

Letters or Speeches? Four Testimonia on Lysias' Ἐρωτικά

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This article aims at shedding light on an underexplored aspect of Lysias' production, the fragments dealing with erotic matters, which have so far been considered as belonging to the (lost) letters attributed to him. It will be shown how, thanks to four underexplored testimonia, the framework in which we should place these fragments appears to be wider than just Lysias' epistolary production.

The literary works attributed to the Attic orators went far beyond public speeches and orations on legal cases. For instance, despite scholars' wariness about the letters attributed to Attic orators (and, indeed, towards all ancient epistolary collections),¹ the documentation available for them is extensive. Alongside the corpora of orations, the medieval manuscript tradition preserves epistolary corpuscula for three of the ten orators of the canon, Demosthenes, Aeschines, and Isocrates.² To these we should add a number of epistles attributed to Lysias. These letters, unlike those of the other orators, are not transmitted through manuscripts (whether as part of the Lysianic corpus³

¹ This diffidence has its roots in the dissertation of Richard Bentley, who demonstrated the inauthenticity of the epistles of Phalaris, tyrant of Syracuse: *Dissertation upon the Epistles of Phalaris, Themistocles, Socrates, Euripides and upon the Fables of Aesop* (London 1697).

² M. R. Dilts, *Demosthenis Orationes* (Oxford 2002–2009); U. Schindel, *Aeschines Orationes* (Stuttgart 1978); G. Mathieu and E. Brémond, *Isocrate, Discours* (Paris 1938–1962).

³ On the corpus see K. J. Dover, *Lysias and the Corpus Lysiacum* (Berkeley 1986).

or with other letters in miscellaneous manuscripts) but have come down to us through the indirect tradition, mainly in quotations by ancient authors of various kinds and in lexicographical works. Moreover, a new fragment has been found by Giuseppe Ucciardello⁴ (and then included in later editions of Lysias) in one of the marginal notes to *Vat.gr.* 7, which contains lexica. According to the main and only comprehensive critical edition of Lysias' work, that of Christopher Carey,⁵ we have thirteen fragments. The names of the addressees are known in four cases, and for one (ἐπιστολή πρὸς Ἀμφήριστον) we know it is the second letter to the same person (since the lexicographer in *Vat.gr.* 7, fr.75 Ucciardello, calls it Πρὸς Ἀμφήριστον β' = fr.452 Carey), which makes the number of fragments of letters attributed to Lysias fourteen.⁶ There is also an entry in the *Suda*, included as a testimonium in Carey's edition, which states that Lysias' epistolary collection contained seven letters. It is not particularly difficult to imagine the reasons for the exclusion of these letters from the Lysianic corpus as transmitted to us, since suspicions of inauthenticity have always (and very often rightly) existed for most epistolary collections. Moreover, to judge from the material we have, it appears that most of these letters were erotic. This is indeed what we read in the *Suda* (λ 858):

Λυσίας ... ἔγραψε δὲ καὶ τέχνας ῥητορικὰς καὶ δημηγορίας, ἐγκώμια τε καὶ ἐπιταφίους καὶ ἐπιστολάς ζ', μίαν μὲν πραγματικὴν, τὰς δὲ λοιπὰς ἐρωτικάς· ὧν αἱ πέντε πρὸς μειράκια.

Lysias ... also wrote rhetorical *technae*, *demegoriae*, encomia, epitaphs, and seven epistles, one political and the rest erotic, of which five were addressed to boys.

The fragments of these epistles have been edited at the end of Carey's edition in a section entitled ἘΠΙΣΤΟΛΑΙ. As said, this is

⁴ G. Ucciardello, "Nuovi frammenti di oratori attici nel Vat. gr. 7," *Miscellanea Bibliothecae Apostolicae Vaticanae* 14 (2007) 431–482.

⁵ *Lysias. Orationes cum fragmentis* (Oxford 2007)

⁶ Some of the fragments are edited and translated in E. Medda, *Lisia. Orazioni* (Milan 1991–1995).

the first comprehensive list of edited testimonia and fragments that could be ascribed to Lysias' epistolary works, and constitutes, therefore, an invaluable tool for scholars interested in the minor production of the orator. To this list, the four testimonia, which will be the focus of the present article, must be added: they certainly enrich our knowledge of Lysias' fragmentary epistles and complement the excellent work made by Carey, but also contribute to a re-evaluation of Lysias' erotic production.

