

Re-Wiring the Ancient Novel

Volume 1: Greek Novels

08814



EDITED BY EDMUND CUEVA, STEPHEN HARRISON,
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Re-Wiring the Ancient Novel
Volume 2: Roman Novels and Other Important Texts

ANCIENT NARRATIVE

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Re-Wiring the Ancient Novel

Volume 2: Roman Novels and Other Important Texts

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BARKHUIS &

GRONINGEN UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

GRONINGEN 2018

Book and cover design: Barkhuis

Image on cover: Antonio Canova (1757 – 1822), *Psyche Revived by Cupid's Kiss*,
Marble - H. 1.55 m; L. 1.68 m; D. 1.01 m, MR 1777, Paris, Musée du Louvre
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ISBN 9789492444561

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Language and Style in Antonius Diogenes: Atticism and the Second Sophistic*

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This paper explores the language and style of Antonius Diogenes' novel τὰ ἄπιστα τὰ ὑπὲρ Θούλην – *The Incredible Things Beyond Thule* (*Apista*) by relating the novel, which was written probably at the end of the first or the beginning of the second century AD, to two literary movements of its time, Atticism and the Second Sophistic. Both in antiquity and modern scholarship the term Atticism is used to describe two rather different trends of Greek Augustan and Imperial Literature: first, an endeavor to follow Classical authors in lexical usage and grammar, mainly in opposition to contemporary *koiné*; second, a tendency to imitate the rhetorical style of Classical authors and orators, especially in opposition to Asianism. Whereas the label 'Attic' is often part of a self-definition, 'Asiatic' is only used in a polemic way to characterize others.

As lexical Atticism has recently been addressed by Russo,¹ I focus on the second kind of Atticism, the rhetorical and stylistical one. My angle is to relate Antonius Diogenes' stylistic choices to statements on style by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, one of the most prominent exponents of rhetorical Atticism.² However, there was no authoritative opinion on how to write Attic, nor one uncontroversial canon by Attic authors that an Atticist should imitate. Schmitz convincingly argues that this very debate and dissension fits well into the agonistic culture of *paideia* of the Second Sophistic,³ the second movement in relation to which I will examine the *Apista*. It is well known that 'Second Sophistic' is a fickle term, used

* The research presented in this paper will also be published in a chapter on Antonius Diogenes' language and style, forthcoming in my doctoral thesis, *Antonius Diogenes: Die unglaublichen Dinge jenseits von Thule. Edition, Übersetzung, Kommentar* (Berlin and New York, De Gruyter, 2018).

¹ Russo 2016.

² De Jonge 2008, 13 and 11.

³ Schmitz 1997, 125–127.

in modern scholarship to describe nearly anything related to Greek literature of the Imperial Era, from rhetorical fashion, to political resistance to the Roman Empire, to postmodern lifestyle. I will use ‘Sophistic,’ firstly, to designate certain stylistic features that are associated with the Older Sophists, especially Gorgias, and that resurface in Imperial prose. Furthermore, I will also use ‘Sophistic’ to refer to elements and motifs popular in Imperial prose, both in oratory and in other prose genres such as the novel. Therefore the focus will shift from a stylistic or even linguistic approach to a broader literary one.

The text of the *Apista* itself is lost. Only a few short papyrus fragments,⁴ some quotes in the Neoplatonist Porphyry’s *Life of Pythagoras*, the summary written by the Byzantine patriarch Photius, and a few short passages in other authors remain. Due to the fragmentary nature of the text it is difficult for us to grasp what reading the novel was like—to use a consciously vague term for the reading experience as a whole that includes aesthetic, intellectual, and emotional aspects. This paper adds to the question of ‘what was reading the *Apista* like,’ by discussing not only language and style but also some literary motifs, which are especially important for the aesthetic character of the novel. The results might be useful when considering further issues such as audience and intertextuality. Since the incomplete transmission only allows us to take a glimpse at the novel, the analysis is based on the premise that the transmitted fragments and Photius’ summary are somehow representative of the novel.

1. Atticism

Regarding lexical Atticism, Russo has shown that Antonius Diogenes mainly uses Atticist vocabulary, that is, vocabulary attested in Attic authors taken as models by the Atticists or vocabulary recommended in the Atticist lexica or both. However, some words do not fall into this category, especially a few of those in passages on Pythagoras. The percentage of such non-Attic vocabulary is similar to the one in Chariton and higher than in the other novelists.

⁴ For the last ten years, four fragments have been known: PSI X 1177, P.Oxy. XLII 3012, LXX 4760 and 4761. For the sake of brevity, I omit the numbers of volumes and refer only to PSI 1177 etc. In 2017, a new fragment is added: P.Oxy. 5354, to be published in P.Oxy. LXXXIII (2018) by Peter J. Parsons.

