THE COMPOSITE OF SPOKEN AND WRITTEN SPEECH.  
THE DEIPNOSOPHISTS OF ATHENAEUS AS A MEDIUM 
OF THE INVENTION AND DOCUMENTATION 
OF SOURCES ON RHETORIC BETWEEN FICTIONALITY 
AND FACTUALITY

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Abstract

The “Deipnosophists” of Athenaeus of Naucratis are a literary work that presents us an insight into ancient rhetoric and speech from various perspectives. Being composed of fictive speeches that join the texts of ancient writings in paraphrases and citations in the conversations of the participants during a banquet, the work reveals in different layers, the composition of the work itself, the conversations, and their writings, especially the ones that focus on rhetorical topics, speech in the essential form of this piece of literature. We argue that Athenaeus invents and composes here a multimedia memory that arranges topics related to the culture of banquets in speeches that range from the factuality of historical accounts about rhetoricians to the fictional story of the event itself that nearly completely consists of speeches as praise of this kind of culture. The “Deipnosophists” of Athenaeus comprises both spoken and written aspects of ancient rhetorics and speeches that blend into each other ranging from the framing narrative of a meeting of Athenaeus who tells the story of the event to a friend, the speeches of the deipnosopshists, and the presentation of the texts of the works paraphrased and cited as speech in the banquet.

Keywords: rhetoric, banquet, hellenism, Epideictic speech, Greek literature, Imperial Rome

Rezumat

Lucrarea „Deipnosophists” de Athenaeus din Naucratis este o operă care face incursiuni, din diverse perspective, în retorica antică și discurs. Fiind compusă din discursuri fictive, care sunt subsumate textelor unor scrieri antice în parafrăzări și citări din conversațiile participanților unui banchet, ea dezvăluie, în diferite straturi, compoziția în sine a acestor conversații și scrieri, mai cu seamă, cele ce ţin de subiecte retorice și vorbire. Autorul introduce aici o memorie multimedia care aranjează subiecte legate de cultura banchetelor în discursuri care variază de la factualitatea relatărilor istorice despre retoricieni la istorizarea fictivă a evenimentului în sine, care constă aproape în întregime din discursuri de laudă cu referire la cultura în cauză. Lucrarea dezvăluie aspecte atât orale, cât și scrise ce ţin de retorica antică și discursuri care se contopesc între ele, de relatarea frapantă a unei întâlniri a lui Athenaeus, pe care acesta o face unui prieten, de prezentarea textelor lucrărilor parafrăzate și citate ca discurs de banchet.

Cuvinte-cheie: retorica, banchet, elenism, vorbirea epideictică, literatura greacă, Imperiul Roman
1. Introduction: Rhetoric and the Deipnosophists of Athenaeus – Three Dimensions of Speech

The aim of this article is to analyze the information about rhetoric that Athenaeus provides us in this book that combines a literary form with an encyclopedic knowledge about Greek customs from the classical time to the fictive speakers’ actions and sayings that reflect the time of Athenaeus. The field of rhetoric is present in various layers of the text. So Athenaeus has chosen a unique blend of a framing narrative with a dialogue between Athenaeus and his friend Timocrates who demands an account of this event, with the narrative of the event of the banquet and the narratives of the works of authors that are either paraphrased or cited. The framing narrative of a dialogue of two persons who meet and one of them asks for an account of a banquet has been used by Plato in his dialogue Symposium. The main account is the event of the dinner of the deipnosophists. References from books are cited by the participants, as Athenaeus tells in Book X. Among them are both citations from speeches of orators and citations from works providing information about the lives of rhetoricians and their culture.

At each of these three levels of the narrative, speech appears both as spoken uttered words and as rhetorical speech (‘λόγος’; ‘oratio’). Athenaeus lets us also have a look at the contemporary state of rhetoric in the Hellenic world during the late 2nd century, in the way his protagonists act and comment on rhetorical issues. The culture of banquets as social gatherings that existed in all parts of the ancient world known to the Hellenic scholars is realized actively during the dinner of the deipnosophists and all of the topics the deipnosophists discuss in their speeches are thematically bound to the banquet. The banquet was only a part of the history of the ancient Greek culture, but as a theme, the banquet was present in a number of literary genres of the past, that were exclusively dedicated to banquets. In Athenaeus’ work, several of these writings, that otherwise would have been completely lost, are quoted. Despite its fictional character Athenaeus reveals in his work biographic details of his own origin from Naucratis in the Western delta of the Nile River during the conversation.

The Deipnosophists is more than a literary work of a fictional event. It contains valuable information about the rhetoric of antiquity until the Second Sophistic from written sources that are exclusively quoted in this work. This concerns the reference to rhetoricians called orators (‘ῥήτωρ’) and their speeches, but also other sources that describe the lives of rhetoricians in anecdotal ways giving us an insight of their interaction with professionals from other scholarly or artistic backgrounds. The way that Athenaeus narrates details about the performance and interaction between the participating deipnosophists entails descriptions of how orators act in comparison with the deipnosophists and the performance of a professional
orator. Plutarch’s *Dinner of the Seven Wise Men* (Συμπόσιον τῶν ἑπτά σοφῶν) is a fictive conversation of the ‘seven wise men’, Thales, Bias, Pittacus, Solon, Chilon, Cleobulus, and Anacharsis. So while Athenaeus chooses fictional contemporaries to gather at the banquet, Plutarch uses the seven wise men. The interaction between the participating deipnosophists has both a discursive structure in the tradition of the genre of the didactic dialogue and narrative and descriptive sequences of the text parts of the single deipnosophists. The references are the argument for their introductory statement that is linked to the discursive frame of the verbal interaction between the participants. The deipnosophists quote or paraphrase their references after the short introductory statement. The topological structure of the whole work ranges subject-wise across all kinds of topics related to the banquet culture. In terms of arguments, it uses the encyclopedic knowledge from books as a support for the topics that the deipnosophists evoke in their speeches during the banquet. But this encyclopedic knowledge the deipnosophists provide is a real one. The author of the *Deipnosophists* must have had access to these works. What Athenaeus knew and documented in the *Deipnosophists* shows us that at the end of the 2nd century CE the works of scholars of the age of Pericles and poetic works since Homeric time were known, preserved, and employed as sources for compositions that use the adaption and implementation of these texts into a new literary form during the Second Sophistic.

