

# Sophistry and Sorcery in Libanius' *Declamations*

*Jeremy J. Swist*

THE ASSOCIATION between rhetoric and magic has a long history.<sup>1</sup> What began as a neutral analogy by Gorgias was co-opted by Plato and the Attic orators, who cast sophists negatively as sorcerers (γόητες) in order to undercut their persuasiveness.<sup>2</sup> Combined with Old Comedy, most importantly Aristophanes' *Clouds*, these writers transmitted the models of intellectual caricature to the canonical school texts of the Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine periods. These foundational texts influenced the literary productions of professors and students of rhetoric, whose "crown of the curriculum" were the fictional speeches, delivered by stock or historical characters, known as declamations (μελέται).<sup>3</sup> The majority of surviving declamations in Greek are by the Antiochene sophist Libanius (314–393 CE).<sup>4</sup> Several of these model

<sup>1</sup> On the role of magic in Greek rhetorical theory from Gorgias to the Second Sophistic see J. de Romilly, *Magic and Rhetoric in Ancient Greece* (London 1975); J. O. Ward, "Magic and Rhetoric from Antiquity to the Renaissance: Some Ruminations," *Rhetorica* 6 (1988) 57–63. For a general overview of the history of this association see W. A. Covino, "Magic And/As Rhetoric: Outlines of a History of Phantasy," *Journal of Advanced Composition* 12 (1992) 349–358.

<sup>2</sup> Gorg. *Hel.* 8–10, 14; Pl. *Resp.* 413B–D, 584A, *Menex.* 235A, *Soph.* 234C–241B; Aeschin. 2.123, 152, 3.137, 207; Dem. 18.276, 19.102, 109.

<sup>3</sup> For an introduction see D. A. Russell, *Greek Declamation* (Cambridge 1983); M. Winterbottom, *Roman Declamation* (Bristol 1980).

<sup>4</sup> To Libanius are attributed 51 declamations, 17 of which are either spurious or of uncertain authorship. For discussion see R. Foerster and K. Münscher, "Libanios," *RE* 12 (1925) 2509–2518; D. Najock, "Unechtes

exercises are delivered by characters who attack orators, sophists, and philosophers by employing the traditional literary stereotypes, which often link their professions to illicit magic. While declamations have been traditionally read as recyclers of classical material in the vacuum of an anachronistic fantasy world that has been called Sophistopolis, it is now increasingly accepted that declamations often had serious educational and social functions.<sup>5</sup> Likewise, cases can be and have been made for how certain declamations, especially those of Libanius, directly reflect their authors' anxieties about contemporary events, such as the plight of traditional religion and education.<sup>6</sup>

I will demonstrate here how the interplay of magic and sophistic stereotypes opens another pathway between declamation's real and imagined worlds. The anti-intellectual rhetoric in Libanius' *Declamations* can be connected to how he perceived

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und Zweifelhafte unter den Deklamationen des Libanios: Die statistische Evidenz," in M. Grünbart (ed.), *Theatron: Rhetorische Kultur in Spätantike und Mittelalter* (Berlin 2007) 305–355; R. J. Penella, "Libanius' *Declamations*," in L. Van Hoof (ed.), *Libanius: A Critical Introduction* (Cambridge 2014) 110–112.

<sup>5</sup> Examples of such studies pertaining to Roman declamation are W. M. Bloomer, "Schooling in Persona: Imagination and Subordination in Roman Education," *CLAnt* 16 (1997) 57–78; E. Gunderson, *Staging Masculinity: The Rhetoric of Performance in the Roman World* (Ann Arbor 2003); A. Corbeill, "Rhetorical Education and Social Reproduction in the Republic and Early Empire," in W. Dominik and J. Hall (eds.), *A Companion to Roman Rhetoric* (Malden 2007) 69–82.

<sup>6</sup> See E. L. Bowie, "Greeks and their Past in the Second Sophistic," in M. I. Finley (ed.), *Studies in Ancient Society* (London 1974) 166–209; Russell, *Greek Declamation* 108–109; T. Whitmarsh, *The Second Sophistic* (Oxford 2005) 66–73; G. Tomassi, "Tyrants and Tyrannicides: Between Literary Creation and Contemporary Reality in Greek Declamation," in E. Amato et al. (eds.), *Law and Ethics in Greek and Roman Declamation* (Berlin 2015) 247–267; L. Pernot, "Il non-detto della declamazione greco-romana: Discorso figurato, sottintesi e allusioni politiche," in L. C. Montefusco (ed.), *Papers on Rhetoric VIII Declamation* (Rome 2007) 209–234; Penella, in *Libanius: A Critical Introduction* 125–127; A. J. Quiroga Puertas, "Demosthenes' Moral and Legal Arguments in Libanius' *Declamations*," in *Law and Ethics* 287–306; J. Swist, "Pagan Altars and Monarchic Discourse in Libanius *Declamation* 22," *Phoenix* 70 (2016) 170–189.

and presented problems that Hellenic, pagan *paideia* faced in the second half of the fourth century, when associations between sophistry and sorcery became a dangerous aspect of the competition between the pagan intellectual elite and the new political establishment under Christian emperors. I begin by analyzing the ethological declamations before considering the contemporary context, and then read Libanius' famous defense of Socrates (*Decl.* 1) in light of that context.<sup>7</sup> This analysis at the very least should establish and reinforce that the *Declamations* deserve consideration in discussions of Libanius' engagement with his world outside the lecture hall.

*The refutation of the mage*

The strongest links between sophistry and sorcery in Libanius' declamations are made in *Decl.* 41. Of his large corpus of declamations, *Decl.* 41 is the only one in which an actual magician and magic are the focus.<sup>8</sup> Its theme is as follows: a city is suffering from a plague, which the Delphic oracle predicted would be ended by the sacrifice of a human child. The child chosen by lot is that of a mage (μάγος), who promises to end the plague himself should they spare his son.<sup>9</sup> This de-

<sup>7</sup> Greek text: R. Foerster, *Libanii Opera* (Leipzig 1909–1913). All translations are my own. For an overview of Libanius' *Declamations* see Penella, in *Libanius: A Critical Introduction* 107–127.

<sup>8</sup> There are no surviving Greek declamations devoted to magical topics before Libanius, and few magical themes; see [Hermog.] *De Inv.* 3.10; Sopat. *In Hermog.* 5.85–86; Syr. *In Hermog.* 96; Anon. *Problemata Rhetorica* 48 [Walz VIII 410]. Russell (*Greek Declamation* 26 n.38) explains this lack by noting the absence of such themes in classical Attic literature. They were evidently more popular in Latin declamation, as suggested by Quintilian's dismissal of such themes as irrelevant to real-world deliberation and litigation (*Inst.* 2.10.5). See [Quint.] *Decl.Mai.* 4, 10, 14, 15.