It is worth explaining briefly how our current edition of the fragments is structured and what texts it presents. First of all, in the 2007 edition, the only testimonium about Lysias' epistolary collection is the above-mentioned entry λ 858 of the *Suda*, reporting a total of seven epistles (one political and six erotic). Immediately after this are presented the fragmenta: first, those for which titles are known to us (*To Asybarus*, *To Ampheristus*, *To Metaneira*, *To Polycrates about Empedus*), and then a sub-section entitled *Ex incertis epistolis*. This last section contains six more fragments attributed to Lysias. The criteria for their inclusion in this section are not explicitly stated in the edition, but they seem clearly identifiable:

- 1) Explicit mention of the term ἐπιστολή. This applies only to fr.458 (the first of the *incertae epistulae*).
- 2) The presence of a second person singular. This criterion can be applied only to fr.459, for which the *Lexicon Patmense* (163 Sakellion) specifies that it is taken from the fifth ἐρωτικός, which is consistent with what the *Suda* tells us. This would not be a very solid criterion, as the second person singular is obviously quite often used in speeches as well.
- 3) As for fr.460 and 463, the criterion is evidently their erotic content, as reported by the *Suda*, which, as noted above, is the only source considered in the OCT edition for these epistles.

Fr.461 and 462, however, do not meet any of these criteria. For both, Carey, who has the merit of being the first to hypothesize the attribution of these quotations to a specific Lysianic work, explicitly says “nusquam nisi in epistola video ubi Lysias hoc dicere, si dixit, potuisset,” but does not put a question mark next to them. However, the texts of the fragments (461 οὐ

βούλομαι γὰρ ἔγωγε συντάττειν ἐσπευσμένα, “for I do not want to write in a rush”; 462 αὐτὸν ἐν ὅλοις δέκα χρόνοις τὸν εἰς τὰ Παναθηναῖα μόλις πληρῶσαι λόγον, “in ten entire years, he scarcely completed the speech for the Panathenaea”) do not provide strong evidence for this attribution: to conclude that they could not have been written in his speeches would be less farfetched, but even that would seem speculative. More cautiously, Floristán Imízcoz,⁷ a few years earlier, had placed the two fragments as *incertae sedis* (his fr.298–299).⁸

The situation appears, however, to be more complicated than Carey’s edition suggests. The four testimonia in question may lead to a reconsideration of the criteria on which we should attribute certain fragments of Lysias to his epistles. The first testimonium is a quotation in Dionysius of Halicarnassus where we hear of erotic and also “epistolary” speeches (*Lys.* 1.1):

πλείστους δὲ γράψας λόγους εἰς δικαστήριά τε καὶ βουλὰς καὶ πρὸς ἐκκλησίας εὐθέτους, πρὸς δὲ τούτοις πανηγυρικούς, ἐρωτικούς, ἐπιστολικούς...

Having written very many speeches well-suited for courts and councils and assemblies, and in addition to these, panegyrics, erotic speeches, and ‘speeches in the style of letters’...⁹

Erotic speeches are also attested for other orators, such as the spurious *Erotic Speech* in the Demosthenic corpus, as well as a speech of this sort remembered among the vast production of Demetrius of Phaleron (Diog. Laert. 5.81). Furthermore, it should be noted that Dionysius does not define Lysias’ ἐπιστολικός as ‘erotic’. Thus, we have here evidence (i) that erotic

⁷ J. M. Floristán Imízcoz, *Lysias. Discursos III* (Madrid 2000) 344: “Nescimus ubi haec Lysias dicere potuisset.”

⁸ On these two fragments and fr.463 (i.e. the ones quoted by Tzetzes) see P. M. Pinto, “La composizione letteraria agli occhi dei Bizantini: Giovanni Tzetze e Michele Coniata,” in *Storie di testi e tradizione classica per Luciano Canfora* (Rome 2018) 192–193.

⁹ Cf. LSJ s.v. ἐπιστολικός.

material could be found outside of Lysias' letters, and (ii) that Lysias' letters were not necessarily all erotic. Consequently, the criterion of erotic subject matter must be considered unreliable, especially if we take into account the many other passages in the Lysianic corpus (above all, *On the Murder of Eratosthenes*) that have an erotic content.

A second testimonium is found in Ps.-Plutarch's *Life of Lysias* and repeated in Photius' *Bibliotheca*:¹⁰

εἰσὶ δ' αὐτῷ καὶ τέχνηαι ῥητορικαὶ πεποιημέναι καὶ δημηγορίαι, ἐπιστολαὶ τε καὶ ἐγκώμια καὶ ἐπιτάφιοι καὶ ἐρωτικοὶ καὶ Σωκράτους ἀπολογία ἐστοχασμένη τῶν δικαστῶν.

He (Lysias) composed rhetorical *technae* and *demegoriae*, and epistles and encomia and funeral speeches and erotic speeches, and an apology of Socrates aimed at the jurors.

