

Lucian, Libanius, and the Short Road to Rhetoric

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THE *TEACHER OF RHETORIC* of Lucian has not attracted much scholarly attention. This work is usually considered, when it is, in conjunction with other dialogues such as *Pseudologistes* (the *Mistaken Critic*), *Lexiphanes*, and the *Uncultured Book Collector*, in which Lucian observed with a critical eye the literary pretensions of some men of his time. The *Teacher of Rhetoric*, therefore, occupies a gray and undistinguished area in the production of Lucian even though it contains many observations on the ancient system of education that confirm that Lucian was a “man in touch with his times.”¹ This dialogue shows very clearly how literary reminiscences, imagination, parody, satire, and the real world converge in the work of Lucian. In this paper I want to point to the actuality of this dialogue: I suggest that it reflects that an abbreviated system of rhetorical instruction existed in Lucian’s time.² Though I revisit the question of Lucian’s actual critique of the society surrounding him, I am well aware that my observations do not exhaust the possibilities of interpretation of his work’s complex literary texture.

The *Teacher of Rhetoric* is cast in the form of an advice essay to a young man (μειράκιον) who wanted to receive a rhetorical education. The dialogue’s dramatic situation is thus a step beyond that of the *Dream*, which purports to tell of the choice made by Lucian between a sculptor’s apprenticeship and a

¹ C. P. Jones, *Culture and Society in Lucian* (Cambridge [Mass.] 1986) 23.

² I use the term “sophist” in what follows, but will come back at the end to the distinction between σοφιστής, which appears only once at the beginning of the dialogue, and ὀήτωρ, which is used throughout.

literary education. Of course the *Dream* is not simply autobiographical but uses elements of Lucian's life story to create an allegorical paradigm. In the *Teacher of Rhetoric* the young man whom Lucian addresses has already made up his mind to pursue an education in rhetoric. Lucian suggests that the promises of rhetoric—wealth, good standing, fame, the admiration of the people—are very seductive. A sophist's career had all the ingredients to dazzle a young man's mind. The dilemma depicted in the *Dream* is here recast in the form of a choice between two different paths that both lead to fair Lady Rhetoric seated on a throne on top of a hill. Lucian, who apparently speaks in his own voice in the first part of the dialogue (1–12), reassures the young man that he will not have to take “a rough, sweaty road that goes uphill” and offers plenty of challenges; this road, which represents the traditional rhetorical education consisting of many years of strenuous training, is “long, steep, and exhausting, and usually people give it up as hopeless” (3). It is a narrow road full of thorns that promises “great thirst, and sweat” (7). Lucian declares that he took that road himself without reaping great rewards and advises the student to choose the easier path that will bring him to the summit without effort. Though Lucian did not himself take this easy road to rhetoric, he saw it from a distance as he painfully climbed up when he was young. He attributes his failure to choose the easy path to his conviction (inspired by Hesiod) that toil is necessary to achieve good results (8). He describes it as “a most pleasant and short chariot road, which is sloping³ and in total shade through flowery fields.” Since it is level and has no windings, the student will reach his goal after a pleasurable walk in a very short time, “all but in his sleep (καθεύδων) in a single night.”

Lucian will again speak in his own voice at the end of the dialogue (26) to reveal that, disappointed and faint-hearted, he has given up rhetoric altogether—a statement consonant with this “professor of pseudos, paradox, and parody,” as Anderson

³ κατάντης, “downhill,” is used here in opposition to ἀνάτης, “uphill,” which describes the hard, steep road. There is a contradiction because the easy road is also supposed to reach the top of the hill, but Lucian is emphasizing the lack of challenge that the easy road presents.

feliculously called him.⁴ For most of the work, however, the role of student adviser is taken by a flamboyant teacher of rhetoric who guides youth up the easier, shorter path. Lucian portrays in fact two distinct figures who lead students up the hill of rhetoric by the two different paths. One is well-built, manly, and strong. He looks very athletic, is deeply tanned, and is fit for the climb.⁵ He is alert, bold-eyed, and “well awake.” The expression ἐγρηγορώς evokes his competence in making the strenuous march. One guesses that the students willing to climb with him are (or will become) “awake” themselves in contrast to the “sleeping” students who take the easy road.⁶ The guide for the hard road is the traditional teacher of rhetoric who in leading a young man up forces him to follow most carefully the footprints of ancient writers such as Demosthenes and Plato (9). With him, the young man will have to endure the sweat and fatigue of a long climb that will last many years.