<sup>9</sup> Lib. *Decl.* 41 hypoth.: λοιμὸς ἐπέϊχε τὴν πόλιν. ἔχρησεν ὁ θεὸς παύσασθαι τὸν λοιμὸν, εἰ ὁ δῆμος ἑνὸς τοῦ τῶν πολιτῶν παιῖδα θύσειεν. ἔλαχεν ὁ τοῦ μάγου. ὑπισχνεῖται παύσειν τὸν λοιμὸν, εἰ ἀπόσχοιντο τοῦ παιδός. βουλευόνται. For a translation of this declamation with notes see D. Odgen, *Magic, Witchcraft, and Ghosts in the Greek and Roman Worlds: A Sourcebook* (Oxford 2002) 290–299.

liberative speech is delivered against the mage's proposal by a fellow citizen, who early on attacks the mage's character with the commonplace stereotypes of his profession, such as grave robbing, necromancy, and fraternizing with evil demons (41.7, 30). In addition to using the more negative label "sorcerer" (γόης), the speaker also employs stock terms of abuse against sophists and orators. He accuses the mage of long-windedness and falsehood (μακρολογία, ψευδολογία, 41.1–3). The mage, he claims, is playing the charlatan (ἀλαζονευόμενον), is an impostor (φενακίζει) who aims at misleading (παράγειν ἐπιχειρεῖ), and takes pay for his services (μισθόφορος, 41.8, 15, 22). These terms of abuse occur elsewhere in Libanius' *Declamations*,<sup>10</sup> but they are laid on the mage with considerably more frequency, especially when aimed directly at the speaker's rhetorical opponent. Nor are the mage's qualities as both a sorcerer and sophist mutually exclusive (41.3):<sup>11</sup>

Two things especially about the mage's public speaking (δημηγορία) bother me, citizens, first that many of the citizens here, charmed by this man's words (τοῖς τούτου κεκλημένοι λόγοις) (and he is guilty of these things too) are dying of the plague...

This initial denigration plays with the tradition of associating rhetoric and magic, and sets up the remainder of the speech as a refutation not only of the mage's arguments, but also of the efficacy of his *technē*. The speaker aims at leaving the impression that only the sorcerer's eloquence possesses any semblance of magic, and that his ability to stop the plague cannot be trusted.<sup>12</sup> For instance, he had not been able to foretell, and thus forestall, his son being chosen by lot to be sacrificed (41.31). Instead the speaker makes his own prediction that the

<sup>10</sup> The speaker attributes μακρολογία to his talkative wife in 26.31. Socrates refers to the Sophists as ἀλαζόνες in 1.7 and 2.24, as does the speaker in 33.42 against the philosophers.

<sup>11</sup> δύο δέ με, ὦ πολῖται, μάλιστα τῆς τοῦ μάγου δημηγορίας ἀνιᾶ, ἐν μὲν ὅτι πολλοὶ νῦν τῶν πολιτῶν ἐν τοῖς τούτου κεκλημένοι λόγοις, ἔστι δὲ καὶ τούτων οὗτος αἴτιος, ἀποθνήσκουσι τοῦ λοιμοῦ.

<sup>12</sup> Ogden, *Magic, Witchcraft, and Ghosts* 298.

mage will rhetorically invent (εὐρήσεις) a host of arguments for delaying his stopping of the plague (41.34).

On the surface, *Decl.* 41 is a bare invective against magic, but when juxtaposed with Libanius' own experiences and attitudes regarding magic, its message is not so clear.<sup>13</sup> As is the case with all declamations, the viewpoint of the fictional speaker is not necessarily that of the author. While *Decl.* 41 features no description of the speaker himself, its Hypothesis presents a morally ambiguous case that could be convincingly argued either way. Although the speaker depicts the mage as impiously defying the god of Delphi, the oracle demanded a human sacrifice, which to a traditional Hellene was a barbaric rite and counter to the value of *philanthropia*. The humanity of the mage, on the other hand, and his paternal instinct should not be discounted.

Moreover, the speaker's skepticism toward magic in *Decl.* 41 is not shared by Libanius. However exaggerated might have been his critics' depiction of him as "more superstitious than all mankind," Libanius' own writings document a firm belief in the efficacy of magical practices and the existence of *daimones*, benevolent and malevolent.<sup>14</sup> A functional hypochondriac, he believed that daemonic spirits could inflict diseases, and he often resorted to magical alternatives to medical treatments.<sup>15</sup>

Furthermore, the speaker's vendetta against magic contradicts Libanius' approach in his orations and letters. While the

<sup>13</sup> Libanius' writings are frequently mined for discussions of magic in Late Antiquity, but *Decl.* 41 is seldom included. C. Bonner, "Witchcraft in the Lecture Room of Libanius," *TAPA* 63 (1932) 40–42, cites it for evidence of the role of demonology in the magical practices of Libanius' day. Ogden, *Magic, Witchcraft, and Ghosts* 298–299, sees it mainly as recycling classical authors' constructions of mages and magic.

<sup>14</sup> John Chrys. *Ad vid. iun.* 96; A. J. Quiroga Puertas, "The Old Man Vanishes: Magic, Literature, and Political Philosophy in Libanius' *Or.* 19.30," *Hermes* 144 (2016) 246–247.

<sup>15</sup> E.g. *Or.* 1.243–250, 25.67, 36.1. See S. Trzcionka, *Magic and the Supernatural in Fourth-Century Syria* (London 2007) 125–126, 136–138.

speaker argues that the spellbinding nature of the sorcerer's eloquence distracts the audience and serves evil ends, Libanius more often gives the association of persuasion and spellbinding a positive spin. In the *Antiochicus* he celebrates the city councilors' ability to moderate the behavior of their governors "as though by incantation (ἐπωδῆ) ... thus they possess a spell (φάρμακον) mightier than those men's authority."<sup>16</sup> Much as Libanius sought magical as well as medical cures for his own ailments, so he thought that the charms of persuasion to temper a ruler's character had a pharmaceutical aspect. *Logoi* as *pharmaka* in the positive sense, moreover, is a theme in a number of Libanius' letters.<sup>17</sup>

In another passage the speaker characterizes the mage as the type that fraternizes with malevolent *daimones*, with whose aid he is able to put curses on various body parts of his enemies, including making them tongue-tied (γλωτταν ἀπέστρεψαν, 41.29). In Libanius' day, these were typically *defixiones* cast, allegedly at least, between rival athletes and rival sophists, Libanius himself having been a victim. Yet even his reaction to being personally attacked by sorcerers reveals his reluctance to condemn their art. In 386 he experienced a sharp decline in his physical and mental health that compromised his ability to declaim, which his doctors diagnosed as magically caused. In his *Autobiography* he reports his dismissal of his friends' advice to prosecute certain men solely on the grounds that they practiced magic: "I was not of that attitude."<sup>18</sup> Upon finding a dead chameleon in his lecture hall, which confirmed for him that he had in fact been hexed, he delivered *Or.* 36 (Περὶ τῶν φαρμά-

<sup>16</sup> Lib. *Or.* 11.141: τοῖς δὲ θρασέσιν ἀνεῖργον τὴν ἀσέλγειαν ταῖς ἀπὸ τῆς σοφίας ἀνάγκαις καὶ καθάπερ ἐπωδῆ τῇ ῥητορείᾳ τρέπον τὸν θυμὸν εἰς πραότητα. οὕτω τῆς ἐκείνων ἐξουσίας ἰσχυρότερον κέκτηνται φάρμακον. See R. Cribiore, *Libanius the Sophist: Rhetoric, Reality, and Religion in the Fourth Century* (Ithaca 2013) 123, and on Libanius' relations with governors *The School of Libanius in Late Antique Antioch* (Princeton 2007) 240–242.

