

# Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 3.2-7: an Analysis

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THE AIM of this essay is to show by means of a detailed analysis that the doctrine of chapters 2 to 4 on the one hand and 5 to 7 on the other of Book 3 of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* are complementary and necessary parts of Aristotle's treatment of style.<sup>1</sup> This has recently been denied by Professor George Kennedy, who attempts to prove that chapter 2 is a later and more detailed version of the material included in chapter 5.<sup>2</sup> Taking as his point of departure Solmsen's theory of the two stages of development in the *Rhetoric* and of the two introductions to its third book,<sup>3</sup> Kennedy thinks it probable that Book 3 itself, and hence also the discussion of style in it, may have seen some development. A comparison of chapters 2 to 4 with 5 to 7 leads him to the conclusion that the latter chapters cannot be considered a more detailed discussion of the matters outlined in chapter 2, which is essentially a later version of chapter 5, written after Aristotle had developed the theory of metaphor in the *Poetics*.

It seems, however, that though in chapters 5 to 7 Aristotle is discussing the same matters as in chapters 2 to 4, he does so from a *different* point of view: in chapters 2 to 4 he discusses them from the point of view of *δνόματα*, in chapters 5 to 7 from the point of view of  *σύνθεσις* or composition. Therefore, the two treatments are not

<sup>1</sup> My quotations from Aristotle's *Rhetoric* are from the edition by Sir William David Ross (Oxford 1959); the lines are those of Bekker's text in the Prussian Academy Edition except in the case of the end of ch.4 and the beginning of ch.5, where I follow Ross' distribution of the lines.

<sup>2</sup> George A. Kennedy, *The Art of Persuasion in Greece* (Princeton 1963) 103ff.

<sup>3</sup> Friedrich Solmsen, *Die Entwicklung der aristotelischen Logik und Rhetorik* (*Neue philologische Untersuchungen* 4, Berlin 1929) 31ff. Solmsen thinks that the two introductions to Book 3 are not totally independent of one another, while at the same time neither originated in the other: even the shorter one has something of its own and agrees with the longer one only in the first sentence. The earlier in composition is, according to him, the one now found at the beginning of Book 3; it contains the division of the enthymeme in *τόποι* and *εἶδη*, which the later one (*i.e.* the one now found at the end of Book 2) lacks; but it does not contain, although it is much more detailed, the *παράδειγμα*, which is mentioned in the later one. The earlier introduction would belong to the topical-dialectical period, while the later one could be ascribed to the last period of the development of Aristotle's theory of logic, *i.e.* after he had developed his mature doctrine of the syllogism.

essentially identical, and neither could have been an earlier version of the other. If this is so, it is unnecessary to enter here into the question of the two introductions to Book 3 and of the alleged earlier and later versions of the first two books; and so Kennedy's theory will have been refuted regardless of the question whether Solmsen is right or not.<sup>4</sup>

In fact, what I have just stated is what Kennedy calls "the usual explanation"; but though Cope<sup>5</sup> and others have so interpreted these chapters, there is room, I think, for a detailed analysis of them and for a critical examination of Kennedy's interpretation.<sup>6</sup> I shall also include a brief analysis of chapters 8, 9 and 10 because it contributes to the elucidation of the point at issue, although these chapters are not directly involved in Kennedy's theory.

At the end of chapter 1 we are referred to the *Poetics*, and at the beginning of chapter 2 Aristotle gives another cross-reference to the *Poetics*,<sup>7</sup> which is repeated a few lines below in words which we should bear in mind.<sup>8</sup> The cross-reference is repeated a third time in chapter 2,<sup>9</sup> and it seems clear, therefore, that Aristotle wants us to keep in mind the classification of words given in chapters 21 and 22 of the *Poetics*. The *ὀνόματα* and *ῥήματα* will be the subject matter of chapters 2, 3 and 4, *i.e.* nouns as such, independently of the arrangement of them in sentences. When at the beginning of chapter 5 Aristotle turns to something new—the arrangement of words in composition—he does not give a list of the types of nouns, as Kennedy would wish him to do,<sup>10</sup> because, having already alluded to them by means of the