Lucian advises the prospective student to let this “out of date” fellow (Κρονικός) climb by himself and introduces the teacher of the easy road whose appearance corresponds to the attractive and smooth path (11). This effeminate dandy, vain, well-dressed, and honey-voiced, is an altogether “marvelous creature, dear to Aphrodite and the Muses.” He addresses the lad directly, as Lucian declares that he is unable to impersonate him. The charming charlatan self-confidently dismisses the need for a rigorous training based on the preliminary exercises (προγυμνάσματα) and on imitation of traditional models. Ignorance, recklessness, shamelessness, and lack of modesty are part of the baggage the student will need for the trip. A sprinkling of Attic words in his speeches, the careful selection of easy themes, and the imitation of contemporary models provided by other sophists will ensure success. The young man is advised not to prepare carefully and write down speeches in advance

⁴ Graham Anderson, “Lucian, a Sophist’s Sophist,” *YCS* 27 (1982) 61–92, at 91.

⁵ Bodily strength usually goes with a deep tan: Lucian *Anach.* 31.

⁶ Libanius offers examples of both “sleeping” and “awake” students, e.g. *Or.* 23.20 and *Epp.* 666, 1250, 1309; cf. Raffaella Cribiore, *The School of Libanius in Late Antique Antioch* (Princeton 2007) 133.

but to deliver rash extemporaneous speeches, following no order, in which he will make use of trite examples from history. He will completely win over his audience with a theatrical delivery and a choice of rare, outlandish vocabulary that will convince people that his education is far superior to theirs. A lack of moral principles completes the picture (23). The charlatan teacher reveals that he was able to forget his poor beginnings by relying first on a miserable male lover and then on a rich old woman of seventy with only four gold teeth left.

Since the work of Jacques Bompaigne, who examined at length the importance and meaning of mimesis in Lucian,⁷ scholars have attempted to show in various ways how one should not underestimate realism and topicality in the dialogues,⁸ and, more recently, have investigated issues of Greek (or Roman) identity.⁹ One needs to be wary in trying to reconstruct an internally consistent set of beliefs in Lucian, and to consider all aspects of Lucian's work. Reaction to literary tradition and variations on inherited formulae of classical culture are fundamental ingredients in his writings because he subtly appropriated some literary models in order to construct his own literary role. Yet Lucian "was not an antiquarian flogger of dead horses" and a writer who resurrected long-dead questions only for the sake of rhetorical virtuosity.¹⁰ Contemporary issues and urgent debates seep through the texture of his work.¹¹

The scholarly focus on the *Teacher of Rhetoric* has been on

⁷ J. Bompaigne, *Lucien écrivain: Imitation et création* (Paris 1958).

⁸ Barry Baldwin, *Studies in Lucian* (Toronto 1973), and Jones, *Culture*, aimed to reappraise Lucian as an original artist.

⁹ Simon Swain, *Hellenism and Empire* (Oxford 1996), and Tim Whitmarsh, *Greek Literature and the Roman Empire* (Oxford 2001), both endeavored to interpret the polarity of power (politics, Rome) and culture (Greek literature and identity).

¹⁰ See Baldwin, *Studies* 97 and 104.

¹¹ For reappraisal of Lucian as a satirist of the social and economic conditions of his time, see B. Baldwin, "Lucian as Social Satirist," *CQ* 11 (1961) 199–208, who underlines that a writer is inevitably influenced by what is going on around him.