At the time Philostratus wrote his *Lives of the Sophists* the word ‘sophist’ (σοφιστής) was not a general term for an expert but used for the ‘orators’ (ῥήτορες), the professors of rhetoric, in the Roman Imperium who were public figures. In the preface to Book I Philostratus wrote that the old sophistic practice must be considered philosophical rhetoric (“τὴν ἀρχαῖαν σοφιστικὴν ῥητορικὴν ἠγείρον χρῆ φιλοσοφοῦσαν”) due to its dialectical approach. Philostratus, slightly older than Athenaeus, coined the term of the Second Sophistic for the oratory practice of the ‘orators’ (ῥήτορες) in the Roman Empire from Emperor Nero onwards. The contextual meaning of the sophist in the time Athenaeus wrote his *Deipnosophists* was positive. While it can be even seen as an overarching conceptual term for professionals of rhetorical activities in his work, in the dialogues orators are called ‘ῥήτορες’, when they appear as the sources of works quoted or as persons in scholarly works.

2. The *Deipnosophists* of Athenaeus and Rhetoric of the Second Sophistic

While Athenaeus is not named by Philostratus in his *Lives of the Sophists*, the Second Sophistic is the cultural movement that in many aspects frames the contents, style, and context of the *Deipnosophists*. So T. Whitmarsh (Whitmarsh, 2013, p. 14) in the *Oxford Handbook of the Second Sophistic* asked
‘What of a text like Athenaeus’ Deipnosophists?’ The recourse to the classical works of Greek culture and its restructuring to a new kind of composite work that is a bridge between the fictive event of the banquet and the factuality of the ancient writings that are in most of the texts present, can be seen as a formal feature of writings of the Second Sophistic. In the way of a biographical account, the concept of the Second Sophistic was used by Philostratus. So it does not apply to Athenaeus who is not recorded in his Lives of the Sophists. E. Bowie (Bowie, 2008, p. 69) in The Geography of the Second Sophistic. Cultural Variations in Paideia noticed that too little is known about Imperial Naukratis that had four sophists from late 2nd to early 3rd century who are recorded in the work of Philostratus, while this profession was in Alexandria absent and it is not known how these sophists “related to that rather different sort of scholarly figure, Athenaeus”.

W. A. Johnson and D. S. Richter [Johnson & Richter, 2017, p. 3) in Periodicity and Scope in The Oxford Handbook of the Second Sophistic argued that for the Greco-Roman world of the 2nd century CE common characteristic of the Second Sophistic of ‘nostalgia for an idealized classical past’, ‘archaism and purity of language’, ‘sophistic performance and contest and display’, ‘paideia and erudition’, and ‘anxieties over self-definition and identity’ should be “explored with nuance, sophistication, and sufficient granularity, and with close attention to tensions, ambiguity, and ambivalence”. Kemezis (Kemezis, 2017, p. 5) in Essence et Presence de la Seconde Sophistique. Narrative of Cultural Geography in Philostratus’ Lives of the Sophists published in Perceptions of the Second Sophistic and Its Times. Regards sur la Seconde Sophistique et son Époque analyzed the literary structure of Philostratus’ Lives of the Sophists with the notice that “the salient geographical feature of Philostratus’s story is its emphasis on Athens as the ideal site for sophistic activity”. As shown by K. Eshleman (Eshleman, 2008, p. 397), Philostratus limits the sophists in his work to the three groups of six academic generations from Nicetes through Herodes Atticus to Philostratus, Polemo and his associates, and Isaeus and his students.

Recent research has employed the concept of the Second Sophistic as a term for the second half of the first century to the second half of the 3rd century CE applicable to public figures beyond the range of Philostratus’ Lives of the Sophists. G. Anderson (Anderson, 1993, p. 16) stated that there is “no specific branch of 'sophistic rhetoric', though again in practice sophists concentrated on 'epideiktic rhetoric”’. As for the Deipnosophists, we have here the fictive event of the banquet and the historical accounts of the cited works in a composite of discourses of the deipnosophists that combine documentation, dialectics, and oratory. T. Whitmarsh (Whitmarsh, 2017, p. 14) noticed that “although eternally aware of the potentially fictive properties of a discourse, Greeks only rarely acknowledged fiction as a
genre: partial exceptions can be found in forms of rhetoric and New Comedy, but it was not until the emergence of the novel in the imperial period that one particular literary form became definitively fictive”. Recent research has contributed to the analysis of the stylistically complex form of the *Deipnosophists*. G. Anderson (Anderson, 1993, p. 347) makes a thematic conjecture between Longinus who in his *On the Sublime* discusses in chapter 43 food and refers so to the ‘world of the *Deipnosophists*’. O. M. Williamson (Williamson, 2013, p. 19) in *Culinary Rhetoric and Rhetorical Cookery. Plato was Right After All* noticed that “the deeply rhetorical nature of cooking has been recognized since classic times, particularly in Athenaeus’ *Deipnosophists*, but the full potential richness of a deeper theoretical linkage between discursive scholarship and the culinary arts remains to be explored”.

