4 Glöckner 1901 and Rabe 1895, 1899, 1908a, 1908b, 1908c, 1913, 1928; see also Kowalski 1939a, 1939b, 1940–1947.
- 5 Patillon, within the framework of studies on the manuscript tradition of the *corpus Hermogenianum* (Patillon 2008, 2009, 2012a, 2012b, 2014), has also reconsidered the circumstances of transmission of exegetical writings. Heath's works – by collecting *testimonia* and fragments preserved in ancient sources – have started a reconsideration of the personalities of the exegetes, especially those from an older era: see, in particular, Heath 2003a, 2003b, 2004, 2009.
- 6 Hereinafter the volumes of the *Rhetores Graeci* will be indicated with the *siglum RhG*.
- 7 Rhetorical exegesis has found little place in the studies on the development of exegesis *tout court*. There are no contributions dedicated to rhetorical exegesis in miscellaneous works on ancient commentary, such as Most 1999; Goulet-Cazé 2000; Geerlings-Schulze 2002 and Gibson-Shuttleworth Kraus 2002.

will try to emphasize the connections of exegetical texts with teaching and with the didactic practices of the late antique period.

2 The Exegetical Tradition from Late Antiquity to the Byzantine Period

An exegetical activity on rhetoric is attested for many late antique authors. Their names and their works, known by direct tradition and/or through *excerpta* transmitted by later exegetes, are listed here below in order of centuries.

III cent.

- Porphyry, the Neoplatonic disciple of Plotinus, author of a commentary on Minucianus' Τέχνη;⁸
- Pancratius, author of a commentary on Minucianus' Τέχνη;⁹
- Metrophanes, native of Eucarpia, author of a commentary on Hermogenes' Τέχνη and of a commentary on Aelius Aristides;¹⁰
- Menander of Laodicea, author of a commentary on Hermogenes and of other exegetical works.¹¹ The interpretation of what we read in the lemma of Suidas (M 590: ἔγραψεν ὑπόμνημα εἰς τὴν Ἑρμογένους τέχνην καὶ Μινουκιανοῦ Προγυμνάσματα) is controversial: according to the position of the comma, before or after καὶ Μινουκιανοῦ, we should mean that he also wrote a commentary on Minucianus' Τέχνη or on his Προγυμνάσματα.¹²

8 Suidas II 2098. The Teubner edition of Porphyry's work, edited by Smith 1993, does not consider most of the rhetorical fragments that have instead been collected by Heath 2003a.

9 Suidas II 12. On Pancratius see Heath 2004, 69, who identifies him with the father of Prohaeresius, teacher of Eunapius.

10 Suidas M 1009. In Suidas' list of his works we also find a treatise Περί ιδεῶν λόγου and a treatise Περί στάσεων. On the figure of Metrophanes see Heath 2004, *passim*.

11 On the figure of Menander see, as well as Heath 2004, Russell-Wilson 1980.

12 The first interpretation is supported by Patillon 2009, VIII n. 2. The second interpretation, defended by Heath 2004, 118–119, seems to be confirmed by the syntactic arrangement of the text, with the genitive Μινουκιανοῦ markedly separated from the preceding εἰς τὴν Ἑρμογένους τέχνην. On the other hand – as Heath himself recognizes (p. 119) – this would be the only evidence of a commentary on a manual of progymnasmata which, as is known, represented the initial and more elementary stage of rhetorical education.

IV cent.

- Evagoras, mentioned several times by Syrianus in the commentary on *Περὶ στάσεων* for his exegesis of Hermogenes;¹³
- Aquila, equally recalled by Syrianus but also by George and Nilus (see *infra*), for his interpretation of Hermogenes.¹⁴ In the opinion of most scholars, it is possible to identify this figure, qualified as ‘philosopher’ by Syrianus himself, with that Aquila who wrote a comment on Aristotle’s *Categories* before 320 AD;¹⁵
- Sopatros, author of a commentary on Hermogenes’ *Περὶ στάσεων*.¹⁶ In addition to this commentary, other works are attributed to a rhetorician named Sopatros: 1) a collection of *Προγυμνάσματα*, transmitted in fragments from the commentaries of John of Sardis and John Doxopatres on Aphthonius’ *Προγυμνάσματα* (ed. Rabe 1928, 57–70); 2) a treatise *Διαίρεσις ζητημάτων*, that collects eighty-two subjects of declamation, classified on the basis of the issue (*στάσις*) they illustrate (edited in *RhG* 8, pp. 1–385); 3) some *Prolegomena* to Aelius Aristides (Lenz 1959); 4) a collection of *Μεταποιήσεις*, ‘paraphrases’ of Homer and Demosthenes, equally in fragments (Glöckner 1910). The question of Sopatros’ identity and the authorship of the works has been, and still is, largely debated;¹⁷
- Epiphanius, interpreter of Hermogenes’ *Περὶ στάσεων*;¹⁸

13 Usually Syrianus mentions Evagoras and Aquila together (2.35.2–3; 2.41–12.11; 2.55.6; 2.56.21; 2.60.24; 2.128.23 Rabe), while only once he refers to Evagoras alone (2.3.23 Rabe).

14 Syrianus, 2.37.26; 2.39.8; 2.43.13; 2.50.24 Rabe, with the addition of references together with Evagoras.

15 Cf. Pernot 1989 and Schenkeveld 1991.

16 The commentary has been transmitted in two different versions. The first can be read in the codex *Marcianus gr. Z. 433* (XI cent., edited in *RhG* 5, pp. 1–211). The second can be found within a compilation that puts together sections of the commentaries by Syrianus, Sopatros, Marcellinus and, exceptionally, inserts extracts from Porphyry, Epiphanius, Polaemon, Athanasius. The most ancient manuscript of the compilation is the codex *Parisinus gr. 2923* of X–XI cent. (on the basis of the *Parisinus* and of the Aldine edition of 1509, the text was published by C. Walz in *RhG* 4, pp. 39–846, who generally eliminates the ‘eccentric’ attributions with regard to the three main authors; cf. Patillon 2008, XL–XLI). There are many other later manuscript copies, such as the *Ambrosianus* I 54 sup. (Martini-Bassi 461) and the *Parisinus gr. 2921*, respectively of XV and XVI sec. On the relations between the two versions of Sopatros’ commentary, that show considerable differences, there are several hypotheses: the question has recently been resumed by Maggiorini 2012, 14–20 who recalls and discusses the opinion of her predecessors.