<sup>4</sup> For similar reasons there is no need to discuss other theories concerning the compositional problems of Book 3, *cf. e.g.* Ingemar Düring, *Aristoteles* (Heidelberg 1966) 121ff and 149ff. For a recent reassertion of the basic unity of *Rhet.* 3 and its essential relation to Books 1 and 2 *cf.* W. M. A. Grimaldi, *Studies in the Philosophy of Aristotle's Rhetoric* (*Hermes Einzelschr.* 25, 1972) 49–52.

<sup>5</sup> *Cf.* E. M. Cope, *An Introduction to Aristotle's Rhetoric* (London 1867) 292.

<sup>6</sup> In his review of Kennedy's book Ulrich Schindel (*Gnomon* 37 [1965] 7) rejects Kennedy's interpretation but does not enter into details.

<sup>7</sup> 1404b7–8: τὰλλα ὀνόματα ὅσα εἴρηται ἐν τοῖς περὶ ποιητικῆς.

<sup>8</sup> 1404b26–27: ὄντων δ' ὀνομάτων καὶ ῥημάτων ἐξ ὧν ὁ λόγος συνέστηκεν, τῶν δὲ ὀνομάτων τῶσαυτ' ἐχόντων εἶδη ὅσα τεθεώρηται ἐν τοῖς περὶ ποιήσεως, *cf.* ch.5 *init.*: ὁ μὲν οὖν λόγος συντίθεται ἐκ τούτων.

<sup>9</sup> 1405a3–6: τί μὲν οὖν τούτων ἕκαστόν ἐστι, καὶ πόσα εἶδη μεταφορᾶς, καὶ ὅτι τοῦτο πλείστον δύναται καὶ ἐν ποιήσει καὶ ἐν λόγοις, [αἱ μεταφοραί], εἴρηται, καθάπερ ἐλέγομεν, ἐν τοῖς περὶ ποιητικῆς.

<sup>10</sup> *Cf.* Kennedy, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 106.

cross-references to the *Poetics*, he assumes that we have that treatment in mind. Nor is it the case, as Kennedy thinks it is, that the kinds of words mentioned in chapters 5 to 7 “do not correspond very well to the list in the *Poetics*”; in fact they do correspond, but those in the *Rhetoric* are fewer: of the eight kinds of words mentioned in the *Poetics* the first four appear also in chapters 5 to 7 of the *Rhetoric*.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, chapter 5 as we have it presupposes chapter 2 of the *Rhetoric* with its cross-references to the *Poetics*.

After giving his definition of good style at the beginning of chapter 2 Aristotle deals with some of the words mentioned in the *Poetics*: *ξενικά* (cf. διὸ δεῖ ποιεῖν ξένην τὴν διάλεκτον 1404b10–11), *γλῶτται*, *διπλᾶ* and *πεποιημένα ὀνόματα* (1404b28–29), *κύριον*, *οἰκεῖον*, *μεταφορά* (1404b31–32). Then, although the cross-reference to the *Poetics* tells us to look there for a classification of metaphor, we find in *Rhetoric* 1405a1ff an extensive treatment of metaphor as a means of achieving *καὶ τὸ καφέες καὶ τὸ ἡδὺ καὶ τὸ ξενικόν* (1405a8). All this, metaphor included, is presented as part of the elements of speech and has nothing to do with composition. What interests Aristotle here are the elements themselves; and the argument against the sophist Bryson (1405b9ff) points out once more the importance of words, regardless of their arrangement: it is untrue, Aristotle says, that whatever

