George A. Kennedy (trans.):

*Invention and Method: Two Rhetorical Treatises from the Hermogenic Corpus. The Greek Text, Edited by Hugo Rabe, Translated with Introduction and Notes* (Writings from the Greco-Roman World 15)
Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature & Leiden: Brill, 2005

xix + 271 pages (indices)


Price: $32.95 (paperback) / £99; $133 (hardcover)

“Later Greek rhetoric is an important but frustrating subject of study”, as George A. Kennedy aptly wrote a few years ago. Indeed, it is a very important field of study, since rhetoric was a central feature in education and public life of the imperial period, and since the texts produced in that period served for over a thousand years as major sources for Byzantine and even Renaissance rhetoric. But studying later Greek rhetoric can be terribly frustrating. Authorship and dates of composition of the extant treatises are often very uncertain. The treatises for the most part do not identify the earlier works on which they are based, and therefore it is difficult to establish thematic or chronological relationships. Until very recently, most of the crucial texts were accessible only in antiquated editions, with Greek that is often cumbersome and difficult to read, all the more so because hardly any translations or commentaries were available, and with technical vocabulary and rhetorical concepts that frequently deviate in curious ways from the ‘classical’ tradition.

For all these reasons, later Greek rhetoric has long been a field reserved for specialists. The situation has been gradually changing since the 1970s, but the real breakthrough has come in the last decade with fundamental publications by leading experts. Mervin R. Dilts and George A. Kennedy have reedited and translated the Anonymus Seguerianus and Apsines (Leiden: Brill, 1997), and Kennedy has published an English translation of all extant Greek progymnasmata textbooks (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature & Leiden: Brill, 2003). Michel Patillon has provided modern editions and translations of Theon (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1997), of Cassius Longinus and Rufus of Perinthus (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2001), of Apsines (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2001), of Pseudo-Aelius Aristides (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2002), and of the Anonymus Seguerianus (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2005). As a consequence, a growing number of scholars have recently embarked upon research in this field, among them many younger scholars searching for opportunities to do original work. Since many of these scholars are not specialists in later Greek, what they most need are reliable texts, translations, and commentaries.

One of the most influential sets of rhetorical texts of the imperial period is that assembled under the name of Hermogenes. The so-called *Corpus Hermogenianum* was compiled in the fifth or sixth century by an unknown editor in order to create a full-fledged *Art of Rhetoric* for teaching rhetoric at the highest educational level. The *Corpus* consists of five treatises, four of which were attributed at the time to Hermogenes of Tarsus, a sophist and adolescent prodigy in declamation of the late second century; the fifth treatise (the opening piece of the *Corpus*) was

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1 The present review is based on the Brill hardcover version of the book.
the *Progymnasmata*, or preliminary exercises, written by Aphthonius of Antioch, a late fourth-century sophist. There was also a shorter manual of *Progymnasmata* attributed to Hermogenes in manuscripts and translated into Latin by Priscian in the sixth century. Despite the attribution, this manual clearly is not by Hermogenes and it was never an integral part of the *Corpus*, neither in antiquity when the *Corpus* was compiled, nor in the Byzantine period when it assumed its unrivalled position of authority in rhetorical theory and education. Modern collections such as Rabe’s 1913 Teubner edition and Patillon’s 1997 French translation have replaced Aphthonius’s *Progymnasmata* with the shorter Pseudo-Hermogenic manual.

Aphthonius’s *Progymnasmata* was translated into English in 1952 (Ray Nadeau, “The *Progymnasmata* of Aphthonius in Translation”, *Speech Monographs* 19, pp. 264-285) and is now also available in recent English translations by George A. Kennedy (*Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric*, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature & Leiden: Brill, 2003, pp. 73-127) and by Malcolm Heath (published online at http://www.leeds.ac.uk/classics/resources/rhetoric/prog-aph.htm), and in other languages, among them Swedish.


The present volume by George A. Kennedy now completes the pentad in English by providing translations of the remaining two treatises: *On Invention* (*Perì heuréseîs*) and *On Method of Forceful Speaking* (*Perì methódou deinótou*).

Kennedy’s book opens with a “Table of Contents” (pp. v-vii), an “Index of Short Titles Used in the Notes” (pp. ix-xi), and a “Note on the Greek Text” (p. xii), before getting to the “Introduction” (pp. xiii-xix), which is a hybrid. Although it is mainly an introduction to the first treatise – *On Invention* – it also serves as a general introduction to the entire book with prefatory material such as acknowledgments, and it is paginated continuously with the front matter. The second treatise *On Method* is given its own introduction later in the book (pp. 201-203). The main body of the book is devoted to the Greek text with a facing annotated translation of *On Invention* (pp. 3-199) and *On Method* (pp. 204-267). A short “Glossary and Index of Technical Terms” (pp. 269-271) completes the book.