<sup>17</sup> E.g. *Ep.* 581.4, 698.2.

<sup>18</sup> Lib. *Or.* 1.248: ἐγὼ δὲ οὐτ' αὐτότ' ἐπασχον.

κων), which despite the title amounts to a defense of his career against all possible guilty parties, rather than an accusation against any one of them. Nowhere in the oration is sorcery condemned *per se*, or the “certain sorcerers” who were hired by the guilty party to do the deed (36.1). Norman vaguely suggests that Libanius wished to avoid “stirring up a hornet’s nest” if he brought suit against anyone;<sup>19</sup> it is possible that Libanius did not wish to ignite another mass hysteria of magic trials that would implicate sophists and sorcerers both (discussed below).

In sum, when read against the historical background, it is plausible that *Decl.* 41 goes beyond recycling literary commonplaces and reflects a contemporary controversy over magical practices in its author’s time, especially in connection with rhetorically trained intellectuals. The speaker’s prejudices against magic, along with his rhetorical associations between sophistry and sorcery, may reflect popular perceptions of Libanius’ profession, as a number of related declamations also suggest.

*Anti-intellectual rhetoric in the Declamations*

*Decl.* 41 applies anti-intellectual labels to a professional sorcerer. A number of Libanius’ other declamations do the reverse, dressing sophists and orators not only in the traditional language of comic ridicule, but in some cases also of sorcery. We find this occurring almost exclusively in the ethological declamations, which are entirely fictional and often delivered by anonymous stock characters familiar from New Comedy.<sup>20</sup>

To begin, we find anti-sophistic rhetoric in Libanius’ famous *Decl.* 26, in which a talkative wife drives a grouch (*dyskolos*) to petition for suicide before the city council.<sup>21</sup> To build his *ethos*,

<sup>19</sup> A. F. Norman, *Antioch as a Centre of Hellenic Culture as Observed by Libanius* (Liverpool 2000) 125.

<sup>20</sup> These types of declamation were particularly popular in Libanius’ day; see Russell, *Greek Declamation* 88.

<sup>21</sup> *Decl.* 26 was evidently popular in Libanius’ own lifetime, on the testimony of [Basil.] *Ep.* 353 Courtonne. Translation with introduction and notes: D. A. Russell, *Libanius: Imaginary Speeches* (London 1996) 113–123.

the silence-loving grouch first establishes his disdain for the “long-windedness” (μακρολογία) of professional orators and sees no “profit in the spoken word” (τοῦ ῥήματος τὸ κέρδος, 26.3–7). He then proceeds to inveigh against his wife’s loquacity in similar terms as though she were an orator herself. In a reversal of gender roles, the husband prefers a quiet existence within the *oikos*, while his wife constantly inquires into civic affairs outside the *oikos* (26.15). Like a sophist, moreover, she delivers an encomium of a rooster, and her husband petitions for suicide because filing for divorce might cause her to break into the courtroom and orate (ῥητορεύσει) on her own behalf (26.14, 45, 51).<sup>22</sup>

*Decl.* 29, another *prosaγγελία*, is a request for suicide, made by a parasite whose host, a rich man, has taken up a life of philosophy, thus forsaking the worldly wealth on which the parasite made his own living. But he does not accuse his host of any wrongdoing, rather those who persuaded him to abandon luxury, people who “abuse themselves with wakefulness, fasting, and hard labor ... pasty-faced men who don’t wear shoes, and who go about half-naked.”<sup>23</sup> They took his host and “bewitched him with their many words (κατεγοήτευσαν πολλοῖς ῥήμασι) ... evil sorcerers (γόητες ἄνθρωποι καὶ πονηροί) capable of persuading anyone of anything: poverty, derangement,

<sup>22</sup> Like many of Libanius’ declamations, *Decl.* 26 is a *προσαγγελία*, or self-denunciation, in which the speaker begs for legal suicide (see Russell, *Libanius: Imaginary Speeches* 35–37). Many *προσαγγελίαι* were possibly meant as “figured speeches” (ἔσχηματισμένοι λόγοι), whose goal of persuasion was other than their professed aim (see Whitmarsh, *Second Sophistic* 57–59). Russell (113) thinks the husband’s true intention is for the council to ratify a divorce, bypassing his wife’s right to due process. In *Decl.* 29 the parasite perhaps wished, instead of his own suicide, that his host return to his former lifestyle; see Penella, in *Libanius: A Critical Introduction* 112.

<sup>23</sup> *Decl.* 29.22: δεινοί τινές εἰσι παρ’ ἡμῖν ἐτέρους διαφθεῖρουν ὄντες κακοδαίμονες αὐτοὶ τὴν τύχην, οἷς ἔργον οὐδὲν ἢ τὸ τιμωρεῖσθαι σφᾶς αὐτοὺς ὡς ἀδικοῦντας καὶ πιέζειν ἀγρυπνία καὶ λιμῶ καὶ πόνοις, τοὺς ἀχρῖῶντας λέγω, τοὺς ἀνυποδῆτους, τοὺς γυμνοὺς ἐξ ἡμισείας, οἷς ἀπεύξαιτ’ ἂν τις καὶ περιτυχεῖν.

hunger, and becoming one of the walking dead.”<sup>24</sup> Their physical descriptions as pallid zombies borrows heavily from the *Urtext* of intellectual parody, Aristophanes’ *Clouds*, in which philosophers and sophists are targeted as threats to the traditional values of Athenian aristocrats.<sup>25</sup> As Phidippides in the *Clouds* forsook his athletic physique and complexion along with horsemanship, so the parasite’s host in *Decl.* 29 abandoned aristocratic symposia and was transformed into a ghost of his former self. The language of sorcery (κατηγοήτευσαν ... γόητες) associated with intellectuals, on the other hand, is not Aristophanic, but derives from later authors such as Demosthenes, Aeschines, and Plato who drew the parallels to stigmatize sophistic persuasion.

We also see sophistry and sorcery mixed in *Decl.* 48, in which a son pleads for his own disinheritance (*apokeryxis*) as his reward for heroism after his father refused to grant the original award he had requested, namely to annul the disinheritance of the son’s brother.<sup>26</sup> He blames his brother’s disinheritance on the jealousy of those who persuaded his father to disown him. These same men oppose the son in this trial as well:<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> *Decl.* 29.23: ἐκεῖνοι τὸν τρόφιμον λαβόντες κατηγοήτευσαν πολλοῖς ῥήμασι παθόντες μὲν οὐδὲν δυσχερές ... γόητες ἄνθρωποι καὶ πονηροὶ καὶ πάντα πείθειν δυνάμενοι ... πενίαν, παράνοϊαν, λιμόν, τὸ τεθνηκότας ἐν ἀνθρώποις εἶναι, οὗτοί μοι τὸν τρόφιμον ἀπολωλέκασι.

<sup>25</sup> *Ar. Nub.* 98–104: Στρεψιάδης: οὗτοι διδάσκουσ’, ἀργύριον ἦν τις διδῶ, / λέγοντα νικᾶν καὶ δίκαια κᾶδικα. / Φειδιππίδης: εἰσὶν δὲ τίνες; / Σ.: οὐκ οἶδ’ ἀκριβῶς τοῦνομα; / μεριμνοφροντισταὶ καλοὶ τε κἀγαθοί. / Φ.: αἰβοῖ πονηροὶ γ’, οἶδα. τοὺς ἀλαζόνας / τοὺς ἄκριωντας τοὺς ἀνυποδήτους λέγεις, / ὧν ὁ κακοδαίμων Σωκράτης καὶ Χαίρεφῶν.