identifying the charlatan sophist of the easy road with a contemporary of Lucian, with general acceptance of the scholiast's identification of this teacher as Julius Pollux of Naucratis, the lexicographer and sophist who became tutor of Commodus.¹² There are difficulties that stand in the way of an exact identification,¹³ but Lucian surely was not interested in giving his character precisely identifiable traits. He seems to have had a definite victim in mind but conflated elements taken from several figures of sophists and from the common stock of invective. Julius Pollux appears on the surface a more positive and dignified character than the charlatan sophist in this dialogue, but he was not uncontroversial. Philostratus declared him "learned and unlearned" at the same time and did not fully approve of his reliance on natural talent rather than art. He also said that Pollux was a pupil of Hadrian of Tyre and had some of the defects of his teacher.¹⁴ Hadrian's portrait appears less than flattering in many respects, and he was guilty of much ostentation such as appearing at his lectures in expensive garb and adorned with gems. To complete Pollux's picture, Philostratus conferred on this ἀπαίδευτος/πεπαιδευμένος sophist an ἀπαίδευτος son, whose illiteracy may have affected the perception of the ability of the father. It is plausible that Pollux was the concealed victim of Lucian's attack.

Besides regarding the *Teacher of Rhetoric* as a personal invective against a colleague, scholars have considered that it employs a variation on the common theme that the younger generation works less than the older, or that it depicts a general contest between good and bad sophists and between the care-

¹² Scholia: pp.174 and 180 Rabe. Pollux has an entry in Philostratus *VS* 592–593. Among those who accept the identification are Jennifer Hall, *Lucian's Satire* (New York 1981) 273–278, and Jones, *Culture* 107–108.

¹³ At 24 where the teacher declares "I have become a namesake of the sons of Zeus and Leda" (Castor and Pollux), the plural παῖσιν is a difficulty. Some biographical details of Pollux also do not seem to coincide with what Lucian says of the teacher of the easy road. See Baldwin, *Studies* 34–36 and n.67.

¹⁴ Philostratus *VS* 585–590, the sketch of Hadrian.

fully prepared *logos* and the improvised speech.¹⁵ They also have noticed (but only in passing) the similarity with Aristophanes' *Clouds*.¹⁶ It cannot be doubted that Aristophanes' scenes about education had some influence on Lucian. In the *Banqueters*, Aristophanes dealt with the contrast between old and new education (fr.205 ff.). In the *Clouds* the youths brought up according to tradition sport muscular bodies and bright faces (1012) exactly like the vigorous teacher who strides up the hard path; by contrast, the young men who are imbued with the new educational principles are weak, pale, and avoid hard work, and the Unjust Argument has the dubious moral principles of the teacher of the easy road. In addition to echoing these and other literary motifs, Lucian must have recorded generic observations on some sophists of his day, those flashy "concert orators" who raised much enthusiasm.¹⁷ Not all the sophists of the movement Philostratus called "Second Sophistic" and portrayed in his *Lives* relied on a careful, academic preparation. Like Pollux, some composed their speeches with "audacity" (τόλμη) rather than with art (τέχνη). But is it possible to go a little further? Is this dialogue suggesting that in Lucian's times rhetorical education was undergoing real changes so that a faster, shortened track became available alongside the traditional course? These are the questions to which we turn.

Lucian describes the two paths leading to rhetoric with specific literary references in mind. Both Hesiod and Xenophon depict a difficult and long path (χαλεπή και μακρὰ ὁδός) and a short, easy one (λείη, ῥαδία και βραχεία).¹⁸ The term Lucian

¹⁵ See Anderson, *YCS* 27 (1982) 79.

¹⁶ See Bompaire, *Lucien* 255–256, who thought that only in the *Clouds* is there a discussion of real educational problems.

¹⁷ See R. B. Branham, *Unruly Eloquence: Lucian and the Comedy of Tradition* (Cambridge [Mass.] 1989) 3.

¹⁸ Hes. *Op.* 228 (λείη), 286–292; the fable of Prodicus in Xen. *Mem.* 2.1.21–33 (quote from 29). Cebes, whom Lucian mentions at 6, in his *Tabula* introduced some variations, cf. John T. Fitzgerald and L. Michael White, *The Tabula of Cebes* (Chico 1983). In the first *Discourse on Kingship* Dio Chrysostom (1.66–84) uses a similar image of two roads leading to Kingship and Tyranny; cf. Parmenides fr.2 and *Didache* 1.1. The pattern was prob-