This passage, while very similar to that found in the *Suda*, does not refer the adjective ἐρωτικός to the letters (to which no specific label is given) but seems clearly to consider ἐρωτικοί as a separate part of Lysias' production. What we have here, then, seems to confirm the information in Dionysius of Halicarnassus. Moreover, in this testimony, ἐπιστολαὶ and ἐρωτικοί are not close in the sequence of listed works, and so there is no way for them be confused or assimilated.

It is important to note that according to Dionysius, Lysias wrote "speeches in the form of a letter" (as Stephen Usher translates ἐπιστολικούς in the Loeb Dionysius), rather than simple letters. Although this is the only explicit attestation of this literary typology for Lysias, this distinction should be taken into account for Lysias' letters. One may fairly assume that the term ἐπιστολή in the other sources is just a simplification of ἐπιστολικός. Unfortunately, from the short fragments we have, making a distinction between the two seems impossible, and it would at any rate be very hard to say what precisely would be the difference between a letter of an orator and a speech written in letter form. This problem had already been briefly ad-

¹⁰ [Plut.] *X orat.* 836B; Phot. *Bibl. cod.* 262, 488b.

dressed by Sauppe¹¹ (who, more than a hundred years ago, discussed the three testimonia mentioned so far, viz. the *Suda*, Dionysius, and Ps.-Plutarch/Photius), writing that the ἐρωτικὸί should be simply equated with letters: “Ἐρωτικούς λόγους vero vel ἐταρικούς, quos Suidas, Dionysius, alii commemorant diversos fuisse ab epistulis negaverim.” There is undoubtedly some fluidity between the two forms. In antiquity letters were not seen as a fully independent genre: for instance, in epistolary theory (Demetr. *Eloc.* 223) they can be seen as one half of a dialogue.

The works of Isocrates are interesting in this regard; among them, we find both texts labelled as letters¹² and speeches that easily fall into the category of the ἐπιστολικοὶ λόγοι. The former are quite self-conscious about their function as speeches that Isocrates would have delivered had he been fit to travel in person (see *Ep.* 1.1 and 6.1, where Isocrates apologizes for being old and not able to travel, and 5.1, where he alludes again to his old age). In particular, Signes Codoñer¹³ has argued that *Ep.* 1, 6, and 9 were actually interrupted *prooemia* to never-written epistolary speeches, since if one tries to reconstruct their length by comparing the beginning sections to those of the other letters, it is clear that they would have been much longer.¹⁴

¹¹ G. J. Baiter and H. Sauppe, *Oratores attici* I (Zurich 1850) 209.

¹² *Ep.* 1–9, some genuine, some spurious, some whose authenticity is still debated—but the question of authenticity need not affect the discussion of Lysias’ fragments, as these fragments are probably spurious too. See, among others, L. F. Smith, *The Genuineness of the Ninth and Third Letters of Isocrates* (Lancaster 1940) 5–6, and Mathieu and Brémond, *Isocrate* IV.

¹³ J. Signes Codoñer “Ἐπιστολαὶ ὁ λόγοι? Problemas en torno a las cartas I, VI y IX de Isócrates,” *MD* 48 (2002) 77–111. To the linguistic reasons provided by Signes Codoñer, we should add that the three letters are often transmitted consecutively in part of the manuscript tradition.

¹⁴ See Isoc. *Ep.* 2.13, where he apologizes for having written a text that is too long (although *Ep.* 2 is still much shorter than the reconstructed length of *Ep.* 1, 6, and 9), almost more like a speech than a letter: καὶ γὰρ νῦν κατὰ μικρὸν προϊὼν ἔλαθον ἐμαυτὸν οὐκ εἰς ἐπιστολῆς συμμετρίαν, ἀλλ’ εἰς λόγου

As regards the shortness of letters compared to speeches, Ps.-Demetrius (*Eloc.* 228–234) goes so far as to judge the very long Platonic *Epistle* 7 to be a treatise in the form of a letter. Moreover, there are many epistolary speeches throughout antiquity that are far too long for the letter form: they have an epistolary opening formula and sometimes very little or nothing else to identify them as letters—so, for instance, along with the epistolary speeches by Isocrates (*To Demonicus*, *To Nicocles*, *To Philip*), the Platonic *Ep.* 7, and the long letters of Epicurus, to mention but a few.

In light of this, even the explicit mention of ἐπιστολή might not be enough to attribute a fragment to the letters of Lysias. In the case of Lysias' fr.458 (the only one where the term is explicit), the word ἐπιστολή does not appear in the text itself but only in the description given by the *Suda*, which seems to have assimilated all erotic contents with epistles. Hence we should admit the possibility that this fragment could be from a Lysianic (or pseudo-Lysianic) λόγος ἐπιστολικός rather than a real letter and may have been mislabelled at some point during its transmission.