The *Deipnosophist* is an artifice and the language used in the speeches is by no means ordinary speech. Ch. Jacob (Jacob, 2013) in *The Web of Athenaeus* described the various layers of the narration of the *Deipnosophists* and characterized in *Chapter XIII. Words and Things* the language employed by the *deipnosophists* as a language that “does not correspond to” the “common” Greek (the *koinē*) spoken in the imperial period, but as one that “has been reconstructed by the work of the grammarians, philologists, and lexicographers of Alexandria, but which also constitutes a relevant object of reflection for the rhetors and prose-writers of the Second Sophistic, in search of stylistic and linguistic norms”. Paulas (Paulas, 2012, p. 403) in *How To Read Athenaeus’ Deipnosophists* noticed the interactive dimension of the rhetoric that Athenaeus employs requiring “‘readerly” engagement involving inter- and intratext” that “renders Athenaeus’ text both meaningful and pleasurable to read”. The “understanding this way of reading and its rhetoric enables modern readers to see the Deipnosophists as a literary work rather than merely a repository of knowledge”. S. D. Olson (Olson, 2018, p. 423) in *Athenaeus’ Fragments* of Non-Fragmentary Prose Authors and their Implications pointed out that “we can generally tell the difference between Athenaeus’ quotations (which appear to be more or less reliable) and his paraphrases (which are not)”. L. Romeri (Romeri, 2014, p. 17) acknowledged the interactivity of the text with its praising function stating that “in Athenaeus’ project there is a real work of reappropriation of the quoted texts and that this work corresponds to the author’s will to celebrate and to preserve a certain Greek knowledge, thus leading the quoted texts to interact”. The uniqueness of the communication style during the banquet in the *Deipnosophists* has been described by Ch. Jacob (Jacob, 2013) in *Chapter XI. How to Speak at Table?* as “the result is a coded dialogue, regulated by a series of rules and constraints, which draws multiple and sophisticated effects of meaning out of a virtuoso game of decontextualization and recontextualization, of effects of form and prosody created by the mixing of dialects, metrical structures, literary genres, levels of discourse, and forms of knowledge”. Speech is an integral element and
overarching means for the composition of the different elements of the text and the representation of knowledge in the Deipnosophists. It is the carrier of the persuasive function of rhetoric. In the following sections, we will analyze how Athenaeus employed speech as rhetorical means to construct the text of the central event of the Deipnosophists, the banquet, and preserve the knowledge of rhetoric.

3. The Deipnosophists about Contemporary Rhetoric: Rhetoric and Rhetoricians/Orators (‘ῥήτορες’) at the Banquet in the Deipnosophists

The Deipnosophists is a work that transforms the knowledge of ancient writings into vivid dialogues of the conversation in various speeches exchanged between a group of men that joint a dinner party in Rome. As a reminiscence of the past of Greek culture, the banquet theme is in various topics of the speeches unfolded. Unlike the abstract logical instructive dialogues of dialectic philosophy whose most prominent representative is the Platonic dialogue, Athenaeus’ dialogues are full of detailed information about the lifestyle, habits, and relationships of persons and the speeches of the deipnosophists entail for the most part narratives. Athenaeus builds bridges between the massive use of original quotations in the extant books of Deipnosophists and the proclaimed vivid dialogues they represent in a quite simple way explained in Book VI. The speakers at the banquet arrived prepared for their speeches with available quotations from books to be used in their performances. The Suda describes in its entry for Athenaeus of Naucratis the author as a grammarian (‘γραμματικὸς’) who lived in the time of Emperor Marcus Aurelius and “wrote a book with the title Deipnosophists (‘Δειπνοσοφισταί’), in which he records how many of the ancients had a reputation for munificence in giving banquets” (“ἐγραψε βιβλίαν ὄνομα Δειπνοσοφισταί: ἐν ὧν μνημονεύει, ὡς τῶν παλαιῶν μεγαλοφύγως ἔδοξαν ἑστῶν”, Tr. Malcolm Heath). Athenaeus appears in the Deipnosophists as a person we can identify as factual providing us with information about the place he came from, the Greek emporium Naucratis on the Canopic branch of the Nile River. Athenaeus provides not only details about the local food of the city (11.61.) but also lets the participating deipnosophists cite works like the History of the Foundation of Naucratis of Apollonius’ of Rhodos or Naucratis (7.19.).

In Book I (1.1.) Athenaeus is described as one of the persons that attends the banquet with the appearance of an orator. His work is ‘an arrangement of the speech’ (‘τοῦ λόγου οἰκονομία’) in the form of an ‘imitation of a sumptuous banquet’ (‘μίμημα τῆς τοῦ δείπνου πολυτελείας’):

“καὶ ἐστὶν ἡ τοῦ λόγου οἰκονομία μίμημα τῆς τοῦ δείπνου πολυτελείας καὶ ἡ τῆς βίβλου διασκεδάζῃ τῆς ἐν τῷ δείπνῳ παρασκευῆς τοιούτων ὁ θαυμαστός οὕτως τοῦ λόγου οἰκονόμος Ἀθηναίος ἠδίστον

“And the arrangement of the conversation is an imitation of a sumptuous banquet; and the plan of the book follows the arrangement of the conversation. This, then, is the delicious feast of words which this admirable
master of the feast, Athenaeus, has prepared for us; and gradually surpassing himself, like the orator at Athens, as he warms with his subject, he bounds on towards the end of the book in noble strides” (C.D. Yonge (trans.)).