In his introduction to *On Invention* (pp. xiii-xix), Kennedy gives an outline of the treatise, which he characterizes as a manual for schooling in declamation (p. xvi). The treatise has no preface or introduction. Book 1 deals with prooemia; book 2 with narration (*diégēsis*); book 3,
prefaced by a dedication to one Julius Marcus, discusses “confirmation” (kataskeuē) or proof. Surprisingly enough, book 4 does not, as one would have expected, treat epilogues but instead deals with features of prose style, with the loose addition of two chapters (13 and 14) on specific problems regarding declamation.

Kennedy reviews the traditional arguments against Hermogenes’ authorship (that is, discrepancies in rhetorical concepts and vocabulary, and deviations from Hermogenes’ usual style), and adds his own observation that the declamatory themes cited in On Invention do not overlap with the two “authentic” treatises (p. xv). In “Le De Inventione du Pseudo-Hermogène” (ANRW 2.34.3, 1997, pp. 2064-2171; cf. esp. pp. 2079-2083) Patillon has proposed Aspasius of Ravenna as the real author of this text, basing his attribution on a citation in 4.13 (mistakenly referred to by Kennedy as 4.14 twice on p. xvi) of a passage from one of the unknown author’s own declamations, which an anonymous commentary on On Ideas (Rhetores Graeci, ed. C. Walz, 7.951, 24-27) attributes to Aspasius. Heath, on the other hand (“Apsines and Pseudo-Apsines”, AJPh 119 (1998), pp. 89-111; Menander: A Rhetor in Context, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, pp. 53-60), has suggested Apsines of Gadara, since Syranus 1.36 (“2:36”, on p. xv, is another unfortunate misprint) cites a passage, also from 4.13, as being from a work by Apsines. Rehearsing arguments from an earlier article (“Some Recent Controversies in the Study of Later Greek Rhetoric”, AJPh 124 (2003), pp. 295-301; cf. esp. pp. 298-299), Kennedy wisely refrains from attempting to attribute On Invention to any individual author. What he is willing to grant is that Apsines may be the author of 4.13 (pp. xv, 187-188, 193), which, according to Kennedy, is a later addition to the text by a different author (as is 4.14; cf. pp. 137 and 127). In Kennedy’s view, the attribution of a second passage, from 4.4, to Apsines by the fifth-century sophist Lachares (in Walz 7.931, 15-22) may be due to a common source of both On Invention and Apsines (pp. xv and 157, note 226).

Kennedy reprises his argument from Greek Rhetoric under Christian Emperors (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983, p. 87) that books 1 and 2 of On Invention show clear signs of editing and abridgement, while books 3 and 4 have suffered from incoherent additions. He suggests that the work may be based on a treatise from the mid-second century, but that it was composed in the third or fourth century, and thoroughly revised in the fifth or sixth century when it was inserted into the Corpus Hermogenianum (p. xvi). At that time it was tailored to fill the gap left by a lost treatise On Invention by Hermogenes, the existence of which appears to be attested by cross-references in both On Issues and On Ideas (p. xiv). Such revisions, according to Kennedy, would account for the characteristic shortcomings of the extant treatise (e.g., the lack of an introduction, of discussions of such standard topics as the functions of prooemia or the stylistic virtues of narration, or of a treatment of epilogues). He also comments on such issues as the practice of school declamation in antiquity, the style of the work, and its subsequent history in the Byzantine period.

In addition to this general introduction, each of the four books of On Invention is provided with its own introduction (pp. 3, 31-33, 61, 137). In some cases there are also introductory notes to individual chapters, particularly in passages that in Kennedy’s view demonstrate editing or redaction, such as 2.7 (p. 51), 3.5 (pp. 85-87), 3.8 (p. 101), 3.15 (p. 127), and 4.13-14 (pp. 187-189).