However, before rejecting an erotic-matter criterion, we should see whether any of the fragments *ex incertis epistulis* (where neither is there a reference to epistles or epistolary language nor is a second person singular employed) could somehow be linked to the epistles of Lysias. A preliminary observation in defense of such an editorial choice¹⁵ should be made about the fragments that seem to actually belong to Lysias' epistles (those with an explicit addressee). In fact, eight of these fragments seem to have (or at least allude to) erotic content. The only one whose content does not appear perfectly clear is fr.457, taken from an alleged letter *To Polycrates about*

μηκος ἔξοκέλας (“and slowly proceeding, I inadvertently ended up writing something that is not in the size of a letter, but of a speech”).

¹⁵ The reasons for this choice are not given by Carey, although both neglected witnesses are listed as general sources for Lysias' production, but not discussed, in his preface, vii–viii nn.7 and 12.

Empedus, where it seems that the orator is talking about eyes and eyelids—but these too are a common erotic motif.¹⁶

Therefore, on the whole, the content of these fragments tends to confirm the information contained in the *Suda*: for the five epistles for which we have explicit titles, the character seems to be erotic, or at least private rather than political. Nevertheless, even though the epistles of Lysias all have erotic content, the double attestation of ἐρωτικοὶ λόγοι should warn us against considering any fragment with erotic references as belonging to the orator's epistolary collection. If one wanted to include them in a section like the *incertae epistulae* of Carey's edition, it would at least be necessary to indicate that this was a doubtful attribution and that these fragments could equally derive from Lysias' (or Ps.-Lysias') λόγοι ἐρωτικοί, ἐπιστολαί, or another kind of work. This criterion, however, does not apply to Carey's fr.461–462, which have no explicit erotic content and should probably be placed as the last fragments in the section—if included in it at all. It is also entirely conjectural to assume that these two fragments belonged to letters simply because they somehow dealt with Isocrates: this derives from the mention of the *Panathenaicus* in fr.462, and of the concept of not writing in a rush in fr.461 in connection with the ten years spent by Isocrates composing the *Panathenaicus*, and from the fact that Isocrates was romantically linked to Metaneira, one of the addressees of Lysias' letters (fr.456). Moreover, fr.459 and 460 both have the expression ἐν Ἐρωτικῷ that definitely points to a speech rather than letters.

At any rate, the first two 'forgotten' witnesses to Lysias' letters trigger further reflections on the nature of these ἐρωτικὸν λόγοι. In order to shed light on this, it will first be necessary to investigate further the possibility that Lysias wrote speeches on love.

¹⁶ See for instance Philostr. *Ep.* 1.11.7, 12.7, 16.15, 59. 1. On the eyes as erotic motif in Philostr. *Epp.* see A. D. Walker, "Eros and the Eye in the Love-letters of Philostratus," *PCPS* 33 (1992) 132–148.

There is certainly at least one famous witness relevant to a discussion of the ἐρωτικοί mentioned by Dionysius and Ps.-Plutarch/Photius, because it provides further evidence of Lysias writing on erotic topics in works other than letters. This is the speech attributed to Lysias by Plato in the *Phaedrus* (230E–234C). The erotic speech marks the beginning of the *Phaedrus* (227B–C):

{ΣΩ.} Καλῶς γάρ, ὦ ἑταῖρε, λέγει. ἀτὰρ Λυσίας ἦν, ὡς ἔοικεν, ἐν ἄστει.

{ΦΑΙ.} Ναί, παρ' Ἐπικράτει, ἐν τῆδε τῇ πλησίον τοῦ Ὀλυμπίου οἰκία τῇ Μορυχία.

{ΣΩ.} Τίς οὖν δὴ ἦν ἡ διατριβή; ἢ δῆλον ὅτι τῶν λόγων ὑμᾶς Λυσίας εἰστία;

{ΦΑΙ.} Πεύση, εἴ σοι σχολὴ προϊόντι ἀκούειν.

{ΣΩ.} Τί δέ; οὐκ ἂν οἶμι με κατὰ Πίνδαρον “καὶ ἀσχολίας ὑπέριτερον” πρᾶγμα ποιήσασθαι τὸ τεῖν τε καὶ Λυσίου διατριβὴν ἀκούσαι;

{ΦΑΙ.} Πρόαγε δὴ.

{ΣΩ.} Λέγοις ἄν.

{ΦΑΙ.} Καὶ μὴν, ὦ Σώκρατες, προσήκουσα γέ σοι ἡ ἀκοή· ὁ γάρ τοι λόγος ἦν, περὶ ὃν διετρίβομεν, οὐκ οἶδ' ὄντινα τρόπον ἐρωτικός. γέγραφε γὰρ δὴ ὁ Λυσίας πειρώμενόν τινα τῶν καλῶν, οὐχ ὑπ' ἐραστοῦ δέ, ἀλλ' αὐτὸ δὴ τοῦτο καὶ κεκόμψευται· λέγει γὰρ ὡς χαριστέον μὴ ἐρῶντι μᾶλλον ἢ ἐρῶντι.