Athenaeus in Book I (1.2.) wrote that a group of rhetoricians (‘ῥητόρων’) was present at the banquet, but records none of them by name:

“τῶν δὲ κυνικῶν εἰς ἧν ὅν Κύνουλκον καλεῖ· οὐ μόνον δῶ Κόνδατιν άργοι είποντο, ὡς τῶν Τηλεμάχου ἐκκλησίαν ἀλλὰ τῶν Ακταίωνος πολύ πλείονες, ῥητόρων τε ἦν ἄγυρος τῶν κυνικῶν κατ’ οὐδέν ἀπολεπισκόμεν” (Ed. G. Kaibel).

In Book II (2.20.) is noticed that Athenaeus after having delivered this lecture on the topic water like rhetoricians (‘ὥσπερ οἱ ῥήτορες’) stopped his speech and then started again. The host of the banquet, Laurentius, is described as a speaker in the way of an orator (“φησὶν ὁ παρὰ τῷ ῥήτορι Αρηνσιος”) (2.35.). From the description of the participating grammarian and text-centered philologist Ulpian we learn in Book III that he was surrounded by sophists who are depicted as the inventors of uncommon meanings for words (3.54.):

“Such now, my friends, are Ulpian's companions, the sophists; men who call even the thing which the Romans call miliarium, that is to say, a vessel designed to prepare boiling water in, ἤπνολέβης, an oven-kettle” (C.D. Yonge (trans.)).

The sophists are called here ‘producers of many names’ (‘πολλῶν ὀνομάτων ποιηταί’) and several examples of how they produce new words or use old words with new meanings based on homophony are given. In Book VI (6.3.) Athenaeus continues the frame narrative of the beginning of the Deipnosophists that depicts the situation of his meeting with Timocrates who urges him to recall the event of the banquet of the deipnosophists with a reference to the speech of the orator (‘ῥήτωρ’) Cothocides saying that he intends to restore the relics of this feast to Timocrates like Cothocides:

“καὶ ἡμεῖς οὖν, ὁ Τιμόκρατες, ὑποδίδομέν οοί τὰ τῶν | “And we accordingly, O Timocrates, will restore to you the relics of the feast
δειπνοσοφιστῶν λείψανα καὶ οὐ δίδομεν, ὡς ὁ Κοθωκίδης φησὶ ῥήτωρ Δημοσθένειν χλευάζων” (Ed. G. Kaibel).

of the Deipnosophists, and will not give them, as Cothocides the orator said, meaning to ridicule Demosthenes” (C.D. Yonge (trans.)).

An account (’ἀπόδοσις’) of the event is the self-declared aim of the author. Athenaeus in Book VIII (8.47.) mentions that one of the participating guests at the dinner, Democritus, esteems Aristotle, other philosophers, and rhetoricians (’τῶν ἄλλων φιλοσόφων τε καὶ ῥητόρων’).

The practice that the host and guests who attended a banquet had selected topics they presented one after the other during the banquet, is known from the Symposium of Plato, the central topic of which is eros. In Athenaeus’ work the event, the banquet, and the topic of the speeches are identical, even though its various aspects are discussed to a degree that lets the banquet appear as a symbol of a universal pleasant and cultured lifestyle. The idea to use the knowledge preserved in a library, books about all kinds of knowledge that contribute to the main topic as material of the narratives of the sophists participating at the dinner, not only shows us the creativity of the invention of the author, but also the presence and availability of this knowledge for scholars like Athenaeus in the second century CE. The banquet takes place in Rome, the center of the Roman Empire, while the culture of Hellenism and its past and other cultures serve as places the works in the discourses refer to. The readers experience the culture of banquets in the narratives of the speeches, while the actions of the event in Rome are only described to a degree that allows to build a framing structure. Between praise of the banquet itself, the imperial impact of Rome, and the esteem for the locations and local cultures in the world known to scholars at that time, the range of this work as an epideictic speech is open to interpretations. The deipnosophists present a vivid memoria of the past and connect it to the present time of the deipnosophists in their speeches. This blending illusion of continuity is the persuasive function of the text that is realized by the chosen medium, the speech.

4. Banquets as a Theme in Greek Culture and Hellenism to the Second Sophistic in the Speeches of the Deipnosophists

The banquet that Athenaeus here constructed imitates a banquet with representative participants that contribute to the conversation being well-prepared for their particular topic with their citations from classic books in order to demonstrate their expertise. One of the topics is the history of the banquet culture itself. In one case, in Book IV. (4.13.), an orator, Xenocles, is mentioned as the host of a banquet in the description of Plutarch about an Attic banquet the parodist Matron narrated. Its host, the rhetorician Xenocles (’Ξενοκλῆς ῥήτωρ’), is in the following poetic invocation formula for the Muse mentioned:
The banquet was a literary motive and topographic place for the presentation of discourses among participants in the Greek culture. Athenaeus’ work mentions and quotes several works with the title Banquet besides poetic, scholarly and historical works with other titles that entail passages of descriptions of banquets. In Book I the poet Archestratus is mentioned as the author of the writing The Art of Giving a Banquet (‘Αρχεστράτου τοῦ δειπνολόγου’) that is quoted during the banquet. The compound ‘δειπνολόγος’ is a reference to rhetorical speech (‘λόγος’) about the event of a banquet (‘δείπνοι’). In Book V the traditions of banquets are described in various cultures beginning with the poetry of Homer in Greece extending to other parts of the world like Germany, Egypt, Persia, and India with quotations from works of authors that entail the banquet as a topic.