<sup>11</sup> All the kinds of words mentioned in *Rhet.* 5–7 (proper words, metaphors, epithets and strange words, besides simple and double words) are mentioned also in *Poet.* 1457b1ff, either with the same or with an equivalent name (e.g. *Rhet.* 1407a31 ἴδια=*Poet.* 1457b1 *κύριον*; *Rhet.* 1407b31–32 *ἐπίθετον*=*Poet.* 1457b2 *κόσμος*; *Rhet.* 1408b11 *ξένα*=*Poet.* 1457b1 *γλῶτται*=*Rhet.* 1404b28 and 1410b12 *γλῶτται*). The four kinds of words that are mentioned in *Poet.* and not in *Rhet.* are *πεποιημένον* or coined, *ἐπεκτεταμένον* or lengthened, *ὕφηρημένον* or curtailed, and *ἐξηλλαγμένον* or altered, and they are not mentioned in *Rhet.* probably because Aristotle does not need to deal with them in his treatment of composition in prose. This seems to be corroborated by *Poet.* 1459a11–14, where Aristotle says that only proper words, metaphors and ornamental words (*τὸ κύριον καὶ μεταφορὰ καὶ κόσμος*)—precisely those words one could employ in prose (*ἄλλοις ἢ ἐν [ἄλλοις] λόγοις τις χρῆσταιτο*)—should be used in iambic verse, which is the metre that most resembles prose. Strange words (*ξένα*), which appear both in the long list given at *Poet.* 1457b1 (*γλῶτται*) and also in *Rhet.* 5–7, are not mentioned by Aristotle in connection with iambic verse. It may be that Aristotle did not think them fit for iambic verse; and we should note that they are among those kinds of words which in *Rhet.* 2 Aristotle recommends to use sparingly, while adding that only metaphors and proper words are fit for prose (1404b28–33). Whatever the reason for the omission, what is significant is that the same kinds of words mentioned in *Poet.* in connection with iambic verse and incidentally with prose are the ones found in *Rhet.* 5–7; and that the four kinds not mentioned in *Rhet.* 5–7 are not mentioned either in *Poet.* 1457a31ff in connection with iambic verse.

words one uses the meaning is the same. The *ὀνόματα* are the important thing so far.

From this point of view chapters 3 and 4 are also illuminating. The vices of style (chapter 3) are here vices caused by the *ὀνόματα per se*, not by composition, as is made clear by the example of Gorgias' calling the swallow Philomela (1406b14ff), or by the very enumeration of the four vices: misuse of compound words (1405b35), employment of strange words (1406a7), inappropriate epithets (1406a10-13), and inappropriate metaphors (1406b5). Moreover, in chapter 4 the simile is also discussed as an *ὄνομα*, regardless of its effect on the different parts of the sentence.

The *ὀνόματα*, then, are the subject matter of chapters 2, 3 and 4, and this is the reason why they are referred to when Aristotle enters into a new subject matter. At the beginning of chapter 5 (1407a19) he says: *ὁ μὲν οὖν λόγος συντίθεται ἐκ τούτων, ἔστι δ' ἀρχὴ τῆς λέξεως τὸ ἐλληνίζειν*. The important words here are *ἐκ τούτων*; they point backwards to the *ὀνόματα* and *ῥήματα ἐξ ὧν ὁ λόγος συνέστηκεν* in 1404b26ff and to the *τούτων ἕκαστον κτλ.* in 1405a3. The particles *μὲν . . . δὲ* contrast the two parts of the sentence, and in the second part the new topic, clarity in composition, is announced.<sup>12</sup>

There is nothing surprising in the fact that Aristotle should discuss the connection and arrangement of words in sentences only after he has established and analysed the different kinds of *ὀνόματα*. Thus, chapter 5 is devoted to clarity (*τὸ ἐλληνίζειν* meaning *σαφήνεια*, 'clarity'), but to clarity from the point of view of composition. It may be, as Kennedy says, clarity "of diction and composition," but in any case it is now to composition that the requirements of good style refer and not any more to single words as the ornament of speech. Aristotle gives five rules to achieve *τὸ ἐλληνίζειν*. The first consists in the proper use of connectives, which should be arranged *ὡς πεφύκασι πρότεροι καὶ ὕστεροι γίνεσθαι ἀλλήλων* (1407a21) and should not be too widely separated from one another. The example given by Aristotle is a whole sentence abounding in connectives, and it is clear that this first rule aims at clarity from the point of view of the arrangement of words. The second rule recommends to call things by their own