Socrates: He is right, my friend. Then Lysias, it seems, was in the city?

Phaedrus: Yes, at Epicrates' house, the one that belonged to Morychus, near the Olympieum.

Socrates: What was your conversation? But it is obvious that Lysias entertained you with his speeches.

Phaedrus: You shall hear, if you have leisure to walk along and listen.

Socrates: What? Do not you believe that I consider hearing your conversation with Lysias “a greater thing even than business,” as Pindar says?

Phaedrus: Lead on, then.

Socrates: Speak.

Phaedrus: Indeed, Socrates, you are just the man to hear it. For the discourse about which we conversed, was in a way, a love-

speech. For Lysias has represented one of the beauties being tempted, but not by a lover—this is just the clever thing about it; for he says that favours should be granted rather to the one who is not in love than to the lover. (transl. H. N. Fowler)

A few lines later, Phaedrus reads out the famous erotic speech of Lysias, in which a certain suitor (who is not in love) speaks to the boy who is the object of his attentions.¹⁷

It is very difficult, if not impossible, to establish with certainty whether this is entirely a Platonic fiction or whether it was to some extent based on an actual speech of Lysias—or perhaps merely on the fact that Lysias was known as a writer of erotic speeches. The subject has been widely discussed without a final solution being reached.¹⁸ It will be enough to say that no serious Platonic scholar since Rowe believes that this is a genuine Lysianic speech, and even when it is edited as part of the corpus, this is done purely in order to give a complete overview of Lysias' biography and production. Carey indeed explicitly distances himself from it in his preface (v), stating that, although he edits the speech, he does not consider it authentic. So did Hude, the previous editor of Lysias for the OCT (1912), as well as Gernet and Bizos, who edited the Lysianic corpus for the *Belles Lettres* series (1955), and Floristán Imízcoz, who edited it as speech XXXV. It is surely just as possible that at least some forgers, authors of rhetorical exercises, composers of spurious Lysianic works of an erotic nature (regardless of their form), took their cue from Plato's invention

¹⁷ On this speech and the two other erotic speeches in the *Phaedrus* see H. Yunis, *Phaedrus* (Cambridge (2011) 97–104. On erotic speeches in Plato's *Phaedrus* and *Symposium* see F. Lasserre, “Ἐρωτικοὶ λόγοι,” *MusHelv* 1 (1944) 169–178.

¹⁸ Among others, see G. Zuccante, *Lisia e Platone: a proposito del discorso erotico di Lisia nel Fedro* (Milan 1925); P. Shorey, “On the *Erotikos* of Lysias in Plato's *Phaedrus*,” *CP* 28 (1933) 131–132; S. Panagiotou, “Lysias and the Date of Plato's *Phaedrus*,” *Mnemosyne* IV.28 (1975) 388–398; C. J. Rowe, *Plato. Phaedrus* (Cambridge 1986) 142–143; Floristán Imízcoz, *Lisias. Discursos* III 186–205; Yunis, *Phaedrus* 1–10, 97–104.

of this famous erotic speech. Fr.458, for instance, labelled by the *Suda* as an epistle, sounds very much like a philosophical (not to say Platonic) speech on love,¹⁹ perhaps based on the one in the *Phaedrus* and then attributed to Lysias. The opposite explanation is also entirely plausible: there might already have been spurious works of Lysias on erotic themes for Plato to allude to in the *Phaedrus*, in addition to alluding to genuine Lysianic works. The chronology would be tight but not impossible, and such activity would not be unprecedented, if we think of Demosthenes' *Erotic Speech* (see below).

To link the *Phaedrus* speech to Lysias' epistles—and also to elucidate the problem of the confusion between erotic epistles/epistolary speeches and erotic speeches—there is a third new and extremely valuable testimonium about Lysias' letters.²⁰ It is a scholium to Plato's *Phaedrus* (omitted by all editors of Lysias), by the fifth-century commentator Hermias (*In Platonis Phaedrum scholia* 35.19–21 Couvreur):

εἰδέναι δὲ δεῖ ὅτι αὐτοῦ Λυσίου ὁ λόγος οὗτός ἐστι, καὶ φέρεται ἐν ταῖς ἐπιστολαῖς ταῖς ἐκείνου εὐδοκιμοῦσα καὶ αὕτη ἡ ἐπιστολή.

It is necessary to know that this speech is by Lysias, and it is reported²¹ also that this letter is of good reputation among the epistles.