uses for the easy and short path is ἐπιτομώτατος (“cut very short,” 3).¹⁹ By following the short road, the young man will acquire all the gifts of rhetoric in a short time (ἐν βραχεῖ).²⁰ Whereas in Hesiod, Xenophon, and Cebes the two roads lead to virtue or true happiness, in Lucian the ultimate goal is Lady Rhetoric in all her splendor (6). In the *Teacher of Rhetoric*, the image of the short path appears again where a Sidonian merchant advises Alexander to take a short route from Persia to Egypt so that the trip would take three days instead of twenty. Alexander does not heed the advice (5), but a prudent student must realize that rhetoric would be reachable in less than a day by avoiding the steep road. The traditional teacher, who takes the long road, “counts not by days and months but by whole Olympic cycles” (9) and will make young men prematurely old with hard labors. He does not know that “a short, easy road to rhetoric has recently been opened.” Towards the end of the dialogue, the flamboyant teacher of rhetoric renews his promise: it will not take a long time to become a rhetor, but in an instant the youth will possess all the blessings of rhetoric.

A traditional, full education in rhetoric surely required several years of rigorous training. The intellectual gymnastics that a young man had to practice followed an almost inflexible order.²¹ All the aspects of knowledge were structured like the links of a chain that a student had to master in a process of

ably inspired by the judgment of Paris. In the *Dream*, Lucian used part of the pattern when he portrayed two women representing different careers. Lucian cites the uphill road of Hesiod in *De parasito* 14 to say that the cultivation of the various arts (τέχναι) requires much hardship. Likewise, he mentions the hard climb in Hesiod when he opposes two different philosophical doctrines in *Nec.* 4. Even though he does not use the image of the two roads, the Anonymus Iamblichī 1–2 (89 D.-K.) mentions the same concepts and relates the disadvantages that derive from a short education. I owe this last information to Elizabeth Irwin.

¹⁹ He uses the term again at *Vit. Auct.* 11, where Cynic philosophy allows those with little education and few scruples to take a “shortcut to fame.”

²⁰ This expression occurs three times in the dialogue (3, 4, 24); at other times (5, 24) Lucian uses litotes, “not long.”

²¹ Cf. Raffaella Cribiore, *Gymnastics of the Mind: Greek Education in Hellenistic and Roman Egypt* (Princeton 2001).

accumulation. Centuries before the systematization of the rhetorical knowledge that was traditional in Lucian's time, Isocrates said that some of his students followed his course for four years (*Antid.* 87). Quintilian described instruction in rhetoric in detail, but did not disclose exactly how many years it took his students to reach their goal. One of the reasons for his silence may be that young men did not follow an entire course of rhetoric with him. By his admission, his students were *robusti fere iuvenes* ("mature young men") who were interested in imitating and learning from his model declamations but had received the rudiments of the art elsewhere (2.5.2). If a student aspired to become "a good man, skilled in speaking," with the broad education that Quintilian advocated, the training inevitably took a long time.²² According to Lucian, the traditional course in rhetoric was quite lengthy because the mountain students had to ascend by the hard path was so precipitous that they even despaired of climbing it. At the beginning (3) he depicts some people taking the long road and struggling on their way up. The student walking on the easy path, however, will arrive long before them and from the top will see those who are creeping painfully upwards, taking many falls. Lucian says that he went up the steep road himself but after a while gave up ascending the mountain and abandoned rhetoric.²³ He presents the traditional teacher as still leading some youth by the steep path, which showed few, old tracks of travelers.

The rhetorical education that traditionally consumed many years continued in fact to be offered, at least to those willing and able to pursue it. Many students, however, started to devote themselves to rhetoric for a shorter time. It is instructive to compare the educational situation two centuries later in Antioch, as revealed by the orations and letters of Libanius, who seems to be the only author from whom one might gain some reliable information about the duration of the training.²⁴

²² Thus Quintilian at 2.11.1–3 dismisses the claims of those teachers who did not wish to lose time with theory and relied only on talent.

²³ *Rh.pr.* 8 and 26.

²⁴ The Middle Ages have preserved so many of his works because they were used as models for writing in the schools. See Cribiore, *School*.