17 See Innes-Winterbottom 1988; Heath 2004 esp. 70–71 and 295–296; Castelli 2015 and Maggiorini 2012, 9–23.

18 An extract of Epiphanius’ work, as already mentioned in the footnote above, (n. 16) is preserved inside the compilation that collects Syrianus, Sopatros and Marcellinus (see *RhG* 4, 463.29–465.18). Glöckner 1901, 93–94 proposes a *floruit* in the middle of the IV

- Eustathius, whose work of interpretation of Hermogenes is mentioned by later exegetes;¹⁹
- Athanasius, author of *Prolegomena* to Hermogenes' *Περὶ στάσεων*, preserved thanks to an epitome prepared by the rhetorician Zosimus.²⁰

v–vi cent.

- Syrianus, author of commentaries on Hermogenes' *Περὶ στάσεων* and *Περὶ ἰδεῶν λόγου*.²¹ The manuscript tradition attributes the texts to a Syrianus 'sophist', but it is generally admitted that he is the Neoplatonic philosopher head of the school of Athens and teacher of Proclus, commentator on Homer, Plato and Aristotle, dead in 437;²²
- George of Alexandria (also known as George Monos), who wrote a commentary on Hermogenes' *Περὶ στάσεων*, which can be dated back to the first half of the v cent.;²³

cent. Instead, Patillon 2009, LIX, in the wake of Kennedy 1983, 137–140, opts for the second quarter of the iv cent.

19 On Eustathius see Glöckner 1901, 78–86 and Glöckner 1908–1909, 22–25; Schilling, 1903, 715–733; Rabe 1908b, 519–520; Rabe in *PS*, LXXI–LXXII; Heath 2004, 71.

20 The epitome is transmitted by the codex *Matritensis* 4687 (xv cent.), that was transcribed in Milan by Constantine Lascaris. The text is edited in *PS*, 171–183. On Athanasius and Zosimus see Glöckner 1901, 90–92; Schilling, 1903, 738–742; Rabe in *PS*, LVIII–LX; Heath 2004, 159.

21 The two commentaries by Syrianus have been transmitted by the manuscripts *Marcianus gr.* Z. 433 (xi cent.) and Messina S. Salvatore 118 (xi cent.). Another, highly different, version of the commentary on *Περὶ στάσεων*, has been transmitted within the compilation that also collects materials of Sopatros and Marcellinus (cf. *supra* n. 16). According to Heath 2004, 70 both the preserved versions of this commentary would have been summarized from a larger original, each of them preserving the material omitted in the other version.

22 See Cardullo 1987.

23 The work, of which is preserved only the part relative to the division of the *στάσεις* (corresponding to chapters 3–12 of Hermogenes' treatise), is transmitted by three codices: the *Parisinus gr.* 2919 (x cent.), the *Vaticanus gr.* 1328 (second half of the xiii century) and the *Vaticanus gr.* 1298 (late x cent.). The *Parisinus gr.* 2919 contains only the comment (Hermogenes' text is quoted only occasionally). The *Vaticanus gr.* 1328 contains both the comment and Hermogenes' *Περὶ στάσεων*. Finally, some George's passages can be read in the lower part of a quire of the codex palimpsest *Vaticanus gr.* 1298 (with Aelius Aristides' orations). See Arnesano 2011 and Patillon 2009, xciv. George's name has been the object of different interpretations. The term *μόνος*, read in the *inscriptio* of the *Parisinus* (τοῦ αὐτοῦ Γεωργίου τοῦ μόνου σοφιστοῦ Ἀλεξανδρείας), has been considered by some as a part of the name of the commentator (George Monos). Others have instead considered *μόνος* as a syncopated form of the noun *μοναχός* ('monk'). A third interpretation has been suggested, with convincing arguments, by Duffy 1980: *μόνος* would be "a laudatory epithet meaning 'the one and only', in the sense of 'the great' or the like" (a similar use is attested

- Marcellinus, author of a commentary on Hermogenes' *Περὶ στάσεων*.²⁴ According to a generally accepted hypothesis, this Marcellinus can be identified with the homonymous author of a *Life of Thucydides*, who lived in the v cent.;²⁵
- John of Caesarea (v cent.), who represents one of the main sources of a long anonymous commentary on Hermogenes' *Περὶ στάσεων*, published in *RhG* 7 (pp. 104–696, see Heath 2003b, 15–16);
- Photius (v cent.), whose exegetical activity is known through quotations by John Doxopates;
- Phoebammon the Egyptian (v–vi cent.), whose work of exegesis of Hermogenes' *Περὶ ἰδεῶν λόγου* can equally be reconstructed from quotations of later commentators. The medieval tradition has instead preserved his treatise *On the figures* (*Περὶ σχημάτων*).²⁶

Flourishing in Late Antiquity, the activity of rhetorical exegesis is equally well-attested in the Byzantine age. In the period of the Macedonian (867–1056) and then Komnenian (xi–xii cent.) Renaissance commentaries were produced by John of Sardis,²⁷ John the Deacon,²⁸ Nilus,²⁹ John Siceliotes,³⁰ John

for μέγας in the comment of Olympiodorus on Plato's *Gorgias*). For the dating to the v cent. see Patillon 2009, LVIII and XCIII.