<sup>26</sup> On the popular theme of disowning (*ἀποκήρυξις/abdicatio*) in declamation see Russell, *Greek Declamation* 31–32; M. Johansson, *Libanius’ Declamations 9 and 10* (Gothenburg 2006) 66–69, and “Nature over Law: Themes of Disowning in Libanius’ *Declamations*,” in *Law and Ethics* 269–286.

<sup>27</sup> *Decl.* 48.50–51: οἶδα τοίνυν ὡς οὗτοι τὴν αὐτὴν προσοίσουσι μηχανὴν καὶ τοσοῦτῳ ῥῆον παράξουσιν, ὅσῳ συνείθικας εὐχερῶς ἀποκηρύττειν καὶ τολμᾶν ἐν δικαστηρίῳ βοᾶν· ἀλλότριον ὄν γεγέννηκα ποιῶμαι. οὐκ ἀνθέξεις τοῖς σοφισταῖς τούτοις, ὦ πάτερ, οὐδ’ ἂν σφόδρα ἐθέλης τὴν ἀριστείαν αἰδεῖσθαι. βούλει σοι προεῖπω καὶ τὰ ῥήματα τῶν γοήτων;

I know, then, how these men will apply the same device and will mislead you (παράξουσιν) as easily as you have been accustomed to readily disown and dare to shout in the courtroom: “I am making a stranger the one I sired!” You will not hold out against these sophists (σοφισταίς), father, nor would you be very willing to revere my heroism. Do you also wish me to foretell you the words of these sorcerers (γοήτων)?

The son, who plays to the democratic audience by confessing his own lack of speaking experience (δέδοικα ... τὴν τοῦ λέγειν ἀπειρίαν, 48.5) undermines his father’s case by associating him with sorcerer-sophists who have relied on rhetorical/magical means to mislead the father.

In *Decl.* 33, we find a miser (φιλάργυρος) too cheap even to spend money on sacrifices or libations for the gods.<sup>28</sup> His hoplite son had requested a crown of olive as a prize for heroism in battle instead of a pot of gold. As a result, his father tries to disinherit him, “since he is wiser (σοφώτερος) than his father and has condemned the lifestyle that I esteem”—σοφώτερος meant sarcastically.<sup>29</sup> In the narrative section, the miser recalls his deliberations over his son’s education (τὰ παιδεύματα, 33.11). He had decided to invest in military training for his son in hope of material rewards, rather than send him to the “thinking-shops” (φροντιστηρίοις) of the philosophers, since they despise material wealth (33.12). Nevertheless, the son had evidently fallen under the spell of these intellectuals in his choice of reward, and has become one of them. When the son objects that the law permitting fathers to disown their sons does not apply to war heroes, the father retorts “here you’re being a skillful sophist (κομψὸς καὶ σοφιστής), but when there is a need to get rich, you’re a fool!”<sup>30</sup> He calls his son’s arguments that

<sup>28</sup> *Decl.* 33.21; transl. and comm. Russell, *Libanius: Imaginary Speeches* 158–168.

<sup>29</sup> *Decl.* 33.2: ἐπεὶ οὖν σοφώτερός ἐστι τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ ὃν μὲν ἐγὼ τιμῶ βίον, τούτου κατέγνωκεν, αὐτὸς δὲ ἕτερον ἐξεῦρεν ἑαυτῷ, ζητείτω καὶ οἰκίαν ἑτέραν.

<sup>30</sup> *Decl.* 33.29: “ἀλλ’ οὐκ ἐπὶ τοῖς ἠριστευκόσι κεῖται,” φησὶν, “ἐγὼ δὲ ἀριστεύς, ἐνταῦθα κομψὸς καὶ σοφιστής, οὗ δὲ δεῖ πλουτεῖν, ἡλίθιος.”

place glory over wealth “the stuff of those delusional, pre-tentious men (ἀλαζόνων) who dazzle people’s imaginations (δοξοκοπούντων), in whose company you would find nothing but cheeks full of hot air, but much hunger within. *Those* people gave you such an education (ἐπαίδευσαν).”<sup>31</sup> The language explicitly connects sophistic parody to institutional *paideia*. The reference to *phrontisteria* recalls Socrates’ school in the *Clouds*, but in the imperial Greek of Libanius’ day it also denoted, un-ironically, any place of contemplative study.<sup>32</sup>

*Decl.* 12, finally, mixes Aristophanic parody with sorcery accusations as well. Here we see an ethological character of the misanthrope (μισάνθρωπος) merged with the historical figure of Timon of Athens.<sup>33</sup> The speech is simultaneously a request for suicide to escape being in love with Alcibiades, and an accusation of Alcibiades for aiming at tyranny.<sup>34</sup> But to build his *ethos* as a misanthrope, he first spews venom at humanity at large, and he cynically unmasks the true nature of sophists and philosophers. Anyone clever at speaking (δεινὸς εἰπεῖν), he claims, “makes false accusations and commits perjury,” while anyone who philosophizes is “a sorcerer who pries into the heavens (γότης ἐστὶ καὶ τὰ οὐράνια πολυπραγμονεῖ).”<sup>35</sup> He implicates Alcibiades in these charges by identifying sophists and philosophers among the pimps and flatterers in his entourage (12.39). Here, language that echoes Socrates’ alleged astronomical pur-

<sup>31</sup> *Decl.* 33.42: τὰ τῶν τετυφωμένων, ὦ παῖ, μοι λέγεις, τὰ τῶν ἀλαζόνων, τὰ τῶν δοξοκοπούντων, παρ’ οἷς οὐδὲν ἂν εὐροις ἢ γνάθους πεφουσημένας, τὰ δ’ ἔνδον λιμὸς πολὺς. ἐκεῖνοί σε ταῦτα ἐπαίδευσαν.

<sup>32</sup> Philostr. *VA* 2.5, 3.50, 6.6, 6.9, *VS* 509, *Imag.* 1.27; Them. *Or.* 13.165b, 175a; Synes. *Regn.* 19.

<sup>33</sup> For literary accounts of Timon see Ar. *Lys.* 805 ff., *Av.* 1547; Plut. *Ant.* 70; Luc. *Tim.*

<sup>34</sup> Russell, *Greek Declamation* 121–122.

<sup>35</sup> *Decl.* 12.9: δεινὸς εἰπεῖν· συκοφαντεῖ. δικάζειν ἐγχειρεῖ· τὰ τῆς ἐπι-ορκίας ἔπεται. φιλοσοφεῖν ἐπιχειρεῖ· γότης ἐστὶ καὶ τὰ οὐράνια πολυπραγ-μονεῖ.

suits<sup>36</sup> is combined with charges of *goeteia*. Overall, Timon represents how the *misanthropos*, the opposite of a *philanthropos*, typically views philosophy and oratory.