The general perception that education in rhetoric by and large continued in late antiquity to take an inordinate number of years is mostly based on what is known of the training of cultural leaders such as Libanius himself, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Basil the Great; but these highly educated thinkers hardly represent the norm.²⁵ One should also observe that the pattern of attendance of Libanius himself was far from regular. His *Autobiography* discloses that he was seized by an inordinate love for rhetoric at fifteen years of age but did not attend the classes of a rhetor on a continuous basis and then dropped out altogether. He returned to school to study poetry under the guidance of a grammarian for five years and then, at the age of twenty-two, went to Athens to study for four more years.²⁶

If one takes into account the attendance of Libanius's students as revealed by his letters, undoubtedly a few of them spent several years to reach rhetoric by the rough path. His letters of evaluation, which cover standardized areas of performance, refer for example to three exceptional students who occupied the position of "head of the chorus" (χορυφαῖος) and had the responsibility of supervising others.²⁷ Yet the fact that

²⁵ See Paul Gallay, *La vie de Saint Grégoire de Nazianze* (Lyon 1943), and Philip Rousseau, *Basil of Caesarea* (Berkeley 1994). Both Basil and Gregory may have intended to choose an academic career and taught a little, but then pursued other goals.

²⁶ *Or.* 1.5–28. When Libanius says that he committed to memory all the authors that were important for style (1.11), he may have done so with a rhetor and not with a grammarian, but he does not specify. Paul Petit, *Les étudiants de Libanius* (Paris 1956), a disciple of H. I. Marrou, often modeled late antique schooling on twentieth-century French education and assumed that the school year began invariably in August and lasted until the summer. The letters of Libanius, however, show that this was not always true.

²⁷ Cf. Raffaella Cribiore, "Libanius's Letters of Evaluation of Students," in W. Hörandner and M. Grünbart (eds.), *L'épistolographie et la poésie épigrammatique* (Paris 2003) 11–20. These students, Eusebius (no. 25 in *PLRE* I), Julianus, and Basilides, whom Libanius considered his true "sons," were a source of great satisfaction for him, see *Epp.* 1408, 835, 884. Only one of his students, Eusebius (no. 24 in *PLRE* I) became a teacher in his school in Libanius's late years. Nothing is known about the duration of his schooling, but he certainly attended for a number of years, because Libanius calls him σοφιστής (*Or.* 54.52, 1.258; *Epp.* 904–908).

none of them chose to remain in academia is an indicator that rhetoric per se had less appeal. Most students did not attend for very long for a variety of reasons.²⁸ Fathers sometimes changed residence and career and required their sons to be with them. Thus when Priscianus became governor of Palestine and recalled his sons, Libanius understood his motives but wrote to him (*Ep.* 1250): “I also have something to predict from the Muses. Since you travel often and widely, you will often recall your children as you do now.” At other times damaging rumors concerning the school made parents withdraw their sons,²⁹ or parents’ and students’ ill health abbreviated attendance³⁰ and a father’s death forced a young man to take the helm of a household.³¹ Financial reasons also might play a part in a student’s decision to leave, for not everyone could afford a long attendance. Those in need of immediate monetary rewards would do well in the retinue of an official after only a shorter training. Two years of rhetorical school might be sufficient for those who wanted to pursue a forensic career, like the students of Lucian’s litigious teacher of the easy path. The instruction they received was quite theoretical, and they could learn what else was needed on the job, by direct experience.³² Other young men, who wanted to be more competitive on the job market, felt it necessary to learn Latin and Roman law. There were several

²⁸ The average attendance was two years. Cf. Cribiore, *School* 30. The table regarding the attendance of some students in Petit, *Étudiants* 63, needs some correction. The sons of Philagrius, for example, attended for only two and not for four years, and Titianus, who kept on going back and forth from Antioch to Cilicia and spent most of the time at home, attended for little more than three years, not five (and certainly not “for at least eight,” as A. J. Festugière, *Antioche païenne et chrétienne* [Paris 1959] 179).

²⁹ E.g. *Epp.* 32, 41, 129.

³⁰ Thus the rhetor Acacius (no. 7 in *PLRE* I), who was often sick, kept on recalling his son Titianus (mentioned above), and migraines sent the student Gaius home after one year (*Ep.* 1371).