- 24 The commentary has been transmitted in the above-mentioned compilation that puts together materials of Sopatros and Marcellinus (see *supra* n. 16); in particular, for Marcellinus' commentary cf. Patillon 2009, LVIII–LIX. It is also possible to attribute to Marcellinus (entirely or only in part) the anonymous prolegomena introducing the compilation, which are edited in *PS* 258–296, cf. Rabe in *PS*, LXXVI–LXXVIII; Kennedy 1994, 220–221.
- 25 The hypothesis, at first put forth by Oomen 1926, 74, is accepted with some doubt by Schissel 1930 and, with more conviction, by Russell 1981, 197 and Cagnetta 1986, 60; *contra* Kennedy 1983, 112.
- 26 On Phoebammon see Rabe 1899 and Stegemann 1941. Also the work of Troilus of Side, active around the year 400, is transmitted in the manuscripts under the title Προλεγόμενα τῆς Πητορικῆς Ἑρμογένους (edition in *PS*, 44–58). However, a study of the content shows that we are rather in the presence of prolegomena to the art of rhetoric in general; see Rabe in *PS* XXXIX.
- 27 Author of a commentary on Aphthonius' Προγυμνάσματα, see Rabe 1928.
- 28 Author of a commentary on the pseudo-Hermogenean treatise Περὶ μεθόδου δεινότητος, see Rabe 1908a.
- 29 Author of a commentary on Περὶ στάσεων, preserved in the *Parisinus suppl. gr.* 670 (x sec.). On this manuscript and on Nilus' identity, see *infra* n. 37.
- 30 Author of a commentary on Hermogenes' Περὶ ἰδεῶν, which we know through the quotations and refutations by John Doxopates; see Romano 2007, 112.

Doxopatres,³¹ Christophorus.³² Under the Palaiologan dynasty, exegetical works were written by Maximus Planudes.³³ Anonymous works are also to be added to the list, such as the long commentary edited in *RhG* 7.³⁴ Therefore, it is far from being a marginal phenomenon, considering its development for almost one thousand years in the history of the Greek culture.³⁵ The considerable extent of the phenomenon on the diachronic plan, is also accompanied by its diffusion on the synchronic plan. In the Byzantine period, the exegetical activity was not limited to the cultural centers of the Greek East but was also developed in 'peripheral' areas such as Southern Italy.³⁶ For a large part of the manuscripts that transmit the work of the commentators, it has been possible to reconstruct their origin in the Italo-Greek area.³⁷ Writing of new commentaries went probably in parallel with the consultation and reuse of more ancient exegetical texts. So, the humanist Janus Lascaris reports that he had seen one of the copies of the work of George of Alexandria at the library of the scholar Sergio Stiso in Terra d'Otranto.³⁸

An essential element resulting from this first presentation of the documented material concerns the choice of the *auctor* and of the texts submitted to exegesis. The most ancient exegetes, Porphyry and Pancratius show their preference for the work of Minucianus of Athens, contemporary of Hermogenes and his rival, especially for the part of rhetorical doctrine relative to the issue-theory.³⁹ However, the situation appears completely changed in the late

31 He commented on three works of the *corpus Hermogenianum*: Περὶ στάσεων, Περὶ ἰδεῶν λόγου and Περὶ εὐρέσεως; see Romano 2007, 112.

32 There is no agreement among the scholars on the Italo-Greek origin of the exegete and of the manuscript transmitting his work, Messina S. Salvatore 119, of the second half of the XII cent., see Rabe 1895 and 1908c, Romano 2007, 112.

33 On the Planudes' project of edition of the *corpus Hermogenianum*, with prolegomena, scholia and appendixes see Patillon 2008, LXXIII–LXXV.

34 *RhG* 7, pp. 104–696.

35 Cf. Valiavitcharska 2013, 34.

36 On the circulation of rhetorical texts in Southern Italy in the Byzantine period Irigoin 1986 and Arnesano 2011.

37 Particularly significant is the case of the codex *Parisinus suppl. gr.* 670, that can be dated to late X cent.: it contains a long commentary on Hermogenes' Περὶ στάσεων and is written by a person who calls himself 'Nilus monk'. He has been identified with Nilus of Rossano, founder of the Greek abbey of Grottaferrata. See Glöckner 1901; Cavallo 1980; Romano 1989, 338–339 (again in Romano 2007, 114).

38 At f. 80r of his notebook, today *Vaticanus gr.* 1412, Lascaris wrote down the titles of some works owned by Stiso. The first was precisely George's commentary. Cf. Arnesano 2011, 108–111.

39 We know Minucianus' work only through the frequent quotations by the commentators, which almost in all cases refer to problems related to the theory of the *στάσεις*. These

III century, when the activity of interpretation was entirely focused on Hermogenes.⁴⁰ The reason was that Hermogenes emerged as the highest *auctoritas* in rhetoric, even preferred to authors like Aristotle or Dionysius of Halicarnassus,⁴¹ as also shown by the very high number of medieval codices transmitting his work.⁴² Under the entry 'Hermogenes' in Suidas we read that all the people have his Τέχνη ῥητορική 'at their fingertips' (Τέχνην ῥητορικήν, ἣν μετὰ χεῖρας ἔχουσιν ἅπαντες).⁴³ Furthermore, it is equally important to notice that, at least until the VI century, the efforts of the exegetes seem to focus only on two treatises, Περὶ στάσεων⁴⁴ and, to a less extent, Περὶ ἰδεῶν λόγου.⁴⁵ As it is well known, the tradition attributes to Hermogenes five writings: apart from the two above-mentioned works, a treatise Περὶ εὐρέσεως, a treatise Περὶ μεθόδου δεινότητος and a manual of Προγυμνάσματα. However, according to modern interpreters, this *corpus Hermogenianum* would be an artificial creation of the V–VI cent. around an original nucleus, very likely represented by Περὶ στάσεων and Περὶ ἰδεῶν λόγου.⁴⁶ Therefore, the exegetical production seems to reflect

quotations also show the polemical positions expressed by Hermogenes with regard to Minucianus. See Heath 2004, 32–36.