*Between imagination and reality*

Intellectual stereotypes such as we have examined occur almost exclusively in the ethological declamations, which place the Old Comedy ridicule of intellectuals, particularly from Aristophanes, into the mouths of ethically deficient, New Comedy characters. Characters in Libanius' historical declamations, exemplary figures such as Demosthenes whose moral arguments serve Libanius' educational goals, rarely adopt this rhetoric.<sup>37</sup> The ethological speakers, on the other hand, wield no edifying arguments, leading most scholars to conclude that these comic declamations served no higher purpose than pure entertainment: as Russell put it, "there is no pill inside the sugar coating."<sup>38</sup> Yet the pill arguably exists in the fact that a sophist's declamations are model exercises in both the faithful portrayal of character and the construction of an argument designed to be persuasive to a specific audience.<sup>39</sup> The comic

<sup>36</sup> Ar. *Nub.* 225, Pl. *Ap.* 19B.

<sup>37</sup> An exception is *Decl.* 9.7, when Neocles says that "the incantations" (ἐπὸδαί) of his schoolmasters had little effect on the impulses of his son Themistocles' mind. For discussion of the Demosthenic declamations and their engagement with Libanius' own day see Quiroga Puertas, in *Law and Ethics* 287–306; Swist, *Phoenix* 70 (2016) 170–189. On moral instruction in Greek and Roman rhetorical exercises and declamation see C. Gibson, "Portraits of *Paideia* in Libanius' *Progymnasmata*," in O. Lagacherie and P.-L. Malosse (eds.), *Libanios, le premier humaniste: Etudes en hommage à Bernard Schouler* (Alessandria 2011) 69–78, and "Better Living through Prose Composition? Moral and Compositional Pedagogy in Ancient Greek and Roman *Progymnasmata*," *Rhetorica* 32 (2014) 1–30; M. Kraus, "Les conceptions politiques et culturelles dans les progymnasmata de Libanios et Aphthonios," in *Libanios, le premier humaniste* 142.

<sup>38</sup> Russell, *Greek Declamation* 88; cf. Johansson, in *Law and Ethics* 283–284.

<sup>39</sup> *Ethopoeiai* were an essential part of the progymnasmata. See Russell, *Greek Declamation* 11–12; C. Gibson, *Libanius' Progymnasmata: Model Exercises in Greek Prose Composition and Rhetoric* (Atlanta 2008) 355–357, and "Libanius' *Progymnasmata*," in *Libanius: A Critical Introduction* 136.

characters must be persuasive to the fictional audience of fellow democrats, of an Athens-like *polis* where sophists and philosophers, as in the *Clouds*, are held in suspicion.<sup>40</sup> But for the sophist's real audience, moral instruction and social comment may also be implicit: whereas Aristophanes comically exploited the flaws of both the rustic Strepsiades and the sophistic Socrates, these declamations of Libanius portray only the former type, and create the morally instructive effect that antipathy to *pepaideumenoï* correlates with defects in moral character and lack of public spirit. Beneath the evident humor of *Decl.* 26, for instance, is the more serious implication that the refusal to exercise civic duty is a surrender of one's masculinity, and in the *dyskolos* we may read the targets of Libanius' frustration at the decline of civic engagement and service in the *curia* of contemporary Antioch.<sup>41</sup> The declamatory dramas construct a reality that would likely influence how Libanius' actual audience in the fourth century CE perceived the real world around them, who would connect the comic characters' assault on philosophy and rhetoric to analogous problems in their own day.

It is arguable that much as the tyrants of his declamations may be mirrored by tyrannical figures in the real world,<sup>42</sup> Libanius' comic characters may in turn be read as parodic and typological representations of the forces he perceived as threats to pagan, Hellenic *paideia*, whose marginalization corresponded, as he saw it, to the expansion of imperial bureaucracy and an ascendancy of "uneducated" *nouveaux riches* under Christian emperors.<sup>43</sup> In a number of his *Orationes* Libanius

<sup>40</sup> Russell calls this imaginary *polis* Sophistopolis, on which see *Greek Declamation* 22–39.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Kraus, in *Libanios, le premier humaniste* 148.

<sup>42</sup> On the connections between declamatory and contemporary tyrants in Late Antiquity see P.-L. Malosse, "Sophistiques et tyrannies," in E. Amato (ed.), *Approches de la Troisième Sophistique: Hommages à Jacques Champ* (Brussels 2006) 172–176; Kraus, in *Libanios, le premier humaniste* 147–148; Tomassi, in *Law and Ethics* 256–261.

<sup>43</sup> *Lib. Or.* 62.21–23; see also 1.255, 3.26, 58.21–22. Cf. P.-L. Malosse,

represents these men in the same language as the misers and misanthropes of his *Declamations*,<sup>44</sup> while he likewise rhetorically exaggerates the poverty of his own profession in correspondence to the malnourished zombies of the declamatory intellectuals.<sup>45</sup> In *Oration* 31, for instance, in which he requests public funding from the city council of Antioch to support his teaching assistants, he reproves those who would not sell off any public property as too “miserly, tightfisted, and money-loving” (νῦν φιλάργυρος, νῦν γλίσχρος, νῦν φιλοχρήματος) to save *paideia* from extinction.<sup>46</sup> In rhetorical exercises, φιλάργυρος invariably denotes the miserly type, and Libanius’ use of it outside of those contexts is rare. Moreover, Libanius consistently advanced the notion that rhetorical *paideia* was no longer valued as one’s ticket into the political establishment. Much like the miserly father in *Decl.* 33, who refused to send his son to the schools of the sophists because such a profession would not make him rich, Libanius presents in *Or.* 62.21 a similar, popular dismissal of his profession: fathers would rather send their sons to Beirut to study Latin and Roman law to launch a more lucrative public career. The growing disparity between men in power and men of letters, he claimed, made the latter into targets of mistrust and resentment.<sup>47</sup>

“Libanius’ *Oration*,” in *Libanius: A Critical Introduction* 90; Cribiore, *The School of Libanius* 236–237.

<sup>44</sup> See *Lib. Or.* 31.41, 42.24, 62.10.

<sup>45</sup> On Libanius’ rhetorical exaggeration of his profession’s poverty see L. Van Hoof, “Lobbying through Literature: Libanius, *For the Teachers* (*Oration* 31),” in L. Van Hoof and P. Van Nuffelen (eds.), *Literature and Society in the Fourth Century AD: Performing Paideia, Constructing the Present, Presenting the Self* (Leiden 2014) 71.

<sup>46</sup> *Or.* 31.41: ἀλλ’ ὁ λαμπρὸς ἵπποτρόφος, Ἥλιε, καὶ ὁ τοῦς ἀθλητὰς ἐξ ἅπαντος ἀγεῖρων μυχοῦ καὶ ὁ θηρίων πλῆθος ἄνούμενος καὶ τοῦς πρὸς ταῦτα μαχομένους ἰχνεύων, ὃν ἕκαστον διασειεῖν πέφυκε τῶν λειτουργούντων τὰς οὐσίας, νῦν φιλάργυρος, νῦν γλίσχρος, νῦν φιλοχρήματος, ἐν ᾧ τὸ μὲν κινδυνευόμενον λόγοι, τὸ δὲ σῶσαι τούτους δυνάμενον πλέθρα γῆς;

<sup>47</sup> See R. Cribiore, “The Value of a Good Education: Libanius and Public Authority,” in P. Rousseau (ed.), *A Companion to Late Antiquity* (Oxford

Such social competition, according to Peter Brown, was also a driving force behind sorcery accusations in the late fourth century.<sup>48</sup> Declamatory sorcery accusations may thus have been a creative expression of such concerns, parallel to Libanius' claim in *Or.* 62 that "being a competent orator is now the grounds for accusation."<sup>49</sup> The atmosphere in which these charges occurred was filled with the rhetoric of Christian bishops who added a religious dimension to the association of *paideia* and magic, with claims that "the Hellenes" bewitch (γοητεύουσιν) the soul,<sup>50</sup> and that "tyrants, emperors, sophists with their irresistible eloquence, sorcerers, magicians, and demons" are in an unholy alliance against the truth of God.<sup>51</sup> Libanius himself in a letter of 363 observes that those who "think the gods are nonsense" are the same as those who "think that people who wear the *tribon* are sorcerers (γόητας)," here referring to the white cloak of philosophers and sophists.<sup>52</sup> Even during his reign, the emperor Julian acknowledged this phenomenon, and how the modern, "uneducated" Cynics were complicit with the Christians in their assault on *paideia* by

2009) 239.