For works exclusively dedicated to a particular banquet the title Banquet (Συμπόσιον) is used in the conversations. The classic writing with the title Banquet has survived under the title Symposium for the dialogue written by Plato about a symposium attended by Socrates and other scholars who discuss the common topic of love from various perspectives. The Banquet (Συμπόσιον) of Plato is mentioned as the title of several books in the Deipnosophists ((5.5.), (5.7.), (5.18.), (5.57.), (11.108.), (11.114.)). Additionally, an unknown treatise on Laws of Banquets written by Plato is cited, describing that under the dominion of Lacedaemon, no drinking parties existed even during the time of the Dionysiac festival of Bacchus (5.43.). The title for the work Banquet written by Xenophon entails the word ‘συμπόσιον’ (‘ξενοφόντος Συμπόσιον’) and is mentioned in several parts of the Deipnosophists ((5.13.), (15.34.), (11.111.), (14.3.)). Among the deipnosophists, it was known that the rivaling philosophers Plato and Xenophon had both written works with the title Banquets (Συμπόσια): “Συμπόσια μὲν γὰρ γεγράφασιν ἀμφότεροι” (11.112.). Even Aristotle is quoted as the author of a today unknown Banquet (Συμπόσιον) (“Ἀριστοτέλης δὲ ἐν τῷ Συμποσίῳ φησίν”) (15.16.). In Book VI (6.2.) Athenaeus tells that laws for banquets were laid down by Xenocrates in the Academy and later Aristotle continued with these guidelines for banquets. Heraclides of Tarentum appears twice as an author of a treatise with the title Banquet (Συμπόσιον) with a quotation: (“ὁ δὲ Ταραντίνος Ἡρακλείδης ἐν τῷ Συμποσίῳ φησί.” (2.76.) and “Ἡρακλείδης ὁ Ταραντίνος, ἄνδρες φίλοι, ἐν τῷ ἐπηγραφομένῳ Συμποσίῳ φησί”, (3.91.). In Book III Yonge translates a title of a quoted book of Lynceus ‘an account of the Banquet of Ptolemy’, while the original text does not use a capital letter (“ἀναγράφων γούν τὸ Πτολεμαῖον συμπόσιον φησιν σύτως;”) and so the
original text indicates an event rather than a book (3.58.). A work with the title *Symposium* (Συμπόσιον) of a philosopher, Meleager the Cynic, is quoted (“καὶ Μελέαγρος δ’ ὁ κυνικὸς ἐν τῷ Συμποσίῳ οὕτως γράφετ.”). Here Athenaeus uses the uncommon verb ‘γράφει’ ('he/she writes') instead of the common verb ‘φησί’ ('he/she says') for the introduction of the author’s work (11.107.).

In Book XIII it is noticed that the Stoic philosopher of the 3rd century BCE Persaeus the Cittiaean wrote an account with the title *Recollections of Banquets* (“καὶ τοῦ Περσαίου τοῦ Κιτιέως ἐν τοῖς Συμμικτοῖς Υπομνήμασι”, (13.86.)). Aristotle’s student Philoxenus is quoted from his book *Promiscuous Banquets* (“Ἀριστόξενος ἐν τοῖς Συμμικτοῖς Συμμικτοῖς ὑπομνήμασι”, (14.31.)). The word ‘Δείπνοι’ is used for the title of literary works in the *Deipnosophists*.

Philoxenus’ play with the title *Banquet* is mentioned several times (“καὶ Φιλόξενος δ’ ἐν τῷ ἐπιγραφομένῳ Δείπνῳ φησί”, (9.77), “Φιλόξενος δ’ ὁ διθυραμβοποιὸς ἐν τῷ ἐπιγραφομένῳ Δείπνῳ”, (15.33., “ἐπεί δὲ καὶ ὁ Κυθήριος Φιλόξενος ἐν τῷ Δείπνῳ”, (14.50.). Timachides is an author who is quoted three times from his several books comprising work *Banquet* (“Ἔσπεριθὼν δὲ μῆλα οὕτως καλεῖ ταῦτα φησί Τιμαχίδας ἐν δῖ Δείπνω”, (3.23.) and “Τιμαχίδας δὲ ἐν τοῖς Δείπνοις τὸ ρόδον φησί”, (15.29.), and “Τιμαχίδας δ’ ἐν τετάρτῳ Δείπνου καὶ θήσειν τι ἀναγράφει καλούμενον ἄνθος” (15.32.).

5. Rhetoric and Rhetoricians/Orators (’ῥήτορες’) in the Cited and Narrated Books of the *Deipnosophists*

Reading the *Deipnosophists* as a multimedial composite of different texts from a time before the concept multimedia in its contemporary definitions was used means to acknowledge the media that existed at the time Athenaeus flourished: Written and spoken speeches that were in the rhetorical theory highly differentiated, artifices of different genres, and scholarly writings of different fields of expertise. Recorded in Greek book once written in the past and well-preserved in late antiquity of the Imperium Romanum, these texts enabled Athenaeus to produce his literary composite. Despite its fictionality, we can show that the conversations of the banquet as Athenaeus’ unique invention refer to contemporary rhetoric. The factual scholarly work and literary artifacts that appear in the conversations refer to the past of the oratory culture as a means of documentation. The citations of the books often are introduced with the word ‘φησί’ marking the beginning of the paraphrase or original text quotation as a speech. So in the conversational speeches of the banquet, the texts of the written works quoted are as a speech introduced by their respective author. Both kinds of speeches, the spoken and written speech that are delivered during the banquet, are the implementations of the framing speech that Athenaeus delivers to his friend as the recollection of this event in the frame narrative.