- 40 We have already said that Menander, as we can read in Suidas, was engaged in the exegesis both of Hermogenes and of Minucianus. See *supra* § 2 and n. 12.
- 41 In particular, it is worth noting the lack of interest for Aristotle's *Rhetoric* that, as well as the *Poetics*, seems excluded from the exegetical activity of Aristotelian and Neoplatonic commentators. The high number of manuscripts of Aristotle's works circulating between the IX and the XIV cent. do not include the *Rhetoric* (except for the famous *Parisinus gr.* 1741, of the mid-X cent., that also contains the *Poetics*). The first comments date back to the XII century, one written by Stephanus of Byzantium (edited in CAG 21:2,263–334) and the other, anonymous and much larger, edited in CAG 21:2,1–262. See Conley 1990; Gottschalk 1990, 68.
- 42 According to the estimate by Romano 2007, 107, the codices of Hermogenes and of his exegetes are about 180. A similar success was experienced, in the Latin West, by Cicero's *De inventione*, as witnessed once again by the important amount of medieval codices transmitting this work. A fruitful and lasting exegetical tradition, flourished around the *De inventione*, extends from the III cent. to the XV cent. (see Ward 1995, 74–105).
- 43 Suidas E 3096. According to Patillon 2009, XVII, this information would probably be traced back to a source of the IV or V cent. AD.
- 44 The theory of στάσεις (on which see the fundamental work by Calboli Montefusco 1986), first outlined by Hermagoras, had been at the center of the attention of rhetoricians between the II and III cent. AD. The proliferation of works aiming at explaining it seems to be a consequence of the importance that this doctrine had assumed in rhetorical education.
- 45 Syrianus (1.15–2.6 Rabe) claims that he had been the first to write an exegetical work on Περὶ ἰδεῶν.
- 46 Thus Patillon 2008, V–VI (see also Patillon 2014, 3–4); Rabe 1913 considers the Περὶ στάσεων and the Περὶ ἰδεῶν λόγου as undoubtedly written by Hermogenes, while he leaves open the question of the authenticity of the Περὶ μεθόδου δεινότητος.

the process of formation of the *corpus*, initially focusing on the two works undoubtedly attributed to Hermogenes and only later paying also attention to the others, when they were already circulating under Hermogenes' name.⁴⁷

3 Form and Structure of Exegetical Writings

For a thorough examination of the exegetical production, it is necessary to start from the observation of its characteristics from the point of view of the internal form and structure. On the formal configuration of the exegetical works only known by indirect tradition, through references or quotations by later exegetes, we cannot say very much. The title by which they are usually indicated in Suidas' Byzantine lexicon, i.e. *ὑπόμνημα*,⁴⁸ clearly evokes the form of commentary. At the beginning of his commentary on *Περὶ ἰδεῶν*, when referring to the activity of others who, before him, had engaged in the interpretation of Hermogenes, Syrianus uses the verb *ὑπομνηματίζειν* giving the impression of using it in its technical meaning of 'comment' / 'write a commentary':

Ἄπαντα μὲν σχεδὸν ὅσα γε εἰς ἡμᾶς ἦκει τοῦ τεχνογράφου Ἑρμογένους συγγράμματα θαυμαστά τε καὶ πολιτικῆς ἀνάμεστα φρονήσεως ὑπάρχει – φημί δὲ τὸ περὶ τῶν στάσεων αὐτοῦ σύγγραμμα, ὃ δὴ πολλοὶ γε καὶ ἄλλοι σοφιστῶν τε καὶ τῶν Πλατωνικῶν φιλοσόφων ὑπομνηματίζειν οὐκ ἀπηξίωσαν [...].⁴⁹

On the other hand, we cannot exclude that Hermogenean interpreters had also adopted other forms typical of exegetical literature. Syrianus himself, in the *incipit* of the commentary on *Περὶ στάσεων*, recalling again the works of those who had preceded him in the exegesis of Hermogenes, prefers to speak of *πραγματεῖαι* ('treatises'):

47 According to Patillon 2008, v–vii, the circumstances of the creation of Hermogenean corpus would be strictly related to those of formation, by an anonymous compiler, of a larger collection of rhetorical writings (*corpus rhetoricum*) covering in detail the different aspects of the doctrine, from the simplest (preparatory exercises) to the most complex (the stylistic doctrine). Within this *corpus rhetoricum*, at least until the xi cent., Aphthonius' *Προγυμνάσματα* (edited by Rabe 1926) were preferred to the homonymous work attributed to Hermogenes. Aphthonius' text is object of the exegesis of John of Sardis and John Doxopates.

48 Cf., for example, Suidas M 1009 (Metrophanes); M 590 (Menander), Π 12 (Pancratius).

49 1.1.4–9 Rabe: 'Almost all the treatises by the technical writer Hermogenes that have come down to us are admirable and full of political wisdom – I refer to his treatise on the issues that many others, both sophists and Platonic philosophers, did not deem unworthy of comment' (my translation).

Πολλῶν ἤδη φιλοσόφων τε καὶ σοφιστῶν πραγματείας οὐ σμικρὰς εἰς ἐξήγησιν τῆς Ἑρμογένους καταβαλομένων τέχνης οὐδὲ εἰς τῶν εἰς ἐμὲ ἡκόντων περὶ τοῦ βίου διελέχθη τάνδρος.⁵⁰

For authors like Syrianus, Sopatros, Marcellinus and George, whose work is preserved, it is possible to identify and define more precisely the internal configuration and organization of exegetical writing.

In medieval manuscripts, these texts are presented with the names of ὑπομνήματα or σχόλια. Some examples come from the codices *Marcianus gr. Z. 433* and *Parisinus gr. 2919*, which transmit respectively the works of Syrianus and Sopatros and George's work:

Marc. gr. f. 2r: σχόλια εἰς τὰ μέχρι στοχασμοῦ τῆς Ἑρμογένους τέχνης καὶ εἰς τὰς ἰδ' στάσεις Συριανοῦ σοφιστοῦ.

Marc. gr. f. 206v: Σωπάτρου σοφιστοῦ ὑπόμνημα εἰς τὴν Ἑρμογένους τέχνην.⁵¹

Par. gr. f. 1r: Σχόλια σὺν θεῷ εἰς τὴν διαίρεσιν ἀπὸ φωνῆς τοῦ αὐτοῦ Γεωργίου τοῦ μόνου σοφιστοῦ Ἀλεξανδρείας.⁵²

A study of Sopatros' work, transmitted by the codex *Marcianus*, allows to qualify it as a commentary in the strict sense, since it satisfies the two characteristics recognized as distinctive of this genre: the nature of second-order discourse,⁵³ aiming at explaining and interpreting another text on which it depends, and the structure by lemmata which reproduce a more or less extended part of the text on which is performed the exegesis.⁵⁴ More precisely, it is a 'continuous commentary', because the basic text is commented *in extenso*.⁵⁵

Of the two exegetical works by Syrianus, we can consider as a continuous commentary the text on *Περὶ ἰδεῶν*, even though the exegesis does not cover the whole Hermogenes' treatise but is interrupted at the ninth chapter of the

50 2.1.6–9 Rabe: 'Among the numerous philosophers and sophists who have composed not short treatises to explain Hermogenes' art, no one of those which have come down to me has spoken of the life of that man' (my translation).