<sup>12</sup> Cf. J. D. Denniston, *The Greek Particles*<sup>2</sup> (Oxford 1954) 472: "Often the *μὲν* clause sums up and rounds off the old topic, while the *δὲ* clause introduces the new one." Denniston quotes Arist. *Pol.*1255b39-40: *περὶ μὲν οὖν δούλου καὶ δεσπότου τοῦτον διωρίσθω τὸν τρόπον. ἄλλως δὲ περὶ πάσης κτήσεως . . .* See also *Rhet.* 1405a3 *τί μὲν οὖν τούτων . . .* and *Rhet.* 1404b1 *ἔστω οὖν ἐκεῖνα τεθεωρημένα . . .*

special names (1407a31: τὸ τοῖς ἰδίοις ὀνόμασι λέγειν καὶ μὴ τοῖς περιέχουσιν). In this case Aristotle deals with ὀνόματα *per se* and not from the point of view of composition. Kennedy could argue that, since ὀνόματα are also dealt with in chapter 2, chapter 5 is an earlier version of chapter 2. We see, however, that in chapter 5 Aristotle does not expand this rule as he does in the case of the other four but that he simply mentions it, perhaps because he assumes that the reader is acquainted with the discussion of ὀνόματα in the previous chapters. The third rule (1407a32) is to avoid long circumlocutions and amphibology, and it is a rule of composition, as is proved by the description of Empedocles' way of writing (φενακίζει γὰρ τὸ κύκλω πολὺ ὄν 1407a35–36). The fourth rule is to observe Protagoras' classification of gender, and the fifth rule is to observe number. In both cases whole sentences are used by Aristotle to show how composition is improved by the observance of these rules (1407b7 and 9–10). Finally, Aristotle tells us what a γεγραμμένον (written composition) should avoid in order to be, as it ought to be, εὐανάγνωστον καὶ εὐφραστον: it should avoid uncertainties of punctuation, as we find in Heraclitus, and long parenthetical explanations (1407b11–25). The chapter ends with the rewriting by Aristotle of an unclear sentence, and this underlines the fact that composition is the important thing here: the words are the same in the first and in the second sentence, but the meaning is not clear until they are correctly arranged. It follows, then, that having dealt in chapters 2 to 4 with the words ἐξ ὧν ὁ λόγος συνέστηκεν, in chapters 5 to 7 Aristotle has turned to the arrangement of them in composition; therefore, it is not the case that “the five rules of clear hellenism have been rendered obsolete by the simple statement that clarity is best achieved by the use of proper words.”<sup>13</sup>

Chapter 6 is devoted to the ὄγκος τῆς λέξεως. Aristotle gives six ways of achieving weight or impressiveness in composition: to describe a thing instead of naming it, to use metaphors and epithets while at the same time avoiding poetic effects, to use plural for singular, to use one article for each noun instead of one article for two nouns, to abound in connectives, and to describe things by the attributes they lack. Kennedy compares this chapter with the discussion of ornament in chapter 2 and seems to think that both discussions deal with the same topic. In chapter 2, however, Aristotle speaks of the adornment produced by certain words, and in 1404b6–8, where he

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Kennedy, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 106.