5.1. Greek Rhetoric and Roman Oratory in the *Deipnosophists*
As a practice of rhetoric in the mythos, in Book I (1.28.) during the discussion about banquets in Homer's poetry it is noticed that the Trojans honored at the end of their banquets Mercury to whom the ‘tongue’ (‘γλῶσσα’) as instruments of ‘interpretation’ (‘ἐρμηνεία’) was dedicated. Athenaeus in Book XIII wrote about rhetoric in the time of Aristotle that Philo wrote a 'speech' (‘λόγος’) against Sophocles who was defended by the cousin of Demosthenes Demochares caused by Sophocles’ release of a decree that banned philosophers from Attica:

“And a certain man named Sophocles, passed a decree to banish all the philosophers from Attica. And Philo, the friend of Aristotle, wrote an oration against him; and Demochares, on the other hand, who was the cousin of Demosthenes, composed a defence for Sophocles” (C.D. Yonge (trans.)).

It is told in Book XIII that in the Roman Empire sophists were either banned from Rome as persons who corrupt the youth or admitted, but nevertheless, the Romans are praised as ‘the best in every respect’ (‘Ῥωμαίοι δ’ οί πάντα ἄριστοι’). The Deipnosophists adds here a quote from the poet Anaxippus who mentions that for him “philosophers are only wise in quibbling about words” (“τοὺς γε φιλοσόφους ἐν τοῖς λόγοις φρονοῦντας”), while being ‘foolish’ (‘μόνον’) ‘in terms of the deeds’ (“ἐν τοῖσι δ’ ἕργοις”) drawing on the discussion about the relation between words and things:

“And the Romans, who are in every respect the best of men, banished all the sophists from Rome, on the ground of their corrupting the youth of the city, though, at a subsequent time, somehow or other, they admitted them. And Anaxippus the comic poet declares your folly in his Man struck by Lightning, speaking thus—Alas, you’re a philosopher; but I Do think philosophers are only wise in quibbling about words; in deeds they are, As far as I can see, completely foolish” (C.D. Yonge (trans.).

The practice of banning philosophers and rhetoricians was common in many cities across Greece during the time of Socrates with reference to Chamaeleon’s book on Simonides (13.92.). This contrasting comparison of ancient Greek and Roman politics dealing with philosophy and sophistry
and rhetoricians who supported or acted against them describes rhetoricians as public figures involved in political affairs.

5.2. Classic Rhetoricians/Orators (ῥήτορες) in the Deipnosophists of the Periclean Age

5.2.1. The Platonic Circle I: Gorgias

Gorgias is a well-known person in the Deipnosophists with the profession of an orator (ῥήτωρ). So in Book V is noticed that Antisthenes’ dialogue Archelaus was written against Gorgias the orator (ῥήτωρ) (5.63.). Its source is Antisthenes’ second treatise called Cyrus, in which the dialogue Archelaus is mentioned. The dialogue Gorgias of Plato appears in several places (“Πλάτων ἐν Γοργίᾳ συγκαταλέγων”, ((3.78.), (11.115.), (11.118.)). Athenaeus in Book V (5.58.) quotes from the dialogue Gorgias to show how carefully Plato composed his dialogues. An anecdote tells that Gorgias himself (“ὁ Γοργίας αὐτός”) said to his friends that Plato knows to write iambics well after he read the dialogue about him (11.113.). Other anecdotal details about the life of Gorgias come from Clearchus who wrote in his Lives that Gorgias for more than eighty years used his full intellectual capacities and from Demetrius of Byzantium who recorded that Gorgias lived over hundred years, as Gorgias stated, he never pleased anyone except himself. (12.71.). The expression ‘I spoke in Gorgias-like language’ (ἐγὼ Γοργιείοις ῥήμασιν εἴπω) appears in a quotation of the Banquet of Xenophon (11.111.). Gorgias appears to be the name-giving person of a book with the title Gorgias written by Hermippus (11.113.). In Book XIII it is recorded that Gorgias wrote a treatise on Courtesans (“ἐν τῷ περὶ Ἑταιρίδων”, (13.70.)) and a treatise about the courtesans of Athens (“πάντων τούτων συγγεγραφότων περὶ τῶν Ἀθηνῶν Ἑταιρίδων”, (13.21.)).

5.2.2. The Platonic Circle II: Aspasia in a Dialogue with Plato as Quoted by Herodicus the Cratetian in the Deipnosophists

In Book V of the Deipnosophists, Athenaeus cites and re-narrates a dialogue between Aspasia and Plato (5.61.). The source for it is Herodicus the Cratetian. Aspasia is not called an orator, but a ‘wise instructor of rhetorical speeches of Socrates’ (ἡ σοφὴ τοῦ Σωκράτους διδάσκαλος τῶν ῥητορικῶν λόγων):

“Ἀσπασία μέντοι ἡ σοφή τοῦ Σωκράτους διδάσκαλος τῶν ῥητορικῶν λόγων ἐν τοῖς φερομένοις ὡς αὐτῆς ἔπεισιν, ἀπερ Ἠρόδικος ὁ Κρατήτειος παρέθετο, φησὶν οὗτος” (Ed. G. Kaibel).