51 The term τέχνη is used here to indicate the *Περὶ στάσεων*; cf. the similar usage in Suidas M 590 and M 1009.

52 The term διαίρεσις refers to a specific section of Hermogenes' treatise, consisting of an introduction, a chapter on method (μέθοδος) and, precisely, a broad discussion about the division (διαίρεσις) of each στάσις (cf. Kennedy 1994, 209). George's exegesis focuses on this last section, cf. what said *supra* n. 23.

53 'Second-order discourse' is the expression used by Baltussen 2007, 254.

54 For a definition of commentary, see Del Fabbro 1979, 69 followed by Abbamonte 1994, 220–221 and Dorandi 2000, 15. Cf. also Romano 1994, 599.

55 Dorandi 2000, 15.

second book, without considering the last three. Syrianus explains the interruption by affirming that the final part of Hermogenes' text – the discussion about political discourses (deliberative, judicial and epideictic), writers of dialogues and historiographers – appears perfectly clear and can be understood by those who have thoroughly studied all of the above.⁵⁶

Syrianus' commentary on *Περὶ στάσεων* differs from this model, at least in the version transmitted by the codex *Marcianus*. It has a structure by lemmata only in the initial part, which comments the first chapter and the beginning of the second chapter of Hermogenes' treatise. In the following part, the work leaves the form of commentary and takes on that of a monograph, organized in fourteen sections, each containing an exposition of every issue.⁵⁷ Syrianus himself programmatically announces and justifies this change of direction. Until that moment, he explains, he had followed Hermogenes' exposition because it was 'the most technical and the clearest' (*τεχνικώτατα καὶ σαφέστατα*) but, when focusing on the definitions of the issues (*τοὺς τῶν στάσεων ὅρους*), it was necessary to look at Evagoras and Aquila, ἄριστοι φιλόσοφοι, who had treated this subject 'in the most scientific manner' (*ἐπιστημονικώτατα*), thus allowing to achieve a precise knowledge of the subject (*τῆς ἀκριβοῦς περὶ τῶν στάσεων γνώσεως*).⁵⁸ Therefore, the abandonment of the hypomnematic form coincides with the choice of two new *auctoritates*, Evagoras and Aquila.

56 1.95.5–9 Rabe. It is useful to recall that a tendency to reduction, towards the end of the text being commented, is shared by ancient commentaries, also in contexts other than rhetoric; see in this regard Nünlist 2009, 12.

57 For every *στάσις*, Syrianus analyzes the definitions (*ὅροι*) and the internal divisions (*διαίρέσεις*). Patillon 2009, LXXV defines this second part of Syrianus' work an 'exposé doctrinal'.

58 2.56.16–24 Rabe. Cf. 2.128.20–129.3: διὰ τοῦτο δὲ τούτων μόνων τῶν τεχνογράφων παρεθέμεθα τοὺς ὅρους, ἐπεὶ γε εὐδοκιμώτεροι τῶν πρὸ ἑαυτῶν ἔδοξαν μέχρι τῶν Εὐαγόρου τε καὶ Ἀκύλου χρόνων· οὗτοι δὲ τὴν ἐκ τῆς θείας φιλοσοφίας ἐπιστήμην τοῖς περὶ τῶν στάσεων ἐγκαταμίξαντες θεωρήμασιν ἀκριβεστέρους τοὺς τε ὅρους καὶ τὰς τῶν προβλημάτων ἐποιήσαντο διαίρέσεις ('for this, we have reported only the definitions of these technical writers, because they were more reputed among our predecessors, until the times of Evagoras and Aquila; but the latter, having combined the issue-theory with the science deriving from divine philosophy, have created more precise definitions and divisions of the questions'; my translation).

A particular case is that of the compilation putting together materials of Marcellinus, Sopatros and Syrianus.⁵⁹ This is in fact a sort of ‘multiple’ commentary, collecting around each lemma the comments of several exegetes.⁶⁰

Finally, George’s commentary is highly interesting because of its particular internal configuration. It is organized in 54 πράξεις (‘lectures’), sequentially numbered (*alpha, beta, gamma*, etc.) and of unequal length, that clarify various sections of Hermogenes’ treatise. Each πράξις is then divided in a series of chapters (κεφάλαια).⁶¹ This organization in πράξεις shows a significant analogy with that of some Neoplatonic commentaries.⁶² Also the formula we read in the *inscriptio* of the codex *Parisinus gr.* 2919 (f. 1r: Σχόλια σὺν θεῷ εἰς τὴν διαίρεσιν ἀπὸ φωνῆς τοῦ αὐτοῦ Γεωργίου τοῦ μόνου σοφιστοῦ Ἀλεξανδρείας)⁶³ closely recalls those that we find in the manuscripts of Neoplatonic commentaries.⁶⁴ This

59 See *supra* n. 16. According to Patillon 2009, LIX (see also Patillon 2008, XLI) the original nucleus of the compilation, in which it is possible to recognize several changes and a lot of glosses, would be traced back to Late Antiquity and could be dated to the second half of the v cent. or to early vi cent. Same opinion in Maggiorini 2012, 16–18 who, independently from Patillon (whose works are not mentioned), goes as far as supposing that the final compiler was Marcellinus. *Contra* Heath 2004, 70–71, who thinks that the grouping took place by an unknown Byzantine scholar much later than the redaction of the three commentaries.

60 In the codex *Parisinus*, the commentary is full page with more or less long sequences of Hermogenes’ text in a centered position, which separate the different exegetical sections, while in the margin there are, in an abbreviated form, the names of the commentators. On the tradition of multiple commentaries, see the contribution of Giancarlo Abbamonte in this volume.