According to the scholiast, Lysias' erotic speech in the *Phaedrus* is to be called a letter (perhaps in the light of its beginning *in medias res*), and it has a good reputation among the corpus of Lysianic letters. This is not only a further attestation of the

¹⁹ "Saying that I do not love you, you charge me with the greatest pettiness. For, if such a character and manner and soul and goodwill are so unhesitating, and in addition, I do not follow to the extreme the commonality of association and the fellowship of speech, who would become more miserable than I, who am indifferent to good sense?"

²⁰ This piece of information was found and kindly shared with me by my young colleague and friend Claudia Nuovo, a brilliant M.A. student at the University of Bologna.

²¹ We cannot exclude that φέρεται means "it is transmitted."

existence of erotic letters attributed to Lysias, but it also shows how blurred the difference between erotic epistles (or ἐπιστολικοὶ λόγοι) and erotic speeches must have been in antiquity, and even more for us modern readers. The identification of Lysias' erotic production with the genre of letters, which we have seen is taken for granted in the *Suda*, must have been at least as old as the fifth century, when Hermias wrote—and this is further confirmation of fr.458 (where the term ἐπιστολή appears only in the description by the *Suda*) being a speech rather than a letter. This identification seems, however, to have been less obvious in the first century, when Ps.-Plutarch distinguished between epistles and erotic speeches, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus mentioned the ἐπιστολικοὶ λόγοι separately from the erotic speeches.²² Similar information is to be found in another later testimonium by Michael Psellus (*Theologica* 98.30–33 Gauthier):

πλατὺν δὲ καὶ τοῦ Λογγίνου καταχέομαι γέλωτα, ὅποτε πρὸς τὴν ἐρωτικὴν τοῦ Λυσίου ἐπιστολὴν τὰς τούτου τέχνας περὶ τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἀντιθεῖς πράγματος, αἰσχύνεσθαί φησι περὶ τοῦ ἀνδρὸς ὅτι δὴ ἐλάττων ὄφθη τοῦ ῥήτορος.

I openly burst into big laughs at Longinus when, having contrasted with the erotic epistle by Lysias his (*scil.* Lysias') rhetorical arts, he says he is ashamed for the man for appearing inferior to the orator.

It is fair to assume, considering the information given by Hermias and the deep knowledge Psellus had of Plato, that the erotic epistle which he talks about in this passage is the Lysianic speech in the *Phaedrus*. Such identification should not surprise in an author of the eleventh century, if it already existed in the fifth and was then taken for granted by the *Suda*, and there is no reason to think that Psellus knew any other erotic epistle by

²² E. Ofenloch, *Caecilii Calactini Fragmenta* (Stuttgart 1907) 100, following Immisch considers the idea that this fragment could be taken from Caecilius of Calacte (1st cent. A.D.), and edits it as fr.112. I do not see any evidence for this attribution, especially considering that Caecilius' contemporary Dionysius was aware of a distinction between letters and erotic speeches.

Lysias. The Longinus quoted in the fragment seems to be Ps.-Longinus, author of the treatise *On the Sublime*, who contrasts Lysias with Plato (32.8, 35.1), but with no explicit reference to any erotic epistle or to the *Phaedrus*. Here, however, Psellus is saying that Longinus found that the moral values of Lysias as a person (which appear from the speech on love) are decidedly inferior to his qualities as an orator—or broadly speaking a rhetorician.

With regard to these testimonia, it is worth mentioning the peculiar and highly speculative view of Spengel, reported with approval by Sauppe,²³ according to which the Lysianic speech in the *Phaedrus* should be understood as an imitation of Lysias' erotic epistles, specifically one of the five addressed to boys mentioned by the *Suda*. Spengel does not give the source from which this claim originates, and had it been Hermias, this would probably have been made explicit: but as the erotic speech in the *Phaedrus* begins *ex abrupto*, it leaves space for speculation on whether it was indeed just a letter with philosophical content. If this were true, the opposite argument could be just as easily brought up: the erotic epistles addressed to boys attributed to Lysias might be later rhetorical fictions based on the erotic speech (or letter?) in the *Phaedrus*.

It should be added that it is not so unusual to find rhetorical pieces with erotic content in the corpora of the orators: we might think, in particular, of Demosthenes, whose corpus includes a certainly spurious *Erotic Speech*. Interestingly, it was perhaps written as a counterpart to Lysias' speech in the *Phaedrus*, as it starts with the praise of Epicrates, in whose house Lysias allegedly pronounced his speech on love. This is further evidence for a phenomenon involving the composition of philosophical erotic speeches modelled on those in the *Phaedrus*, as could be the lost erotic speeches attributed to Lysias (see above on fr.458). Among erotic materials ending up in oratorical corpora, mention can also be made of the tenth letter of

²³ Baiter and Sauppe, *Oratores attici* 209.