“Aspasia, indeed, who was the clever preceptress of Socrates in rhetoric, in these verses which are attributed to her, which Herodicus the Cratetian has quoted, speaks thus—” (C.D. Yonge (trans.)).

In the following dialogue, Aspasia advises Socrates to charm Alcibiades with his voice as a strategy for the beginning of love (‘φιλίας ἣδ’ ἀρχή’) in
order to win the love of Alcibiades. The following part is a combination of a
dialogue between Socrates and Aspasia and a narration of events. Aspasia is
called ‘instructor in love affairs’ (’ἐρωτοδιδάσκαλον’) for Socrates. The
following narrative about the unsuccessful approaches of Socrates towards
Alcibiades refers to the Platonic dialogue Protagoras. Book V (5.62.) mentions
among the writings of the philosopher Aeschines a work with the title
Aspasia. Details about the life of Aspasia are recorded in various sources. So
Socrates is supposed to have spent time with Aspasia’s flute-playing woman
as told by Xenophon in Book II of his Memorabilia. (5.63.). In Book XIII (13.71)
it is mentioned that Socrates went to the house of Aspasia:

“οἷον δ’ ἔχληνεν δότι ἐξοχον ἔχρη
Ἀπόλλων ἄνθρώπων εἶναι Σωκράτη
ἐν οἰκίᾳ Κύπρις μηνίουσα πυρὸς
μένει. ἐκ δὲ βαθείης ψυχῆς
κουφοτέρας ἔξεπόνη’ ἀνίας, οἰκί’
ἐς Ἀσπασίας πωλεύμενος” (Ed. G.
Kaibel).

“And with what fiery power did Cyris,
in her wrath, heat Socrates,
whom Apollo had declared to be
supreme among all men in wisdom! Yea,
though his soul was deep, yet he
laboured with lighter pains when he
visited the house of Aspasia” (C.D.
Yonge (trans.)).

In Book V (5.63.) it is recorded that the work Aspasia of Antisthenes attacks
the sons of Pericles Xanthippus and Paralus. In Book XII about the life of
Aspasia it is noticed that Pericles lived with her. Aspasia is called a
courtesan from Megara (’Ἀσπασίας τῆς ἐκ Μεγάρων ἑτάρας’, (12.45.)). In
Book XIII it is told that Aspasia was the friend of Socrates (’Ἀσπασία δὲ ἡ
Σωκρατικὴ’) and imported great numbers of beautiful women so that Greece
was filled with her courtesans with a reference to the Acharnenses
of Aristophanes. Aristophanes is here the source for the account that
the Peleponnesian war was initiated by Pericles’ love to Aspasia (13.25.). In Book
XIII (13.56.) it is narrated that according to the account of Clearchus Amatory
Matters Pericles caused a state crisis in Greece due to his relation with
Aspasia. In Book XIII (13.37.) it is noticed that the name of a courtesan
belonging to Cyrus the Younger was changed from Milto to Aspasia.

5.2.3. Rhetoricians / Orators (’ῥήτορες’) from the Alexandrian Canon of
Ten Greek Orators
Athenaeus’ Deipnosophists does not refer to the Attic orators of the
Alexandrian Canon of Ten Greek Orators in a referential or systematic way,
but the names of seven of these orators appear in the conversations. The
contemporary philosopher of Plato Isocrates, a student of Gorgias, is called
‘orator’ (’ῥήτωρ’) ((3.94.), (13.21.)). Athenaeus in Book XIII (13.62.) writes that
Isocrates is the ‘most modest of all the rhetoricians’ (’ὁ τῶν ῥήτωρον
αἰσχημονέστατος’) who had a mistress named Metanira with a reference to
the Letters of Lysias, while Demosthenes in one of his speeches says that this
mistress belongs to Lysias.

The most famous orator of the classic Greek past praised in writings of
late antiquity is Demosthenes. In the Deipnosophists many of his speeches are
cited. The attribute ‘orator’ (‘ῥήτωρ’) is given to Demosthenes in several places ((2.22.), (3.57.), (6.62.), (8.31.), (13.31.), (13.54.), (13.63.), (14.3.), (14.53.)). Cothocides is called ‘orator’ (‘ῥήτωρ’) in a quote ridiculing Demosthenes (6.3.). Demosthenes’ contemporary rival Hypereides appears also in several places of the *Deipnosophists* with the profession ‘orator’ (‘ῥήτωρ’) ((3.90.), (6.92.), (8.27.), (12.27.), (13.58.), (14.6.).) Lysias has the attribute ‘orator’ (‘ῥήτωρ’) throughout the conversations ((12.48.), (12.76.), (13.34.), (13.93.), (13.94.).) An anecdote is told about Lysias who was desperately in love with Lagis the courtesan, whose panegyric was written by Cephalus the orator (‘ῥήτωρ’) (13.62). In his oration against Philonides Lysias says that Nais was the mistress of Philonides (13.62.). In Book V a speech of Lysias is quoted (5.45.) with the remark that philosophers often are more inclined to evil speaking than comic writers with examples from writings of Aeschines, the pupil of Socrates, and his negative disposition displayed when laughing at Lysias the orator. (5.62.). Antiphon is called ‘orator’ (‘Ἀντιφῶντι δὲ τῷ ῥήτορι λόγος’) who wrote a speech On Peacocks (9.56.). Lycurgus is called ‘orator’ (‘ῥήτωρ’) who wrote an Oration against Demades. (11.51.). For Aeschines the professional title ‘orator’ (‘ῥήτωρ’) is used three times in the *Deipnosophists* (6.41.), (8.22.), (13.30.). According to Demosthenes’ oration about the False Embassy, Epicrates who was nicknamed Cyrebion was the son-in-law of Aeschines (6.41.), Aeschines’ speech against Timarchus is mentioned (13.30.). Since the orators Isocrates, Demosthenes, Hypereides, Lysias, Lycurgus, Antiphon, and Aeschines are mentioned in the *Deipnosophists*, while the names of Andocides, Dinarchus, and Isaeus lack, we can assume that Athenaeus did not take into account the Alexandrian Canon of Ten Greek Orators who were selected by Aristophanes of Byzantium and Plutarch in his Lives of the Ten Orators.