Kennedy briefly describes the much shorter treatise On Method as a collection of chapters on style (pp. 201-203). Although Hermogenes in On Ideas 2.9 announces a treatise on matters of style under the same title, Kennedy points out that the extant treatise cannot be the one envisaged by Hermogenes, since its contents do not match the announcement. On the other hand, one and the same author could not have written both On Method and On Invention since the two treatises differ considerably in terminology (see the differing accounts of antitheton in On Invention 4.2 and On Method 15). Kennedy notes some similarities with Pseudo-Dionysius’s…
Art of Rhetoric (2.10-11) which suggest that both treatises may have drawn on a common source. Yet, On Method is curiously unaware of the discussions of style by Aristotle, Demetrius, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus. Its integration into the Corpus Hermogenianum antedates Syrianus and may have involved some editing and the addition of some of the later chapters. Both texts are indispensable sources for the study of late antique (and Byzantine) rhetoric, and we owe Kennedy a debt of gratitude for making them available in English.

Kennedy’s translation is based on Rabe’s text from the 1913 Teubner edition. Unlike all other modern translators of works from the Corpus Hermogenianum, Kennedy commendably provides the full Greek text and critical apparatus, which is thereby made accessible in a serviceable modern edition. In his “Note on the Greek Text” (p. xii), Kennedy offers information on Rabe’s main manuscripts and their sigla as used in the critical apparatus, but this list is not exhaustive and he refers the reader to Rabe’s Praefatio for further information; the specialist reader will find reason to do so in a good many cases. With respect to the list of early editions, one minor problem may be noted: Johannes Sturm’s Strasbourg bilingual (Greek/Latin) editions are not from 1555, but from 1570 (On Invention) and 1571 (On Method). It is unclear whether Sturm is responsible for the earlier Strasbourg monolingual Greek editions, but neither of these is from 1555: On Method is from 1556, and On Invention is from 1558.

Rabe’s Greek text has been reproduced with admirable precision by Yannis Haralambous (who receives due acknowledgement on p. xix). There are some odd misprints, however, which might be explained if the text was scanned electronically. There is, for example, the occasional final sigma found in an interior position in a word (see, e.g., 168,19; 212,8; etc.; these and the following references give the relevant pages and lines in Kennedy’s Greek text) or the odd intrusion of (Latin) question marks at the end or even in the very middle of Greek words (e.g., 14,16: tē?n; 152,17: e?xeíñai). It is most unfortunate that all ‘em dashes’ have disappeared from the Greek text, since this results in an almost incomprehensible text in passages of parenthetic or anacoluthic construction (76,5-6; 130,18-19; 158,5-6 and 9-10; 166,13-14; 212,19; 216,8, 16 and 25; 234,10-13).

Haralambous has meticulously copied Rabe’s critical apparatus, save for some inevitable changes: all line numbers and cross-references have been adapted to Kennedy’s pagination. As a rule, Rabe’s use of the first person singular is changed to the third person singular (e.g., “scripsi” becomes “scripsit Rabe” at 70, apparatus to line 3), although “ego”, at 130, apparatus to line 2, is still Rabe’s.

The Greek text is printed on even-numbered pages, with parallel translation on odd-numbered pages. Rabe’s original pagination is indicated on both the left and the right pages for ease of reference. The correspondence of the facing-page text and translation is in general good, and the reader is rarely forced to turn pages back or forth.

A completely new edition of the Greek text might have been desirable, especially since, as Kennedy points out (p. xii), Rabe himself had come to a different evaluation of the manuscripts by the time he edited Aphthonius in 1926; but Kennedy can hardly be blamed for his decision to use Rabe’s text. Sometimes, however, the faithful adoption of Rabe’s text has undesirable consequences for matching the text with the translation. Kennedy’s translation occasionally departs from Rabe’s text, embracing conjectures proposed by Patillon or himself, but these departures are not reflected in his Greek text. For example, on pp. 158-159, and on pp. 164-165, Kennedy bases his translation on the variant periōn (“going around”), whereas the Greek text has Rabe’s peri ("getting the better"). On p. 163 with note 238, Kennedy translates xénous (“mercenaries”) instead of lógoi, which is found in the Greek text. On p. 145 with note 209, Kennedy transliterates his own conjecture ergasia but gives enárgeia in the Greek text. This is eccentric. Moreover, in a difficult passage (146,7-8), Kennedy appears to follow Patillon’s French
Even for those proficient in Greek, texts such as the Pseudo-Hermogenic treatises are not an easy read. With their arcane and highly technical vocabulary, their somewhat awkward and convoluted style, and their frequent allusions to obscure themes used in classroom declamation, these works pose a considerable challenge to anyone trying to capture their language and content in modern English. Thanks to the expertise he has accumulated over many years of studying later Greek rhetoric and to his experience as a translator, Kennedy should be highly suited for this task. Departing from the practice of Patillon and the earlier English translators of Hermogenes’ works, Kennedy has decided not to translate but merely to transliterate the majority of the Greek technical terms (p. xviii) and to offer approximate English equivalents in the notes and in the Glossary (nevertheless, in On Method, he has translated a number of the Greek terms). Transliteration makes sense in that much of the importance of these treatises lies in the ways they invent new technical terms or use terms in peculiar ways that do not match how they were used in earlier works. But the transliteration makes it unclear just what readership Kennedy had in mind for this book. Specialists may praise him for his scrupulous refusal to translate technical terms, but readers less adept at Greek may find this a major obstacle to their reading, and objections have already been raised to that effect. 6