<sup>48</sup> P. Brown, "Sorcery, Demons, and the Rise of Christianity from Late Antiquity into the Middle Ages," in M. Douglas (ed.), *Witchcraft Confessions and Accusations* (London 1970) 22–24. Accusations were also made among rival sophists, much as they were among athletes, to try to expose their success as illegitimate and assisted by magical means, especially in a case where one sophist is accused of hexing another's speaking ability. Libanius was both the victim and the alleged perpetrator of such sorcery.

<sup>49</sup> *Or.* 62.44: νῦν δὲ πλεονέκτημα μὲν τὸ μὴ δύνασθαι λέγειν, ἔγκλημα δὲ τὸ ῥητορεύειν ἱκανῶς.

<sup>50</sup> Greg. Naz. *Or.* 2.104; cf. *Or.* 4.55, 7.11.5, *Carm. de se* 1426. On Christian association of paganism and sorcery see M. Kahlos, *Debate and Dialogue: Christian and Pagan Cultures c. 360–430* (Abingdon 2007) 110–112.

<sup>51</sup> Joh. Chrys. *De Babyla* 11: τὰ μὲν γὰρ παρ' ἡμῖν ἅ φατε πλάσματα εἶναι καὶ τύραννοι καὶ βασιλεῖς καὶ λόγων ἄμαχοι σοφισταὶ ἤδη δὲ καὶ φιλόσοφοι καὶ γόητες καὶ μάγοι καὶ δαίμονες καθελεῖν ἐσπούδασαν.

<sup>52</sup> *Ep.* 803.4: γόητας ἠγεῖτο τοὺς ἐν τοῖς τρίβωσιν ἐκεῖνος ὃς καὶ τοὺς θεοὺς ἠγεῖτο εἶναι φλήναφον.

teaching the young that “the genuine devotees of Pythagoras, Plato, and Aristotle are ... sorcerers, sophists, lunatics, and poisoners.”<sup>53</sup> This illustrates how both the bishops and the declamatory characters see no meaningful difference between philosophers and sophists.

Declamatory sorcery accusations went beyond parroting and parodying the enemies of *paideia*: they may have reflected existential fears among pagan intellectuals not only for their professions but also their persons. Under Constantius II, Valentinian, and Valens, several pagan philosophers and sophists in Rome, Antioch, and elsewhere were executed on the charge of illicit and treasonous magic.<sup>54</sup> As Christian bishops were quick to associate pagan religion with illicit magical practices, in the minds of educated pagans such allegations were often perceived as pretexts for persecution against pagan *paideia* at the hands of imperial bureaucrats, especially after the death of Julian when educated pagans whom Julian had elevated found themselves in a dangerous position. Sorcery accusations were an occupational hazard throughout Libanius’ career,<sup>55</sup> to the point of being investigated at Valens’ personal request.<sup>56</sup> Libanius was acquitted, he reports, much to the emperor’s chagrin. A century later, the pagan historian Zosimus would claim likewise that sorcery and pagan *paideia* were closely linked in the paranoid minds of these emperors.<sup>57</sup> Valens suspected “all those who were then renowned in philosophy or otherwise classically educated,” and dispatched the proconsul Festus to

<sup>53</sup> Jul. Or. 6.197d: οἱ Πυθαγόρου καὶ Πλάτωνος καὶ Ἀριστοτέλους χορευταὶ γνήσιοι γόητες εἶναι λέγονται καὶ σοφισταὶ καὶ τετυφωμένοι καὶ φαρμακεῖς. See also Jul. Or. 6.193a, 7.224a-c; Mis. 353b.

<sup>54</sup> For analyses of the magic trials under Constantius and the Pannonian emperors see M. W. Dickie, *Magic and Magicians in the Greco-Roman World* (London 2001) 244–245; N. Lenski, *Failure of Empire: Valens and the Roman State in the Fourth Century A.D.* (Berkeley 2002) 218–234.

<sup>55</sup> Lib. Or. 1.43, 50, 71, 162.

<sup>56</sup> Lib. Or. 1.171–172.

<sup>57</sup> Zos. 4.1.1–2; cf. Amm. Marc. 26.4.4; Lenski, *Failure of Empire* 218–219.

Asia “so that there would be no man of letters left.”<sup>58</sup> Another pagan historian, Ammianus, notes that the libraries of several of those executed were publicly burned on the grounds that they were illicit tomes (*inliciti*), when in fact they were mostly “titles of various liberal disciplines and law.”<sup>59</sup> As discussed by Salzman and Sandwell, the legal ambiguity bound up in the term *superstitio* between pagan religion and illicit magic was exploited by zealous governors to justify the summary prohibition of pagan practices and the demolition of temples.<sup>60</sup> Yet as noted by Trzcionka, the religious persuasions of these authors did much to frame sorcery accusations and inquisitions as convenient means to attack paganism, despite the more likely reality, as demonstrated by Lenski and others, that political factors more concrete than a monolithic pagan-Christian polarity

<sup>58</sup> Zos. 4.14.2: πρὸς δὲ ὄργην ἄμετρον ὁ βασιλεὺς ἀναστὰς ὑπόπτως εἶχε πρὸς ἅπαντας τοὺς ἐπὶ φιλοσοφίᾳ τηρικαῦτα διαβοήτους ἢ ἄλλως λόγοις ἐντεθραμμένους. 4.15.2: τῶν δὲ ἀτοπημάτων ἦν κολοφῶν Φῆστος, ὃν εἰς πᾶν εἶδος ὠμότητος πρόχειρον ὄντα τῆς Ἀσίας ἀνθύπατον ὁ βασιλεὺς ἔστειλεν, ὡς ἂν μηδεὶς τῶν περὶ λόγους ἐσπουδακῶτων ἀπολειφθεῖ· καὶ εἰς ἔργον ἦει τὸ βούλευμα.