5.2.4. Rhetoricians / Orators (‘ῥήτορες’) of the 4th and 3rd Century BCE

Demades is called ‘orator’ (‘ῥήτωρ’) ((3.55.), (13.61.)) who said that Aegina was the “eyesore of the Peiræus,” and that Samos was “a fragment broken off from the city” (3.55.). Axionicus’ work Lover of Euripides is the reference for calling Callias the orator (‘ῥήτωρ’) a gambler (8.27.). For the fatness of the orator (‘ῥήτωρ’) Python of Byzantium his fellow-citizen Leon is used as the reference (12.74.). Callimedon is called ‘orator’ (‘ῥήτωρ’) ((3.57., (3.64.).) The play Ponticus of Alexis mentions the orator (‘ῥήτωρ’) Callimedon (3.57.). Athenaeus in Book VIII (8.28.) employs the word ‘rhetoricians’ (‘ῥητόρον’ in a quote from the source Physician of Theophilus in a wordplay of the homophonic pun between ‘κάραβος’ (‘crawfish’) and Callimedon’s nickname Carabus:

“Θεόφιλος δὲ ἐν Ἱατρῷ ἁμα/ σκώπτων αὐτοῦ καὶ τῷ ἐν λόγοις/ ψυχρόν· πᾶς δὲ φιλοτιμός πρὸς/ αὐτῶν τῶν νεανίδων [...] ἐγχέλειον παρατέθηκε. τῷ πατρὶ/ τεθείη ἡν χρηστή· πατρίδιον, πῶς | And Theophilus, in his Physician, ridiculing his coldness of expression, says—‘And the slave put before the young man himself with great eagerness a little eel: his father had a fine cuttle-fish before him. ‘Father,’ says he, ‘what do you think
The ‘brazen poet and orator’ (‘ῥήτωρ’) Dionysius Chalcus wrote a speech advising the Athenians to adopt a brazen coinage that Callimachus notices in his list of Oratorical Performances (15.9.). Caucalus is an ‘orator’ (‘ῥήτωρ’) who has written a panegyric on Hercules (10.2.). Philinus as an ‘orator’ (‘ῥήτωρ’) wrote a debate on the Croconidae (10.25.) It is noticed about Aristophon the orator (‘ῥήτωρ’) that he proposed in the archonship of Euclides a law that everyone who was not born of a woman who was a citizen should be classified as a bastard (13.38.). Nicarete the courtesan was the mistress of Stephanus the orator (‘ῥήτωρ’) (13.65.). Stratocles is called an ‘orator’ (‘ῥήτωρ’) who kept as his mistress a courtesan whose name was Leme in Gorgias’ treatise on Courtesans (13.70.) The nephew of Demosthenes Demochares has the professional title ‘orator’ (‘ῥήτωρ’) (11.119.). In a reference to Leon of Byzantium who was a student or Aristotle a Python of Byzantium is called ‘orator’ (‘ῥήτωρ’) (12.74.). Baton of Sinope who wrote a treatise on Thessaly and Haemonica (14.45.) is called twice ‘orator’ (‘ῥήτωρ’) ((14.34.) and (14.45.)). For Cephalus the title ‘orator’ (‘ῥήτωρ’) is used (13.62.) when mentioning that he wrote a panegyric for the courtesan of Lysias Lagis. The only rhetorician of the Augustan Age who is called ‘orator’ (‘ῥήτωρ’) is Caecilius ((6.104.), (11.15.). As for rhetoricians of the 2nd century CE, Herodes Atticus carries the professional title ‘orator’ (‘ῥήτωρ’) (3.55.). Occasionally orators as a group of professionals are cited in works of Greek poetry. So in Book X (10.73.) from Antiphanes’ play Sappho a speech is cited asking how an orator can be declared mute (“ῥήτωρ ἄφωνος”). From the Knights of Aristophanes a passage is quoted in Book III (3.47.) that mentions orators (‘ῥήτορες’). In Book XIII (13.60.) it is told that Herodicus in Book VI of his Essay on People mentioned by the Comic Poets wrote that a courtesan according to the orators (‘ῥήτορες’) was called Sestos. In the Deipnosophists the title ‘orator’ (‘ῥήτωρ’) is used for representatives of this profession from its earliest beginnings like Gorgias to orators of the 2nd century CE in the age of Imperial Rome like Herodes Atticus.

References


**Texts**


*Digital Athenaeus. Athenaei Naucratitae Dipnosophistarum Libri 15.* G. Kaibel (Ed.). Project directed by Monica Berti at the Alexander von Humboldt Chair of Digital Humanities at the University of Leipzig.