³¹ The death of someone’s father during schooling was a frequent circumstance: e.g. *Epp.* 140, 1373, 645, 646, 288, 666.

³² Consider the student Severus in *Or.* 57: he withdrew at the beginning of the second year of rhetoric but became very successful as a litigator after only one year of experience on the job.

schools of Roman law in the East, such as those in Alexandria, in Caesarea in Palestine, the school founded in Constantinople in 330, and the major school of law in Beirut.³³ The students of Libanius who were admitted to these schools had to have some knowledge of Greek rhetoric but did not need to be accomplished orators: one or two years of the art were sufficient.

But how could Libanius serve the needs of students whose attendance varied so much? Were those young men who chose the short road able to take full advantage of their limited training? When some pupils suddenly dropped out of the course or did not return the following year, the sophist resented acutely their decision and left no doubt that the long road was in his opinion the only legitimate way to reach rhetoric. He was more tolerant when people humbly presented their plight.³⁴ He had to surrender to the reality that a long attendance was not for everyone, and continued to follow the vicissitudes of his delinquent students. Very rarely (and indirectly) are we allowed to glimpse the need he felt to cut his instruction short, such as when he advised a professor of Roman law to adjust his course for a certain youth: “You should treat him as I would if he were studying with me. I am not talking of kindness, since you are evidently always kind, but I am saying that he should learn a lot in a short time.”³⁵ In spite of his silence concerning the theoretical approach he took, Libanius must have employed some teaching strategy and a different structure of the traditional curriculum that could serve the student who attended for a limited time.

A change in the structure of the curriculum in later antiquity (roughly the second to fifth centuries) is what Malcolm Heath

³³ H. J. Jolowicz, *Historical Introduction to the Study of Roman Law* (Cambridge 1952) 473–475; and Fritz Schulz, *History of Roman Legal Science*² (Oxford 1953) 272–277. On learning Latin and Roman law, see J. H. W. G. Liebeschuetz, *Antioch: City and Imperial Administration in the Later Roman Empire* (Oxford 1972) 242–255.

³⁴ E.g., *Epp.* 875 and 876.

³⁵ *Ep.* 653. The addressee was Dominus or Domnio (*PLRE* I “Domnio 1”); see also *Ep.* 1171 = Scott Bradbury, *Selected Letters of Libanius from the Age of Constantius and Julian* (Liverpool 2004) no. 166.

has recently suggested.³⁶ The political functions of rhetoric were drastically different from classical antiquity, but this discipline adapted to the new times. The accomplished orator still concerned himself with the whole theory of issues, involving arguments and style. Yet in the second century, issue-theory went through a series of innovations. Hermogenes separated it from the systematic learning of the theory of the parts of a speech. Students learned immediately to devise a strategy of arguments and to analyze problems, and progressed to the whole structure of a speech only later in their instruction, if they reached that stage. Naturally they received at the start some elementary notions of style, but intensive work in this area belonged to advanced levels of instruction.³⁷ Through issue-theory the student who did not attend for many years learned a strategy based on arguments that was going to be so useful in his future career.

Thus young men who attended a school of rhetoric in the second century already experienced the curricular innovations that benefited the students of Libanius; but are we entitled to use as comparanda for Lucian's times the societal changes that Libanius depicts? Of course the situation in the fourth century had some peculiarities of its own so that the flight from the λόγοι was more pronounced than before. It seems, however, that changes were in the making in the second century too. The Roman colony Beirut was then a major city, with a typically Roman aspect (a century later Gregory Thaumaturgus will call it a πόλις ῥωμαϊκωτέρα),³⁸ which was prominent politically and economically. The precise date of the foundation of its school of law is not known, but Paul Collinet has shown that it was sometime in the second century, and this date is upheld by Wenger.³⁹ According to Fergus Millar, legal instruction was

³⁶ M. Heath, *Hermogenes on Issues: Strategies of Argument in Later Greek Rhetoric* (Oxford 1995), and especially *Menander: A Rhetor in Context* (Oxford 2004).

³⁷ Heath, *Menander* 226.

³⁸ Greg. Thaum. *Pan.or.* 5.62.