<sup>59</sup> Amm. Marc. 29.1.41: *deinde congesti innumeri codices et acervi voluminum multi sub conspectu iudicum concremati sunt, ex domibus eruti variis ut illiciti, ad leniendam caesorum invidiam, cum essent plerique liberalium disciplinarum indices variarum et iuris.*

<sup>60</sup> For example, by the Christian Praetorian Prefect of the East Cynegius, who interpreted an edict of Theodosius I in 385 against divinatory sacrifices (*Cod. Theod.* 16.10.9) to attack pagan shrines in the vicinity of Antioch. See M. R. Salzman, “‘*Superstitio*’ in the *Codex Theodosianus* and the Persecution of Pagans,” *VigChr* 41 (1987) 177–183; I. Sandwell, “Outlawing ‘Magic’ or Outlawing ‘Religion’? Libanius and the Theodosian Code as Evidence for Legislation against ‘Pagan’ Practices,” in W. V. Harris (ed.), *The Spread of Christianity in the First Four Centuries* (Leiden 2005) 90–109. Cf. M. Kahlos, “*Artis heu magicis*: The Label of Magic in Fourth-Century Conflicts and Disputes,” in M. R. Salzman et al. (eds.), *Pagans and Christians in Late Antique Rome* (Cambridge 2016) 171–173. Sandwell disputes Salzman’s claim that Christian emperors used *superstitio* in their legislation with intended ambiguity of the term, but does accept that the ambiguity was nevertheless exploited by others.

were at play.<sup>61</sup> Libanius professed nevertheless that *hiera* and *logoi* were inextricably linked, and so an attack on one was an attack on both.<sup>62</sup> Libanius' anti-*paideia* declamations may reflect the growing persecution complex, later fully expressed by Zosimus, that many of his contemporary pagans may have felt in his own time. Behind the grouch's wish for orators to be silent in *Decl.* 26, or the rich man cutting out the orator's tongue in *Decl.* 36, may have been Libanius' real fear of Hellenic oratory being forced into silence.<sup>63</sup>

It is plausible that both religious partisanship and social competition with the *apaideutoi* were reflected in the boorish declamatory characters' opposition to the *pepaideumenoι* in the declamations of Libanius, who himself had been accused of magic multiple times. Real-life sorcery accusations may have prompted him to inject magical language into the stock Aristophanic formulae of intellectual parody, especially when they independently can connect with his general concerns for the state of traditional *paideia*. The vulgar, comic characters who deliver such anti-intellectual rhetoric may reflect popular attitudes in Libanius' own day, attitudes fueled by bishops and bureaucrats, but also by rival sophists. These characters, while constructing caricatures, can be themselves caricatures of those who make such accusations in real life, however exaggerated for literary effect. While persuasive to the fictional audience that feeds on sophistry-sorcery stereotypes, their appearance as their own stereotypes discredits their arguments in the eyes of the real-world audience who may then view real-world sorcery accusations with skepticism.

<sup>61</sup> Trzcionka, *Magic and the Supernatural* 63; Dickie, *Magic and Magicians* 256–257; Lenski, *Failure of Empire* 211–233.

<sup>62</sup> *Lib. Or.* 62.8. Cf. *Or.* 13.1; *Jul. Ep.* 36 Wright.

<sup>63</sup> See *Or.* 30.8, where amid the monastic destruction of pagan shrines, priests are forced “to be silent or die” (σιγᾶν ἢ τεθνᾶναι). On Libanius' fear of silenced oratory see A. J. Quiroga Puertas, “Libanius' *Horror Silentii*,” in *The Purpose of Rhetoric in Late Antiquity* (Tübingen 2013) 223–244; Swist, *Phoenix* 70 (2016) 184–186.

*The defense of Socrates*

In light of what we have discussed, we may examine one more declamation, one cast in a different mold. Those so far examined have included attacks on intellectuals, but in *Decl. 1*, Libanius' *apologia* of Socrates, we have a defense.<sup>64</sup> Libanius here gives creative voice to concerns about his own profession from a different perspective, and of all his declamations, *Decl. 1* has received the most scholarly recognition as communicating with Libanius' own day. H. Markowski had proposed that the speech be read as an allegorical defense of the emperor Julian, while Bernard Schouler has more recently argued that it defends Libanius' own career.<sup>65</sup> Following on Schouler I will show that one of *Decl. 1*'s strategies of defending Hellenic, rhetorical *paideia* is to distinguish its genuine form from its various misrepresentations both past and present.

*Decl. 1* is a work of historical fiction in which an anonymous advocate steps in after Socrates gives his own *apologia*, i.e. that written by Plato or Xenophon, and Libanius uses the historical situation to his advantage.<sup>66</sup> He throws the arguments of Socrates' accusers, that he corrupted the Athenian youth, in their faces:<sup>67</sup>

<sup>64</sup> For translations and analyses see Russell, *Imaginary Speeches* 17–57; W. M. Calder III et al., *The Unknown Socrates* (Wauconda 2002) 39–110.

<sup>65</sup> H. Markowski, *De Libanio Socratis defensore* (Breslau 1910) 169–170, whose interpretation is followed by D. G. Hunter, “Borrowings from Libanius in the *Comparatio Regis et Monachi* of St. John Chrysostom,” *JThS* 39 (1988) 527–528; Calder et al., *The Unknown Socrates* 40; Russell, *Imaginary Speeches* 19–20; B. Schouler, “Que cherchait Libanios en défendant Socrate?” in L. Brisson and P. Chiron (eds.), *Rhetorica philosophans: Mélanges offerts à Michel Patillon* (Paris 2010) 189–204. For discussion of the varying interpretations of *Decl. 1* see Penella, in *Libanius: A Critical Introduction* 125.

<sup>66</sup> Russell, *Imaginary Speeches* 18–19.

<sup>67</sup> *Decl. 1.102–103*: νέοι δὲ πατέρων τε πρότερον ἄγοντες ἐκείνον, ὡς λέγεις, καὶ πρεσβυτέρων ἀδελφῶν ὑπερορώντες καὶ καθάπερ ὑπὸ γόητος ἐλκόμενοι τοῦ Σωκράτους τί πλέον ἂν ἐζήτησαν τοῦ νεῦσαι τὸν ἄνθρωπον; ... τίς οὖν πατήρ ἀπεκήρυξε τὸν αὐτοῦ φάσκων πονηρὸν διὰ Σωκράτην γεγενῆσθαι; τίς οἴκοι καθείρξε τὸν υἱόν, ὅπως μηκέτ' ἀκούοι τῶν διαφθει-

As for the youth, who hold that man in higher regard than their fathers, as you claim, and despise their brothers insofar as they are drawn on by that sorcerer (γόητος) Socrates, what more would they have sought than his nodding? ... So what father has disinherited (ἀπεκήρυξε) his son claiming that he has become a bad person because of Socrates? Who has shut his son indoors, lest he hear his corrupting words any longer? Nobody.

Libanius represents his opponents' position as directly accusing Socrates of being a genuine sorcerer. Such a characterization of Socrates is found in a number of Plato's dialogues.<sup>68</sup> Yet in Plato these characterizations are always metaphorical representations of the effect of Socrates' words on his interlocutors and made by other characters such as Thrasymachus in the *Republic*.<sup>69</sup> Moreover, as Meno points out in the eponymous dialogue (80B), Socrates' charming rhetoric could be dangerously misconstrued as actual sorcery, which is what the anonymous speaker in *Decl.* 1 suggests here. Furthermore, Socrates' advocate asks whether any scenario in which fathers disowned their sons on account of their being educated by Socrates has actually ever occurred. For the imaginary Athenian audience, the answer is no. But Libanius' real audience has seen this, not in real life, but in other declamations, such as *Decl.* 33. Fathers' disinheritance of sons (*apokeryxis/abdicatio*) was a popular declamatory theme, especially in the Libanian corpus. The miser in *Decl.* 33, as we have seen, disowns his son because the son had been taught by intellectuals to despise material wealth. For both the real and the imagined audience, Libanius tries to show that the accusations against Socrates are no truer than sophistic stereotypes.