Aeschines, utterly inconsistent with the rest of that epistolary collection and in general with the orator's character and production; it is in fact the narration of an erotic adventure that allegedly happened in Asia Minor, most likely to be dated to the Imperial age.²⁴ Finally, a paramount example of the erotic *spuria* accreting around an Attic orator's original production is the pseudo-Demosthenic *Against Neaera*, a speech against a courtesan (also mentioned in fr.463, where we read that Lysias slandered her badly with remarks on her obscene sexual habits), generally attributed to Apollodorus of Acharnae.²⁵ It is in this speech (19–23) that we find a mention of Lysias and his relationship with the courtesan Metaneira, who was one of the addressees of the fragmentary letters of the orator, and apparently belonging to the same mistress as Neaera, a woman called Nicarete. Here we read that Lysias wanted his beloved Metaneira to be initiated into the mysteries of Eleusis, and that he therefore asked Nicarete to escort the young courtesan along with him; the author says that Neaera also went with them. This anecdote about Lysias and Metaneira is used by Ps.-Demosthenes, who summons a friend of Lysias as a witness, to prove that Neaera was a prostitute and worked with Metaneira.

It is in connection with Metaneira that we can identify a plausible source for the creation of some erotic *spuria* for Lysias. In the fragment of the letter to Metaneira transmitted by Athenaeus, she is sexually or romantically linked to both Lysias and Isocrates (fr.456). Adding this information to the various

²⁴ See O. Hodkinson, "Epistolarity and Narrative in Ps.-Aeschines *Epistle* 10," in *Epistolary Narrative in Ancient Greek Literature* (Leiden 2013) 323–345; E. Mignogna, "Cimone e Calliroe: un 'romanzo' nel romanzo: intertestualità e valenza strutturale di Ps.-Eschine *Epist.* 10," *Maia* 48 (1996) 315–326.

²⁵ See G. Macurdy, "Apollodorus and the Speech Against Neaera," *AJP* 63 (1942) 257–271; A. J. Patteson, *Commentary on [Demosthenes] LIX Against Neaera* (diss. U. Pennsylvania 1978); C. Mossé, "La femme dans le discours politique athénien. Le discours Contre Nééra du Pseudo-Démosthène," *CahEtAnc* 15 (1983) 137–150; K. A. Kapparis, *Apollodoros 'Against Neaera'* (Berlin 1999).

mentions of her role as *hetaira* in other sources (see Hegesander fr.29 Müller), Metaneira could have been the object of stories that led to the creation of *spuria* (letters and rhetorical exercises in the form of judiciary speeches, but perhaps also philosophical speeches on love, imitating those in the *Phaedrus*) that might have ended up in the collections of the orators. It is fair to assume that in Lysias' case, they were lost through the complex mechanisms of textual transmission. The biographical tradition on Metaneira in connection with orators contains the typical combination of motifs that would have led a later writer of spurious epistles to concoct a letter 'from Lysias to Metaneira', which would be accepted as either good and plausible fiction or as genuine, depending on the intentions and skills of the composer and the capacities of the readers. Furthermore, biographical traditions surrounding other authors and poets are made up of, among other things, implausible anecdotes in third-person form and first-person letters that retell those anecdotes from a supposedly personal perspective (see for instance the five spurious letters attributed to Euripides),²⁶ and something similar could well have happened in Lysias' case too.

As regards the authenticity of these letters, Lysias fr.257 also provides insights: its source, Harpocration, uses the formula εἰ γνήσιος, "if genuine," in referring to the letter. This clearly shows that the authenticity of these epistles—or at least one of them—was being questioned as early as the second century A.D.²⁷ As noted above, ancient epistolary collections are often spurious²⁸ (e.g. the letters of Aeschines). However, not much has been said about Lysias' epistles. Westermann discussed

²⁶ On these a recent overview is O. Poltera, "The Letters of Euripides," in *Epistolary Narrative* 153–165.

²⁷ There was already a consensus in antiquity concerning which works in the Lysianic corpus were spurious, see Dion. Hal. *Lys.* 17.

²⁸ A comprehensive discussion with compelling examples is P. A. Rosenmeyer, *Ancient Epistolary Fictions: The Letter in Greek Literature* (Cambridge 2001).

briefly the authenticity of Lysias' epistolary collection,²⁹ and thought they were later fabrications; Blass, on the contrary, was persuaded of their genuineness.³⁰ After the nineteenth century, however, the topic of their authenticity does not seem to have attracted much interest in Lysianic scholarship. That the transmission of Lysias does not give us more of his letters than these few short fragments and testimonia might derive precisely from other ancient readers already believing the same as Harpocration. Otherwise they would simply have had Lysias' extant letters added to their copies of his complete works, and thus preserved them for us along with the oratorical works, as happened with Demosthenes, Aeschines, and Isocrates, whose letters are always placed at the end of the corpora. Later authorities, such as the *Suda* or Photius, are of absolutely no help in determining what authentic epistles, if any, there may have been by Lysias.³¹

In addition, we may state that even if we possessed these texts in their entirety, their authenticity would be just as questionable as that of Aeschines' letters and the other spurious collections. There are many ways that could explain the origin of these letter collections. They could even have been an imperial rhetorical fabrication, as is commonly believed now about some or all of Aeschines' letters. For Lysias' fragments, how-

²⁹ A. Westermann, *De epistolarum scriptoribus Graecis commentationis V* (Leipzig 1854) 17–19.