refers to the *Poetics*, he says: *μὴ ταπεινὴν δὲ ἀλλὰ κεκοσμημένην τὰλλα ὀνόματα ὅσα εἴρηται ἐν τοῖς περὶ ποιητικῆς*. In the *Poetics* (1458a31ff) we read: *δεῖ ἄρα κεκρᾶσθαι πως τούτοις· τὸ μὲν γὰρ μὴ ἰδιωτικὸν ποιήσει μηδὲ ταπεινόν, οἷον ἢ γλῶττα καὶ ἢ μεταφορὰ καὶ ὁ κόσμος καὶ τὰλλα τὰ εἰρημένα εἶδη, τὸ δὲ κύριον τὴν σαφήνειαν*. In the latter passage the idea is different from that conveyed in chapter 6, for, although the words *ὄγκος* and *κόσμος* have a similar meaning, *ὄγκος* is applied to composition but *κόσμος* is not. In chapter 2 it is the *ὀνόματα* which make style *κεκοσμημένη* (1404b7), whereas in chapter 6 *ὄγκος* is something different: to achieve it Aristotle recommends not types of words but rules of composition.

Appropriateness, a necessary condition of *σαφήνεια*<sup>14</sup> according to chapter 2 (1404b1-4), reappears, as Kennedy says, in chapter 7.<sup>15</sup> But this notion of appropriateness or correspondence to the subject matter is only briefly mentioned in chapter 2, and to achieve it Aristotle recommends the kinds of words indicated by means of the cross-references to the *Poetics*, whereas in chapter 7 this characteristic refers to composition, is treated more at length, and is explained with an example. Furthermore, propriety is not mentioned alone in chapter 7: we find also the notion that *λέξις* should be *παθητικὴ τε καὶ ἠθικὴ* (1408a10-11), characteristics which were not mentioned in chapter 2.

Chapter 8 deals with rhythm and chapter 9 with the periodic style. Both clearly are in the domain of composition, and their being placed precisely after chapters 5 to 7 reinforces the argument that 5 to 7 already deal with composition. At the beginning of chapter 8 (1408b21) Aristotle speaks of the *σχῆμα τῆς λέξεως*, the ‘form’ of a composition. The word *σχῆμα* here refers to the form of composition as is shown by a passage in chapter 10 (1410b28 and 31), where *σχῆμα* is opposed to *ὀνόματα*: *κατὰ δὲ τὴν λέξιν τῷ μὲν σχήματι . . . τοῖς δ’ ὀνόμασιν*. Here in chapter 8 Aristotle opposes prose to poetry not in the same way as when he talked of poetic and prosaic words in chapter 1 but on account of the arrangement of words, an arrangement for the purpose of achieving prose rhythm, not metre (1408b30). He has whole

<sup>14</sup> Appropriateness is not the “third characteristic of good style” as Kennedy, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 107, says, nor a separate virtue of style at all but a necessary condition of *σαφήνεια* or “a kind of corollary,” as Kennedy himself calls it on p.104.

<sup>15</sup> Style must be *μῆτε ταπεινὴν μῆτε ὑπὲρ τὸ ἀξίωμα, ἀλλὰ πρέπουσαν* (1404b3-4) or *τοῖς ὑποκειμένοις πράγμασιν ἀνάλογον* (1408a11).

sentences in mind, for he recommends the use of the two kinds of paeon for the beginning and the end of sentences respectively (*δει δὲ διαφέρειν τὴν τελευτὴν τῆς ἀρχῆς* 1409a10–11); it is by its rhythm that the end of sentences should be marked. Composition is still the point of view in chapter 9, where Aristotle considers “the structure of the sentence itself, in respect of the arrangement of its words and subordinate clauses.”<sup>16</sup>