61 As already said, the *Vaticanus gr.* 1328 contains both the commentary and the text of Περὶ στάσεων: in it, integral quotations of Hermogenes’ text (defined with the expression τὸ κείμενον) and the relative comment (ἡ ἐξηγήσις) succeed each other, in alternated sequences. In the *Parisinus gr.* 2919, containing only the commentary, the quotations of Hermogenes’ text usually appear at the beginning of the πράξις, but they can also be inserted during the exposition, sometimes with slight modifications to ensure the grammatical and logical continuity with the latter. Instead, in George’s extracts contained in the *Vaticanus gr.* 1298 there are no Hermogenes’ quotations. Cf. Patillon 2009, LXIII, LXXXVIII–LXXXIX, XCIV.

62 In the Neoplatonic commentaries, each πράξις is usually divided in θεωρία (i.e. explanation and interpretation of the content, of the doctrine), and λέξις (i.e. explanation of individual words or sentences), see Lamberz 1987, Hadot 1997, 170 and Szabat 2015, 259–260. It is widely believed that such a structure was already used in Middle Platonic commentaries (Dörrie-Baltes 1993, 169–170; Mansfeld 1994, 161–163; Ferrari 2001, 566–570); *contra* Petrucci 2017.

63 The formula is also reported, though with slight modifications (see Arnesano 2011, 110), in the annotation by Janus Lascaris (*Vaticanus gr.* 1412, f. 80r), cf. *supra* n. 38.

64 Cf., for ex., the formula opening the commentary on Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, transmitted under the name of Asclepius of Tralles (Σχόλια εἰς τὸ μείζον Α τῆς μετὰ τὰ φυσικὰ Ἀριστοτέλους γενόμενα ὑπὸ Ἀσκληπιοῦ ἀπὸ φωνῆς Ἀμμονίου τοῦ Ἑρμείου, on which see

formula sheds light on the nature and on the particular modalities of compilation of the work: these are ‘notes’ (σχόλια) drawn up ἀπὸ φωνῆς, ‘from the voice’ of George, that is to say, on the basis of his oral teaching.⁶⁵ The *subscriptio* present in the same codex would also seem to identify the author of the more or less faithful transcription of George’s lectures: his disciple Zeno (f. 245v: Ἐπληρώθη σὺν θεῷ καὶ ἡ διαίρεσις εὐτυχῶς Ζήνωνι σχολαστικῷ).⁶⁶

Another element contributes to characterize – both on the formal plan and in terms of content – the exegetical production in the rhetorical context: the presence of prolegomena, introductory sections containing preliminary questions for the study of Hermogenes’ treatises or of rhetoric in general.⁶⁷ These prolegomena were initially an integral part of the commentaries, as is the case for the works of Sopatros⁶⁸ and Syrianus;⁶⁹ however, it is possible that they had already begun to be produced as autonomous texts in the ancient period.⁷⁰ The prolegomena to rhetoric follow three different schemes: the first consists in examining fundamental notions, such as the definition of discourse, the distinction between the two arts of the discourse (grammar and rhetoric), the tasks of an orator; the second and third models discuss instead a series of questions, either in a simpler or a more complex form.⁷¹ In the first case, four aspects are considered: the existence of rhetoric (εἰ ἔστι), its essence (τί ἐστίν), its quality (ὅποιόν ἐστι), its purpose (διὰ τί ἔστι). In the second case, ten questions or points (κεφάλαια) are addressed: 1) the existence of rhetoric among the gods; 2) the existence of rhetoric among the heroes; 3) its arrival among men; 4) its apogee in Athens; 5) its definition, aims and tasks; 6) its genres and their origin in the parts of the soul; 7) the different types of rhetoric (philosophical,

Cardullo 2012), or that introducing the commentary on Plato’s *Gorgias* by Olympiodorus (Σχόλια σὺν θεῷ εἰς τὸν Γοργίαν ἀπὸ φωνῆς Ὀλυμπιοδώρου τοῦ μεγάλου φιλοσόφου).

65 A fundamental work for the interpretation of these formulas and, in particular, of the expression ἀπὸ φωνῆς, is that of Richard 1950.

66 This is how the expression Ζήνωνι σχολαστικῷ is understood both by Schilling 1903, 667 and by Richard 1950, 204.

67 The prolegomena, many of which anonymous, were collected for the first time in a single volume by H. Rabe (*Prolegomenon Sylloge*, here shortened to *PS*). Cf. also Rabe 1909; Kennedy 1983, 116–122; Patillon 2008, 3 ff.; Patillon 2012b, 2–10; Calboli Montefusco 2010.

68 See *RhG* 5.1.1–3.17.

69 The prolegomena opening the commentary on *Περὶ στάσεων* contain a βίος of Hermogenes (2.1.9–3.7 Rabe). The prolegomena by which Syrianus opens the commentary on *Περὶ ἰδεῶν* are preserved in two different versions, of which the broadest is transmitted in medieval manuscripts independently from the commentary (on the question see Rabe 1892–1893, vol. I, pp. VI–X).

70 In medieval manuscripts, they are usually placed prior to the text of Hermogenes’ treatises.

71 Rabe 1909 (= *PS*, III–VI), Patillon 2008, 3–6.

political, dialectic, etc.); 8) the modalities of rhetorical reading; 9) the different political systems; 10) the ways to explain rhetoric. The prolegomena to each treatise, together with general considerations on rhetoric, explain some particular characteristics of the treatise.⁷² There are evident similarities between these *schemata isagogica* and those attested for other disciplines, from grammar (and literary criticism) to philosophy, from medicine to theology.⁷³

4 Commentaries and Teaching Practice

There are several signs that can allow recognizing a deep relation between the production of exegetical writings and the coeval practices for the teaching of rhetoric.

A first clue is the almost immediate and lasting success of Hermogenes as *auctor* on which is performed the exegesis. The extraordinary fortune enjoyed by the work of the rhetorician of Tarsus in Late Antiquity and then in the Byzantine period induces to think that it had become the work of reference in school education. Since Hermogenes' treatises were included in the educational curriculum of the students, it can be assumed that the comments were conceived as teaching tools designed to facilitate learning⁷⁴: we can imagine that the reading, during lectures, of sections of Hermogenes' work was followed

⁷² PS, VI–VII; cf. Van Berchem 1952, 80–81; Mansfeld 1994, 52.