³⁹ P. Collinet, *Histoire de l'école de droit de Beyrouth* (Paris 1925) 16–20; L. Wenger, *Die Quellen des römischen Rechts* (Vienna 1953) 619–632. See also, K. McNamee, “Another Chapter in the History of Scholia,” *CQ* 48 (1998) 269–288, at 269–270.

widely available in Beirut at this time, so that several schools of law existed in the initial period.⁴⁰ Students entered the school after one or two years of Greek rhetoric. Most of the students flocked to Beirut from the rest of Syria and from the Roman East at large. By attending the school of Roman law, they had access to prestigious careers in the civil service or became judges and advocates.

In Lucian's time, therefore, some young men may have opted for a shorter training in Greek rhetoric with an eye to learn Roman law.⁴¹ But as in the fourth century, other students who wanted to engage successfully in forensic activities without knowing Roman law did not need to follow the long road to rhetoric. A shorter training was sufficient to those (such as the flamboyant teacher of the easy road) who had some predisposition to eloquence and possessed intellectual gifts, personal charisma, and a lack of scruples, in Lucian's opinion. As Lucian suggests bitterly, they might enjoy success as advocates and might build some sort of reputation with their flashy speeches, at the expense of the defendants who sought their help ("those poor fools," 25). Orators of this sort could also engage as speakers in public displays in the theatrical form of oratory that was so popular. Lucian amply shows how they compensated for their lack of mastery of traditional techniques by strategies of various kinds, which included flamboyant dress, elaborate gesturing, modulation of voice, and keen understanding of their audience's expectations. In another dialogue, Lucian again attributes his decision to leave the profession of advocacy to the fact that a disagreeable character was mandatory for a ῥήτωρ to be successful: "deceit, lies, impudence, loudness of mouth, and pushing" aimed to remedy the lack of academic preparation (*Pisc.* 29).

⁴⁰ F. Millar, "The Roman Colonies of the Near East. A Study of Cultural Relations," in H. Solin and M. Kajava (eds.), *Roman Eastern Policy and Other Studies* (Helsinki 1990) 7–58, esp. 23 (repr. *Rome, the Greek World, and the East III* [Chapel Hill 2006] 164–222, esp. 182).

⁴¹ There is no mention of this possibility in the dialogue, yet the teacher of the easy road was some sort of advocate. After a short training, his students may have found it profitable to go to law school.

Undoubtedly in the second century (as in Libanius's time) there still were sophists, such as Aristides, who underwent a painstaking training and possessed an impeccable technique and deep knowledge of themes. They toured the cities and gave learned performances that drew adoring crowds. Sometimes, as Aristides did when his health allowed him, they also engaged in teaching and had a *χόρος* of students.⁴² These sophists were entirely worthy of the denomination *σοφιστής*. They were polished orators and were thoroughly steeped in their cultural heritage. In his other works, Lucian sometimes applies the term *σοφιστής* not only to cultivated and respected members of the Second Sophistic but also to casual practitioners, with ironical undertones; but at the beginning of the *Teacher of Rhetoric* he seems to draw attention to the difference between the terms *σοφιστής* and *ῥήτωρ* (1): "You ask, young man, how you can become a *ῥήτωρ* and could seem to embody the most distinguished and glorious name of *σοφιστής*." He seems to suggest that a young man had a chance to become a *ῥήτωρ* with the limited education offered by the flamboyant teacher but could acquire only the reputation of being a real *σοφιστής*. It is significant that the word *σοφιστής* does not reappear in the rest of the dialogue: in describing both the forensic oratory and the public, oratorical displays of the teacher of the easy road, Lucian always employs *ῥήτωρ*, which occurs twelve times.

Scholars have debated the meaning and significance of the titles *σοφιστής* and *ῥήτωρ*. A distinction existed between these terms, but it is not easy to point to one that could be universally valid. Glen Bowersock, for example, maintained that the term *sophist* designated a category within the general group of rhetors:⁴³ sophists were virtuoso rhetors who possessed the most exquisite rhetorical skills, whereas people designated as rhetors were amateurish practitioners of the art. In the second century

⁴² See *Or.* 30 and 31. Cf. Charles A. Behr, *Aelius Aristides and the Sacred Tales* (Amsterdam 1968) 106 n.39, and "Studies on the Biography of Aelius Aristides," *ANRW* II.34.2 (1994) 1140–1233, at 1163–1164; cf. Laurent Pernot, *La rhétorique de l'éloge dans le monde gréco-romain* (Paris 1993) 65–66.