In chapter 10, although still with composition in mind, Aristotle turns to a new topic, figures of speech; and the fact that he has finished a part of the discussion is indicated in the text, for at the beginning of the chapter (1410b6) we read: *ἐπεὶ δὲ διώριται περὶ τούτων, πόθεν λέγεται τὰ ἀστεία καὶ τὰ εὐδοκιμοῦντα λεκτέον*, where *περὶ τούτων* refers to the matters treated in chapters 5 to 9. Similar devices had been used by Aristotle on two other occasions in this book to indicate the end of one topic and the beginning of another.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, to each of the different parts of the definition of the virtue of style given by Aristotle at the beginning of the discussion (chapter 2, 1404b1–4) correspond one by one the topics discussed in the chapters that follow. Thus, *μήτε ταπεινῆν* (1404b3), in so far as it is the vice of excessive *καφήνεια*, corresponds to chapter 5; *μήτε ὑπὲρ τὸ ἀξίωμα* (1404b3–4), to the characteristic called *ὄγκος* in chapter 6, and *ἀλλὰ πρέπουσαν* (1404b4) to that called *τὸ πρέπον* in chapter 7. Therefore, we can see that Aristotle has himself divided his analysis. Since the modern chapter division does not go back to Aristotle nor to the ancients, we ought to pay attention to the text itself; it presents us with a division of the subject matter which in all probability goes back to Aristotle himself. The three sentences at the beginnings of chapters 2, 5 and 10 perform the function of reviewing or summing up what has been said previously, and simultaneously they announce a new subject; they indicate three turning points in the treatment of style—the beginning of the discussion from the point of view of *ὀνόματα*, the beginning of the discussion from the point of view of composition, and the beginning of the discussion of the figures of speech.

Kennedy says that “if chapters five to seven merely developed

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Cope, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.5) 306.

<sup>17</sup> At the beginning of ch.2 (1404b1–2) we read: *ἔστω οὖν ἐκεῖνα τεθεωρημένα καὶ ὠρίσθω λέξεως ἀρετὴ* . . . (where *ἐκεῖνα* points to the *Poetics* referred to in ch.1), and at the beginning of ch.5 (1407a19) we read: *ὁ μὲν οὖν λόγος συντίθεται ἐκ τούτων, ἔστι δ'* . . . , where *ἐκ τούτων* refers to the kinds of words mentioned in chs. 2 to 4 and in the *Poetics*.

chapter two we should expect the discussions to be more detailed. But in fact they are more detailed only in the discussion of points inconsistent with chapter two, like the five rules of hellenism, and much less detailed in matters like the metaphor.”<sup>18</sup> There is nothing surprising, however, in the fact that Aristotle felt the necessity of being more detailed precisely in points which had not been discussed before, such as the rules of composition, instead of insisting on what he had already said. The two treatments are *different* but not inconsistent. They appear to Kennedy to be inconsistent with one another only because he assumes that chapter 2 and chapter 5 are discussions of the same subject matter and from the same point of view. There are in chapter 2, moreover, cross-references to matters discussed later on; in 1404b30 Aristotle is explaining that certain kinds of words (*γλώτται, διπλᾶ, πεποιημένα ὀνόματα*) should be used sparingly, and he adds, *ὅπου δέ, ὕστερον ἐροῦμεν*. This refers to chapters 3 and 7: in chapter 3 (1406a7) he mentions *τὸ χρῆσθαι γλώτταις*, and in chapter 7 (1408b10–12) we read: *τὰ δὲ ὀνόματα τὰ διπλᾶ καὶ [τὰ] ἐπίθετα πλείω καὶ τὰ ξένα μάλιστα ἀρμόττει λέγοντι παθητικῶς*. These cross-references show how Aristotle, when writing chapter 2, mentioned topics which he was planning to develop in later chapters, as he actually did. One could argue, as Kennedy probably would, that Aristotle inserted the cross-references when he wrote the “later version” (chapter 2) because he intended it to be read before the “earlier version” (chapters 5 to 7); but then this would mean that he considered both treatments different and necessary, in which case it is of no importance for us which one is earlier and which one later. What is important is to understand the different points of view of the two discussions. In short, Kennedy’s interpretation does not explain the text of chapters 2 to 7 as we have them.<sup>19</sup>

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October, 1973

<sup>18</sup> Cf. *op.cit.* (*supra* n.2) 108.

<sup>19</sup> I wish to thank Professor James Coulter of Columbia University and the anonymous reader for their helpful comments.