³⁰ F. Blass, *Die attische Beredsamkeit*³ I (Leipzig 1887) 422–423.

³¹ None of the fragments is transmitted by a particularly early authority, but it should be said that earlier sources are not necessarily more authoritative for establishing the authenticity of an ancient work: all sorts of authors from Cicero to Plutarch seem to accept the genuineness of some of Plato's letters, which modern scholarship has shown to be inauthentic. Also remarkable is the case of Cicero (*Brut.* 191), who seems to take as genuine some information contained in Demosthenes' *Ep.* 5, the only letter in Demosthenes' epistolary collection which is patently a later fabrication, meant to establish a connection between Demosthenes and Plato.

ever, given the small amount of text extant, no one could possibly attempt to establish a later date on the grounds of language and style. And there are many reasons why certain texts could have been attributed to Lysias. One of them could be the usual pseudonymous epistolary motive of wanting to disclose the private thoughts or feelings of a famous literary figure while remaining authoritative, rather than inventing things about him in the third person. Other reasons could lie in the fact that there were letters in circulation attributed to Demosthenes, Isocrates, Aeschines (and in some cases for Demosthenes and Isocrates, they were even genuine), and many others. Finally, and more interestingly, we should not underestimate the suggestive hints of erotic themes in the extant non-epistolary corpus, and of course the erotic Lysianic speech in Plato's *Phaedrus*.

A final issue, following upon these reflections, is a reconsideration of the status of the erotic speeches. Both Lysias' speech in the *Phaedrus* (as well as the two other erotic speeches in the same dialogue) and the *Erotic Speech* of Ps.-Demosthenes constitute philosophical discussions on love, and it does not seem far-fetched to imagine that the lost erotic speech by Demetrius of Phaleron, given his vast philosophical production (Diog. Laert. 5.80–81), was also something of this sort. Unfortunately, the paucity of the information contained in Lysias' fragments of alleged erotic speeches does not allow us to place any of them in the category of philosophical erotic speeches.

As a first necessary step, in the light of the present discussion, we should consider some small but helpful changes to the order and the titles given by Carey to the fragments *ex incertis epistulis*. First, one should not place fr.461–462 in the epistolary section but rather among the fragments *incertae sedis*. If one chooses to edit them in the section *ex incertis epistulis*, assuming that the mention of Isocrates (see above) is a sign of their pertinence to the letters, the two fragments should at least be placed at the end of the section, followed by a question mark. Similar reasoning applies to fr.463, more likely erotic than fr.461–462 because of the mention of Metaneira (and therefore to be

placed before the other two), but still far from certainly a letter (hence the necessity of a question mark). Second, in the light of the ambiguity between ἐπιστολαί and ἐπιστολικοὶ λόγοι, fr. 459–460 (both using the term ἐρωτικῶ) should be labelled *incertae epistulae vel orationis*.

A more radical editorial option—but perhaps a less confusing one—would be to rename the whole section now called *ex incertis epistulis*³² simply as ἐρωτικά, so that both the fragments potentially belonging to letters and those more likely to belong to erotic speeches would be in the right place; even so, in my view fr.461–463 should still be marked as doubtful.

In conclusion, we have shown how four short passages, those of Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Ps.-Plutarch and Photius, Hermias, and Psellus, not now included as testimonia of Lysias' epistles and erotic works, raise new questions about a relatively underappreciated aspect of Lysias' literary production. They complement the current edition of Lysias' fragments and provide grounds to reassess some editorial criteria; they give important information on the orator's epistolary collection and more generally on a part of his production that did not survive through the centuries; and finally, they can aid investigation into the reasons why and processes through which some erotic material entered the corpora of the Attic orators. A detailed commentary on these fragments will surely clarify these issues further and is therefore very much a desideratum.³³

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³² This would include fr.458, an epistle only according to the confusing testimony of the *Suda* and sounding more like a philosophical speech on love.

³³ I would like to thank Gregory Hutchinson, Massimo Pinto, Antonio Stramaglia, and the anonymous reviewers for their suggestions, and Claudia Nuovo for sharing her find with me.