Yet as stereotypes, they may still be used by Libanius to his rhetorical advantage before an imagined Athenian audience. Like Libanius' contemporary Himerius, the speaker distinguishes Socrates from the 'First Sophistic' sophists such as

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ρόντων ῥημάτων; οὐδεὶς.

<sup>68</sup> See de Romilly, *Magic and Rhetoric* 33–34.

<sup>69</sup> Pl. *Resp.* 358D, cf. *Sym.* 215C.

Protagoras, Gorgias, Prodicus, and Thrasymachus.<sup>70</sup> These are the sophists he casts as “those who bewitch everyone” (τοῖς ἅπαντας γοητεύουσιν, *Decl.* 1.22, 153). Likewise for Libanius’ real audience he may reinforce the Philostratean distinction (*VS* 1.481) between the original sophists as underminers of society and sophists in their own day as stewards of *paideia* and Hellenic civilization. The speaker also repeatedly emphasizes the profiteering motives of the Sophists, while Socrates never charged money for his teaching (*Decl.* 1.16, 22, 166). Here is a sure parallel with Libanius, who himself claims in more than one oration not to have required any fees for his teaching, only accepting donations in proportion to his students’ means.<sup>71</sup> The lack of description of the speaker’s own character invites us to place Libanius in both the imaginary and the real-world contexts of this speech’s performance, yet still achieving the rhetorical aims directed at either audience. To the fictional Athenian *demos*, Libanius uses popular mistrust of sophists to his advantage to persuade them that Socrates does not fit the stereotypical description of them; yet in his own image he presents Socrates as the ideal sophist nonetheless.<sup>72</sup> He asks “who is the better counselor (σύμβουλος) for the city, the one who is mad with desire for money ... or the one who exhorts us to wisdom rather than wealth?”<sup>73</sup> Libanius turns the arguments of the anti-intellectual declamatory characters on their heads, asserting that *paideia*, not wealth, is what confers eloquence,

<sup>70</sup> *Him. Or.* 35.8–21, 38.4–7; cf. R. J. Penella, “Himerius’ Orations to his Students,” in T. C. Brennan and H. I Flower (eds.), *East and West: Papers in Ancient History presented to Glen W. Bowersock* (Cambridge [Mass.] 2008) 141.

<sup>71</sup> *Or.* 36.9, 62.19. Since he held the imperial chair of rhetoric at Antioch, Libanius’ school was subsidized by the imperial government; see R. A. Kaster, “The Salaries of Libanius,” *Chiron* 13 (1983) 37–59.

<sup>72</sup> B. Schouler, *La tradition hellénique chez Libanios* (Paris 1984) 130.

<sup>73</sup> *Decl.* 1.89: πότερον οὖν βελτίων, ὃ Ἀθηναῖοι, σύμβουλος καὶ πόλει καὶ ἰδιώταις ὅστις ἐκμαίνει περὶ χρημάτων ἐπιθυμῖαν ... ἢ ὅστις ἐπὶ τὴν φρόνησιν μᾶλλον ἢ τὸν πλοῦτον παρακαλεῖ;

and also qualifies one to best advise the state.<sup>74</sup> The miserly father of *Decl.* 33, in contrast, asserts that “wealth makes an orator more intelligent, renders a plaintiff more credible, and secures a defendant’s acquittal.”<sup>75</sup> Overall, *Decl.* 1 is an *apologia* of *paideia* made palatable for a classical Athenian audience, as a speech designed to compensate for the rhetorical tactlessness of Socrates’ own *apologia*, as well as for a contemporary late antique audience for whom the utility of a sophist must be reinforced.

### *Conclusion*

Of all extant declamations, Greek and Latin, those of Libanius are the only ones that dramatize anti-intellectual viewpoints.<sup>76</sup> This fact alone, however, does not convincingly turn correlation with contemporary issues into causation. First, there is the simple accident of transmission, for while ethological declamations predominate in Libanius’ corpus, there is sufficient evidence that comic characters had appeared in declamations since at least the second century CE, and some of these lost texts could have employed anti-intellectual rhetoric.<sup>77</sup> Second, the bare fact that declamations can rarely be convincingly dated, especially within such a broad span of time as Libanius’ career, usually precludes any claims that these works may be reactions to specific historical events, e.g. the magic trials at Antioch. Finally, the intellectual stereotypes employed, including those that link rhetoric and magic, are largely unoriginal and derived from classical sources, especially Aristophanes and the Attic orators.

<sup>74</sup> *Decl.* 1.88: ὀρθῶς οὖν ὑπολαμβάνει Σωκράτης τῶν πεπαιδευμένων, ἀλλ’ οὐ τῶν εὐπορούντων τὸ δύνασθαι λέγειν ἡγούμενος.

<sup>75</sup> *Decl.* 33.53: ὁ πλοῦτος καὶ ῥήτορα φρονιμώτερον ἔδειξε καὶ κατήγορον πιστὸν ἀπέφηνε καὶ φεύγοντα ἐξητήσατο.

<sup>76</sup> The declamatory characters of Choricus of Gaza (fl. 510 CE) use stock accusations of sophistry, but only as brief rejoinders to the voiced objections of their legal opponents. It is also likely that Choricus, active a century later, was influenced by Libanius. See Choric. *Decl.* 6.29, 7.51, 10.40.

<sup>77</sup> Luc. *Salt.* 65; Russell, *Greek Declamation* 88.

With these points of caution in mind, it is nevertheless worth considering that this material was selected and manipulated by a master sophist who in his orations and letters was so personally invested in the status of traditional *paideia* under an ascendant Christian imperial establishment. When a boorish miser attacks sophists and philosophers on the stage, it is not farfetched that certain audience members, or readers of circulated texts, would be reminded of the persecution of pagan intellectuals in the real world. Such a dissolution of the fourth wall is also nothing new. One recalls Euripidean characters, such as Hecuba in *Trojan Women*, who profess anachronistically modern ideas about the nature of the gods, only to be met with confusion and rejection by less sophisticated characters like Menelaus.<sup>78</sup> Libanius' declamations, while looking backward to the past, could also function as mirrors held up to his own society in order to identify, through parody, how those who possessed wealth and political power were in opposition to the cause of eloquence and education. As Socrates at the end of the *Symposium* argued that the same author could write both comedy and tragedy, so the comedy of intellectual caricature as presented by Libanius may reflect the tragedy of *paideia* in the late fourth century CE, and the conflict of power and wealth with its perennial nemesis: eloquence.<sup>79</sup>

February, 2017

Department of Classics  
University of Iowa  
Iowa City, Iowa 52242  
jeremy-swist@uiowa.edu

<sup>78</sup> Eur. *Tro.* 884–889.

<sup>79</sup> An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Classical Association of the Middle West and South annual meeting in Williamsburg in 2016. I am grateful to Craig Gibson for his assistance in the revision process, and to my anonymous readers and the editor of *GRBS* for their valuable criticism and suggestions.