In the assessment of the quality of a translation, very different standards and criteria may apply, depending on the genre of the text translated. Particularly with such technical texts as the present treatises, however, the primary test of a good translation will have to be its scrupulous fidelity to the content and wording of the text and its reliability for readers who will want to use it either as a key to or as a substitute for the original text. Kennedy produces an English text that reads smoothly on the surface. And there are a number of places in which he renders even difficult passages in a brilliant way, such as, for example, at the beginning of On Invention 3.10 (106,8-108,18), where he gives an appropriate and even elegant translation of a highly intricate passage on the application of hupodiairesis in the type of argument called “from-beginning-to-end”. Yet on closer inspection, Kennedy’s translation as a whole exhibits too many infelicities, errors, and faulty renditions. The text is certainly difficult to translate, but help was available. Kennedy claims to have consulted Patillon’s translation (cf. pp. xviii and 203), but Patillon gets it right in most of the places where Kennedy’s translation goes wrong. Even the sixteenth-century Latin translations by Johannes Sturm frequently do better with difficult passages (cf. below).

Some of the errors involve central features of technical language. For instance, the Greek section heading of On Invention 1.2 is hupodiairesis; Kennedy mistranslates this as “sub-ordination” (p. 17; p. 270) instead of as “subdivision” (but he gets it right on p. 17, note 20; p. 107; p. 131, note 188). Its synonym hupomerismos (130,16 and 22) is also wrongly rendered as “subordination”. Hupophorá, which is a technical term (“proposition of the opponent”; see On Invention 3.4), at 120,15 is translated as “separate directions”. Sustréph, which is the author’s

term for “compress, condense” (cf. Sturm 1570, p. 163: “contractum”), is twice mistranslated as “invert” on p. 143; the corresponding term ekathên (142,14; from eketinh) does not mean “stated” but “extended” (again Sturm 1570, p. 163: “dilatatum”). Likewise, apatathêntos (176,13) is not “divided” but “extended”. Similarly, Kennedy’s “literal” translation of kakozelôn as “striving for what is bad” (p. 183, note 266) distorts the meaning of the term, which is “striving perversely or excessively (for what is in itself a virtue)”. Besides those, the translation exhibits also a good many other linguistic errors and shortcomings. Some have to do with basic Greek vocabulary: kinduneiein (56,15) is not “to be a source of danger” but “to be in danger”; anaireîs (64,19) is not “consider” but “deny”; aneuthunos (66,16) is not “subject to scrutiny” but “not subject to scrutiny”; apateôn (116,2) is not a participle of apatáô, “deceiving”, but the noun “a deceiver”; and póte (with accent, 240,24) is the interrogative “when”, not the indefinite “sometimes”.

Morphological errors constitute another problem, leading to serious distortions of the sense of words and phrases. Thus, the future apoleitai (56,16) is translated as the past (“was ruined”); deêsei (74,10), future of the impersonal verb deî, is misinterpreted as the dative of the noun déesis (“need”); apantêsetai (170,7) is wrongly translated as the second person (“you will”); and apantâi (170,10) is rendered as an imperative (“meet him …!”), when it is an indicative. Furthermore, the imperative bîsai (112,11) is middle (“force!”), and not passive as it is rendered here (“be forced!”); thaumastos phanéseî rhêtôr (112,16-17) is not “let the speaker be admired”, but “you will appear an admirable speaker”; hierelôn (134,2) is genitive not of hierês (“sacrificers”), but of hierêia (“sacrifices”); ephéstêke ta deinâ (142,11) does not mean “[the enemy] have threatened dire things”, but “terrible things are impending”; biazômenos at 192,7 means “employing force” not “being forced”.