1.1 Tropes

As to rhetorical and stylistical Atticism, we find restrained use of tropes in the five papyrus fragments that are attributed with some certainty to Antonius Diogenes. There are three examples of predicates that could be classified as personifications:

PSI 1177,6: ὅπερ τότε ἐπὶ νοῦν ἦλθέ μοι – ‘what came to my mind then’

P.Oxy. 4761,9–10: κινδύνου προσιόντος – ‘as the danger approached’

P.Oxy. 4761,14–15: ἐξοικτρώσης τῆς φυγῆς – ‘as the flight spurred them on’

In all three cases of potential personification the alienating force of the phrasing seems rather weak; it is doubtful whether an ancient reader would have felt the trope behind the phrase at all. In P.Oxy. 4761, a person is called ‘weak and a wandering child,’ with *παῖς* as a rather plain metaphor for a vulnerable or helpless person.⁵ Finally, while the exact meaning of *καρδίαν λαμβάνω* in P.Oxy. 3012 is disputed, the phrasing can be explained as metonymy—whether we take it to mean ‘to take heart’ or ‘to feel.’⁶ The very discussion about the meaning, due to the fact that the juncture is not attested elsewhere, might indicate that the wording here is a bit more unusual than in the other instances. P.Oxy. 4760 and P.Oxy. 5354 do not present any instances of tropic speech.

The avoidance of tropes is the second feature that Dionysius of Halicarnassus praises in Lysias and his plain style; the first is the use of plain and common vocabulary.⁷ Dionysius elsewhere recommends the middle style as the best out of

⁵ 4–5 ἀσθενὲς γὰρ εἷς καὶ παῖς πλανώμενος – ‘for a single person is a weak thing and a wandering child.’ εἶς Martin L. West *apud* Bernsdorff 2006: εἷς (= εἷ *es*) Parsons 2006. Cf. the translations by Parsons 2006 (‘for you are a weak thing and a wandering boy’) and Bernsdorff 2006 (‘Denn wer einzeln umherirrt, zumal ein Kind, ist ein schwaches Ding’).

⁶ 2–7: ἐγὼ δὲ πῶς ἄ[ν]οι, ὦ Δεινία, τὸ μέ[γ]α λέξ[αι]μι, ...τίνα [καρ]δίαν λα[βού]-[ς]α – ‘But I, how should I tell you, Deinias, about the important matter..., what attitude can I find/with what feelings?’ (translation Stephens/Winkler 1995/my adaptation).

⁷ D.H. *Lys.* 2,2–3,2 τὸ καθαρεῦεν τὴν διάλεκτον...μίαν μὲν δὴ ταύτην ἀρετὴν ἀξίαν ζήλου καὶ μμήσεως εὐρίσκω παρὰ τῷ ῥήτορι...έτέραν δὲ καὶ οὐδὲν ἐλάττονα ταύτης...ἢ διὰ τῶν κυρίων τε καὶ κοινῶν καὶ ἐν μέσῳ κειμένων ὀνομάτων ἐκφέρουσα τὰ νοούμενα <ἐρμηνεία>. ἥκιςτα γὰρ ἂν τις εὔροι Λυσίαν τροπικῇ φράσει χρητάμενον...τοῖς δὲ προτέροισι οὐχ αὕτη ἡ δόξα ἦν...ἐξήλλαττον τὸν ιδιώτην καὶ κατέφευγον εἰς τὴν ποιητικὴν φράσιν, μεταφοραῖς τε πολλαῖς χρώμενοι καὶ ὑπερβολαῖς καὶ ταῖς ἄλλαις τροπικαῖς ιδέαις, ὀνομάτων τε γλωττηματικῶν καὶ ξένων χρήρει...καταπληττόμενοι τὸν ιδιώτην. δηλοῖ δὲ τοῦτο Γοργίας τε ὁ Λεοντίνος, ἐν πολλοῖς πάνυ φορτικῇν τε καὶ ὑπέρογκον ποιῶν τὴν κατασκευήν. ‘This matter of pure language...This, then, is one quality I find in our orator which deserves to be studiously imitated...He displays a second quality no less important

the three. His wording nevertheless makes it clear that the plain style is still acceptable, even praiseworthy, whereas the metaphorical description of Gorgias' grand style as 'vulgar,' φορτική, recalls the harsh rebuke of Asiatic style where bad style is likewise compared to a woman of dubious morals.⁸

1.2 Repetition of Vocabulary

Antonius Diogenes' choice of words, under the perspective of plain versus extravagant vocabulary, can best be studied in PSI 1177. Antonius Diogenes repeats a number of words, mostly verbs, in the thirty lines:

γραμματεῖον, 'writing tablet' (6–7 and 15)

δίδωμι, 'to give' (9 and 19)

χαράττω, 'to incise' (10–11 and 16)

ἡδομαι, 'to rejoice' (12 and 26)

αὐτίκα, 'immediately' (13 and 22–23)

λαμβάνω, 'to take' (15 and 20)

πάνυ, 'very' (18 and 19)

βούλομαι, 'to want' (17 and 30)

ἄπιθι, 'go away!' (22 and 27)

A comparison of all of the fragments to each other, including the new papyrus P.Oxy. 5354, results in further matches, as in the use of the same words:

εὐθύς, 'immediately' (PSI 1177,21; P.Oxy. 3012,12; P.Oxy. 5354,12)

φημί, 'to say' (PSI 1177,10; P.Oxy. 3012,4–5; P.Oxy. 5354,14)

ἀφικνέομαι, 'to arrive' (P.Oxy. 4761,24; P.Oxy. 5354,4, 42 and 45)

than this...It is the expression of ideas in standard, ordinary everyday language: Lysias is rarely to be found employing metaphorical expressions...His predecessors have no such claim to praise...they abandoned ordinary language and resorted to artificial expression. They used a plethora of metaphors, exaggerations and other forms of figurative language, and further confused the ordinary members of their audiences by using recondite and exotic words...Gorgias of Leontinoi is a case in point. He wrote many of his speeches in quite vulgar, inflated style' (translation Usher, Loeb).

⁸ D.H. *Orat. Vett.* 1,6–7: ἡ μὲν Ἀττικὴ μοῦσα καὶ ἀρχαία καὶ αὐτόχθων ἄτιμον εἰλήφει σχῆμα, τῶν ἐαυτῆς ἐκπεσοῦσα ἀγαθῶν, ἡ δὲ ἐκ τινῶν βαρὰθρων τῆς Ἀσίας ἐχθρὸς καὶ πρῶην ἀφικομένη,...Ἑλληνίδας ἡξίου διοικεῖν πόλεις ἀπελάσασα τῶν κοινῶν τὴν ἐτέραν. 'The ancient and indigenous Attic Muse, deprived of her possessions, had lost her civic rank, while her antagonist, an upstart that had arrived only yesterday or the day before from some Asiatic death-hole...claimed the right to rule over Greek cities, expelling her rival from public life' (translation Usher, Loeb).

related *composita* and *simplicia*:

δίδωμι, 'to give' (PSI 1177,9 and 19) – ἀποδίδωμι (P.Oxy. 5354,5)
 λαμβάνω, 'to take' (PSI 1177,17 and 30; P.Oxy. 4761,18) – καταλαμβάνω
 (P.Oxy. 5354,8)
 μένω, 'to stay' (P.Oxy. 4761,2) – περιμένω (P.Oxy. 5354,13 and 19) – κατα-
 μένω (P.Oxy. 5354,40)
 αἰρέω, 'to seize' (P.Oxy. 4761,20) – ὑφαιρέω (P.Oxy. 5354,1)
 γιγνώσκω, 'to recognize' (PSI 1177,26) – ἀναγιγνώσκω (PSI 1177,24) –
 διαγιγνώσκω (P.Oxy. 5354,2)

or whole phrases:

ταῦτα ἐδήλου, 'this it showed' (P.Oxy. 3012,1–2) – ἐδήλου ταῦτα, 'it
 showed this' (PSI 1177,22)
 τοῖς ἐμαυτῆς κακ[οῖς], 'my own misfortunes' (P.Oxy. 3012,9–10) – τὰ
 ἐαυτῆς κακά, 'her misfortunes' (PSI 1177,24–25).⁹

Of the words repeated, only γραμματεῖον and χαράττω are a bit more specific, though still widely attested and hardly remarkable. The other words are the standard expressions for the things they indicate, especially so for the basic human actions to give, to take, to want, or to rejoice. Antonius Diogenes certainly could have found more fanciful synonyms, compounds, or even neologisms for these actions and matters had he wanted to avoid repetitions and to impress the reader with his broad lexicon, just as Lysias' predecessors do according to Dionysius.¹⁰ But obviously, Antonius Diogenes preferred to repeat the plain standard term. This plain vocabulary follows Lysias rather than Gorgias and would have been called Attic, as opposed to Asiatic, by Dionysius.¹¹ Dionysius' rebuke of Gorgias is all the more noteworthy as Gorgias is one of the main representatives of the

⁹ Stephens and Winkler 1995, 154.

¹⁰ As to the stylistic ideal of lexical *variatio* cf. *Rhet. Her.* 4,42/54: *Verbis commutabimus, cum re semel dicta iterum aut saepius aliis uerbis, quae idem ualeant, eadem res profertur*. 'Our changes will be verbal when, having expressed the idea once, we repeat it once again or oftener in other, equivalent terms' (translation Caplan, Loeb).

¹¹ Lysias' style is also praised by the second prominent representative of rhetorical Atticism apart from Dionysius, Caecilius of Caleacte T 45 Woerther (Fr. 150 Ofenloch) = [Longin.] 32,8: ὁ Κακίλιος ἐν τοῖς ὑπὲρ Λυκίου συγγράμμασιν ἀπεθάρρησεν τῷ παντὶ Λυκίαν ἀμείνω Πλάτωνος ἀποφύνασθαι. 'Caecilius ventured, in his writings in praise of Lysias, to make the assertion that Lysias was altogether superior to Plato' (translation of [Longinus]: Roberts, Cambridge University Press).