⁷³ Rabe 1931, v supposed that the rhetorical prolegomena were modelled on those of the Neoplatonic commentators on Plato's and Aristotle's works (on this, see Hoffmann 2006, 607–614); same opinion by Kennedy 1994, 218. A derivation in the opposite sense, with the philosophical prolegomena influenced by the rhetorical ones, is instead suggested by Patillon 2008, 5–6. In fact, Mansfeld 1994, 53 ff. has the merit of pointing out that these schemes or sections of isagogical character were shared, in Late Antiquity, by several disciplines (before him Van Berchem 1952, esp. 81). For some of them it has been possible to recognize that they depended on the most ancient exegetical tradition, that of the Alexandrian age, while it is highly complex to make a more general discussion on the derivations and transitions from one discipline to another. Also helpful Stok 2018, who focuses on the *schemata isagogica* in Virgilian exegesis.

⁷⁴ In the preface to the comment on Περὶ ἰδεῶν, already mentioned several times, Syrianus (1.2.4–7 Rabe) identifies, by an apostrophe, the person to whom his work is addressed: the young Alexander (ὦ φίλτατέ μοι τῶν ἐχγόνων Ἀλέξανδρε), for whom he has decided to put together the short notes gathered in view of a more accurate reading of Hermogenes' work (βραχέα τινὰ πρὸς τὴν ἀκριβεστέραν ἀνάγνωσιν τοῦ βιβλίου συμβαλλόμενα κατὰ γὰρ τὴν ἐμὴν συνθεῖναι δύναμιν). Nothing is known about the identity of this Alexander, though the term ἔκγονος would seem to suggest a parent-child, or at least family, relationship with Syrianus. Anyway, what is important for our purposes is that the commentary is based on notes, with a clear catechetical function.

by the teacher's comment; the material used orally, reorganized and put in writing, was then published on the initiative of the teacher himself or of one of his pupils.⁷⁵ This scenario is clearly suggested by a work like that of George where the *πράξεις* that mark the written commentary appear as the reflection of the organization of the oral course in a series of didactic units.⁷⁶

The habit of placing isagogical schemes, like the prolegomena, prior to the comment also meets a purely didactic purpose.

An important confirmation of the pedagogical matrix of the commentaries seems to come from the observation of the exegetical strategies used. It is an essential aspect on which, as stressed at the beginning, there are no systematic enquiries so far. Nonetheless, even a cursory glance allows to notice a preference for strategies aiming at facilitating the comprehension of the text, such as gloss, *differentiae verborum*, paraphrases, exemplification⁷⁷ while, for instance, purely philological annotations, less appropriate in a teaching context, are less frequent.⁷⁸

Finally, the frequent use, by commentators, of compilatory and doxographical method fits well within this representation: for those who write a didactic commentary, reporting the different opinions of the predecessors and drawing on preexisting materials is necessary or even inevitable.⁷⁹ In this regard, Pierluigi Donini's words are illuminating:

Dovremmo forse pensare alla nostra stessa esperienza di scrittori di manuali scolastici o di saggi di divulgazione: è in principio escluso che siano queste le forme letterarie in cui riveliamo tutta quanta l'originalità di cui siamo capaci. La materia da esporre è infatti quella e lo schema espositivo

75 Numerous ancient sources illustrate the students' practice to take notes during lectures and, in some cases, to put them into circulation (some examples gathered and discussed by Heath 2004, 261 ff.). One of the most interesting testimonies for our discussion is that of Marinus, Proclus' biographer (*Life of Proclus* 12), who tells that the Neoplatonist Plutarch had encouraged Proclus to take notes (*σχόλια*) of his classes on *Phaedon*, with the aim to publish in the future commentaries (*ὑπομνήματα*) under Proclus' own name.

76 With regard to Neoplatonic philosophical commentaries Szabat 2015, 259–260 emphasizes that they are influenced, in their structure and form, by the original oral form, which also explains the presence of references to previous lessons, repetitions, insertion of direct discourse, questions put by the teacher to his pupils.

77 I am only showing here an example for each typology, taken from Syrianus' work: 1.39.11–15 Rabe (gloss); 2.192.1–14 Rabe (*differentia verborum*); 1.40.12–15 Rabe (paraphrase); 1.26.19–27.4 Rabe (exemplification).

78 See again Syrianus, 1.53.10–16 Rabe, where are discussed the variant readings *διήρηται* and *διήρται*.

79 Donini 1994, 5059; Sluiter 1999, 173.

è, di solito, quasi obbligato: si pensi agli indici e alla partizione in capitoli delle nostre moderne storie della filosofia o di qualsiasi manuale di una disciplina scientificamente costituita da tempo – sono quasi completamente eguali in tutte le opere.⁸⁰

Recalling the predecessors, which gives the commentators the possibility to place themselves and their own work within a certain exegetical tradition,⁸¹ does not imply, on the other hand, renouncing their autonomous assessments and some search for originality. Commentators, at least in the earlier phases, do not fail to distance themselves both from Hermogenes' text⁸² and from the opinions expressed by previous exegetes or to intervene by additions, omissions and variations, thus showing their own way of looking at things and going as far as to take the interpretation of a well-established doctrine as the starting point for personal contributions of theoretical nature.⁸³ On the other hand, it does not seem possible to ascribe to chance the fact that, in our documentation, the diffusion of commentaries coincides with the gradual exhaustion of the production of *Technai*: the exegetical writings, created to accompany and exemplify the reading of Hermogenes, ended up including all the speculation and creative reflection in rhetoric.⁸⁴

Recognizing that rhetorical commentaries are the result or the tool of teaching, or both at once, gives rise to a series of new questions about the profile of those who engaged in exegetical activity, the environments where they operated, the levels of teaching for which the commentaries were conceived, the age of the students for whom they were intended. As one can easily imagine, the answer to these questions is complex and not unique.⁸⁵ However, there is

80 Donini 1994, 5059.

81 Rogers 2017, 49.

82 The clear refusal of Hermogenes' exposition by Syrianus in favor of that of Aquila and Evagoras (*supra* § 3 and n. 58) represents one of the most significant examples of the critical attitude of the commentators.