⁴³ G. W. Bowersock, *Greek Sophists in the Roman Empire* (Oxford 1969) 12–14.

Pollux's *Onomasticon*, which is particularly significant in light of the identification of the unscrupulous teacher with Pollux, includes as definitions of σοφισταί “teachers, educators, leaders” (4.41), and of ῥήτορες “politicians, panegyrists,” those who might serve the city on embassies (4.25). Sophists could be criticized as money-grubbers and hunters of pupils; rhetors for failing to help their city. Naturally there was a great deal of overlap between sophists and rhetors. The prejudice created against the sophists by Plato and Isocrates meant that for others, such as Plutarch, Dio, or Aristides, the term “sophist” remained wholly objectionable.⁴⁴ In discussions of these two terms, no scholar cites the *Teacher of Rhetoric*, which maintains a distinction based on differentiated academic preparation. Rhetors may have been successful public speakers, but their education was less meticulous. Lucian, in any case, represented σοφισταί as being very far from perfect.

When considering the two types of rhetorical training, Libanius apparently did not have a doubt: as a true lover of Lady Rhetoric, he longed for his students to possess her to the fullest.⁴⁵ But did Lucian approve indiscriminately of the rigorous but pedantic education he had apparently received? As usual, to identify a consistent set of beliefs in Lucian is problematic. Even though he lamented that the same opportunities were offered to students who embarked in long and costly studies as to those who opted for a shortcut, his attitude towards the old and the new education is one of nuances. Like Aristophanes in the *Clouds*, Lucian seems to have misgivings about both old-fashioned and progressive education. The *Teacher of Rhetoric* starts by extolling the easy path to rhetoric, but almost immediately Lucian's irony comes into the open. The text plays on the reader's traditional expectations that the

⁴⁴ Aristides considered himself a true rhetor and despised sophists: *Or.* 34; cf. Behr, *ANRW* II 34.2 (1994) 1163–1177. Yet he sometimes used the term “sophist” in a neutral way, see A. J. Festugière, “Sur les ‘Discours Sacrés’ d’Aelius Aristide,” *REG* 82 (1969) 117–153, at 148–149; C. P. Jones, “The Reliability of Philostratus,” in G. W. Bowersock (ed.), *Approaches to the Second Sophistic* (University Park 1974) 11–16, at 13.

⁴⁵ He says in *Or.* 1.54: “My bride was my art.”

short, easy road was inferior to the long one.

Even though Lucian seems to target with particular ferocity the shortened training that was newly offered, he is not entirely forgiving towards classicizing education either and does not unabashedly praise the old times. The traditional guide enjoins the student to follow the footprints of a few writers of the past “like a rope-dancer” (9). If the young man swerves just a little, he will fall off the road and will not “contract a lawful marriage with Rhetoric.” This teacher is an old-fashioned impostor, an “old man of the time of Cronus” who requires a long commitment and imposes hardships for huge sums of money. He digs up long-buried speeches that are no longer relevant and enjoins students to imitate them faithfully.⁴⁶ But, Lucian asks, why revive these speeches in time of peace when Philip and Alexander are long gone (10)? The public required that oratory recall the past with literary archaizing and linguistic borrowings. Both old and new education built on a set of exempla that were more or less superficially known but probably equally irrelevant. The audience that Lucian conjures up mirrored itself in the outlines of its past. Allusions to the Persian wars and to the rest of the classical lore were mandatory but were devoid of poignancy and had become empty receptacles of words. In this dialogue Lucian appears well aware of the dilemma that confronted rhetoric and education in general. The smooth continuity of education stood in contrast to the changed times. But the *Teacher of Rhetoric* also refers to changes in education that were afoot, which were not changes for the better. Education was slowly losing the rigor and discipline that characterized it in the past and that were its strength and justification.

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⁴⁶ The sands of Egypt have preserved several examples of similar student compositions, cf. Criboire, *Gymnastics* 235–238.