83 Heath 2003a, 165–166; Heath 2004, 73. The importance of the innovative contribution varies from a commentary to the other, cf. the comparative analysis of those of Syrianus, Sopatros and George offered by Patillon 2009, LXXIV–LXXXVI. Anyway, it is worth emphasizing the difficulty, for modern scholars, to exactly distinguish personal interventions and innovations by each author: rhetorical commentaries are, by their own nature, fluid and dynamic texts, characterized by weak authorship and open to glosses, supplements, epitomes and contaminations.

84 Cf. Heath 2003a, 165–166.

85 There are some considerations on these aspects in Heath 2004, 217 ff. The discussion on the commentaries on Hermogenes has found little place in the most important studies on education and teaching of rhetoric in Late Antiquity, as Cribiore 2007 and 2013; Watts 2008.

at least one aspect on which it is worth making a reflection at the end of this work. Among the commentators of Late Antiquity, there are first of all professional rhetoricians like Pancratius and Menander, usually qualified with the term σοφισταί.⁸⁶ However, a careful analysis of the sources induces to think that the exposition and explanation of Hermogenes' works was not an exclusive prerogative of the rhetoricians. Syrianus, placing the redaction of his commentaries within the framework of a well-established practice, mentions two categories of predecessors: not only the 'sophists' but also the 'philosophers' (πολλῶν ἤδη φιλοσόφων τε καὶ σοφιστῶν; πολλοί γε καὶ ἄλλοι σοφιστῶν τε καὶ τῶν Πλατωνικῶν φιλοσόφων).⁸⁷ It is worth noting that, in the ancient documentation, it is not always easy to draw the boundaries between the figures of rhetoricians-sophists and philosophers.⁸⁸ So, for instance Suidas' lexicon describes Tiberius both as 'philosopher' and as 'sophist';⁸⁹ a Harpocraton is celebrated as 'rhetorician' and 'philosopher' in an Athenian funerary inscription of the III cent. AD.⁹⁰ The biographical tradition often presents cases of authors who went through teaching of rhetoric before arriving at teaching philosophy, but also of authors who continued to teach both disciplines all of the time.⁹¹ On the other hand, the statements by Syrianus, who apparently wants to make a clear distinction between the two groups, seem to leave no doubt as to the fact that Hermogenes' exegesis was also practiced, and rather commonly, by philosophers, in particular by 'Platonic' philosophers.⁹² Therefore, we should not be surprised of the fact that the first in the list of commentators is a key figure in the history of Neoplatonism like Porphyry.⁹³ It is possible to find a connection with Neoplatonic circles, in a more or less evident manner, for other exegetes,

86 See the lemmata Menander and Pancratius in Suidas (M 590, Π 12); Sopatros and George are called σοφισταί in the medieval manuscripts (*Marc. gr.* f. 206v: Σωπάτρου σοφιστοῦ; *Par. gr.* f. 1r: Γεωργίου τοῦ μόνου σοφιστοῦ). In the prefaces Syrianus speaks of σοφισταί, while elsewhere (for ex. 2.128.20 Rabe) he prefers the word τεχνουργοί.

87 1.1.8 and 2.1.6 Rabe, cf. *supra* § 3 and nn. 49–50.

88 On the oscillations see Heath 2009, 144–146.

89 Suidas T 550.

90 *IG* III 1369; II² 10826 = Puech 2002, n. 129. Metrophanes, identified as 'sophist' (σοφιστής) in Suidas, is mentioned by Syrianus (2.55.5 Rabe) with the title 'Platonic' (ὁ Πλατωνικός).

91 See Heath 2009, 148–149.

92 The use, repeated in two passages, of the adjective πολλοί is indicative of a common practice.

93 Eunapius insists on Porphyry's *polymathia*, expressing some doubts as to whether his most significant contribution had been given in rhetoric, literary criticism, arithmetic, geometry or in the various branches of philosophy (*Lives of the Sophists* 4.2.2–3 = 9.11–19 Giangrande).

starting from Syrianus himself.⁹⁴ It is necessary to take into account such observations not only in the studies on the addressees, on the functions and use of commentaries, but also, in a broader perspective, in any enquiry aiming at reconstructing the role played by rhetoric and its relationship with philosophy in the late antique school system.

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94 As already mentioned, Syrianus declares that his activity is inspired by ἄριστοι φιλόσοφοι like Aquila and Evagoras (2.56.16–24; 2.128.20–129.3 Rabe, discussed *supra*). In his two commentaries, there are frequent quotations of Plato, qualified by Syrianus with the epithet 'divine' (θεῖος); cf. for ex. 2.173.24 and 180.14 Rabe. These elements confirm the hypothesis of identification with the philosopher head of the Neoplatonic school of Athens (see *supra* § 3). It is possible to find Neoplatonic influences also in the works of Sopatros and Marcellinus (fundamental on this, the pages of Kennedy 1983, 52–53, 73–86 and Kennedy 1994, 209 ff.; recently Maggiorini 2012, esp. 38, 58, 62, has pointed out the relation between biographical data and rhetorical system of Sopatros, on the one hand, and Athenian Neoplatonism on the other hand). The attention of Neoplatonists to rhetoric, also shown by the production of commentaries to dialogues such as *Gorgias* and *Phaedrus*, is recognized by Hadot 1990, 300–301. In her important volume *Arts libéraux et philosophie dans la pensée antique* published in 1984 (a revised and expanded edition appeared in 2005), Hadot herself has enlightened the gradual re-evaluation of rhetoric in the long Platonic tradition, a re-evaluation that led to recognize it as an integral part of philosophical education. Sorabji 1990, 9–10 supposes that courses of rhetoric were held in the Neoplatonic schools of Apamea and Alexandria. In particular, the study of Hermogenes' texts was for the philosophers a "training in logical method" (Kennedy 1994, 209). For the contribution given by Neoplatonists to the discussion on the genres of rhetoric see Pepe 2013, 259–260, 284, 324 n. 188.

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