Sometimes even basic Greek constructions are wrongly rendered: hôs + future participle is translated as causal instead of final (52,22-24), hôs + infinitive as causal instead of consecutive (142,24-26); more than once an ân indicating a counterfactual statement is simply ignored (e.g. 110,22; 116,25); ou deî is rendered “there is no need” instead of “one ought not” (92,6-7; 170,15-16). By virtue of the prohibitive negation, mêdê kainôn (80,7) does not mean “it is nothing new”, but “nothing new (should be tried)”!

Several errors result from mistaken correlation of words, often due to disregard of grammatical agreement. The sentence deinôn gar baskanian homolegein kai epiphthonon aei (8,6-7) does not mean “it is always a bad thing to admit to jealousy and envy” but “it is bad and always odious to admit one’s jealousy” (cf. Sturm 1570, p. 7; Patillon, p. 211); the phrase hois periplakeis ho logos summêrrosei (62,16) does not mean “by which the speech, when woven together, will fulfill”, but “woven around which the speech will fulfill”; siaotaton ton rhêtora apodeixeî (80,4) is not “it is strongest for the orator to demonstrate”, but “it will demonstrate the orator to be most compelling”; ton tôn anthrôpôn metapoioieî epi to kainôteron bîon (142,1) is not “change the affairs of men into a more novel way of life”, but “change the life of men in the direction of what is more novel” (by virtue of its gender, bîon must go with ton tôn anthrôpôn, not with to kainôteron); ti oûn [...] tôn khrêston nomismen Hómêron légein hêmín (258,8-9) is not “what useful lesson shall we think that Homer tells us?”, but “what shall we think good Homer tells us?”.

In a number of passages, constructions go completely awry and crucially distort or obscure the sense of the text. Here are just a few striking examples: axion de kakeîno têrêsaî tôn rhêtorôn (70,14) is not “it was right for the orators to keep to that treatment”, but “it is worthwhile observing also that point in the orators”; [Periklês] en proskhêmati timês aei pros Athênaîôn phulâttetai (90,18) is not “[Pericles] has always kept an honorable basis in his dealings with Athenians”, but “is always being guarded by the Athenians under the pretext of honor”; kainôtomon ho polêmos kai apû heautoi technâtai ta pollâ (92,13-14) is not “war is an
innovating thing and many things are taught by it” but “[...] and it invents most things by itself”; τί το αὐτίον ἐστι θανάτου γενέσθαι (122,3-4) is not “what was the cause of her death”, but “what it means to be the cause of someone’s death”.

The list of serious shortcomings is long and cannot be given in full here. On average, the present reviewer found reason to question or object to the translation on every other page. The translation of On Method is better than that of On Invention, but, all in all, both translations fall short of the professional reader’s expectations and show many signs of hurried working. Other reviewers have been satisfied with these translations, and it is with deep regret that the present reviewer cannot concur.7

In contrast, however, Kennedy’s introductions and notes offer a wealth of learned material that will prove invaluable to specialists and beginners alike. They are the product of decades of research in later Greek rhetoric. In his notes, Kennedy generously provides astute explanations of terms, sound interpretations, and abundant references to other late-antique rhetorical treatises, for which the reader will be grateful. When combined with Patillon’s similarly comprehensive notes they will make a serviceable substitute for the full commentary that we still need on these important texts. There are odd slips in the notes, but they are few: Michel Patillon is once misnamed “Marcel” (p. 203); the remark “auctor est Lachares” from Rabe’s critical apparatus does not mean “the author is Lachares” (p. 157, note 226) but “the source is Lachares”; Patillon’s proposal of a conjectural reading πνεύμα πεποίηκεν (Patillon, p. 295, note 5) is misprinted as σκῆμα πεποίηκεν (p. 161, note 234). Two reconstructions of obscure declamatory themes (p. 81, note 124, and p. 113, note 155) unfortunately suffer from mistranslations of the Greek text.

The book as a whole gives the impression of being hurriedly produced. The proof-reading is not always satisfactory, particularly when it comes to the transliterations of Greek words: suzētai is misspelled in two different ways on the same page as synētai and synzētai, respectively; sunētai is twice misrepresented as synesti (p. 195); for hyposkhesis read hypokhesis, for anakhephalosis read anakhephalaisos, for syllogisthvasthai read syllogisthasthai (p. 225). There are similar problems with proper names: for example, for “Aglaeus” read “Agelaus” (p. 237). Particularly infelicitous misprints are “raising the walls” instead of “razing” (kataskáptōn, p. 159), and “said” instead of “saved” (p. 151, last sentence of second paragraph). There are also problems with the physical production of the book, such as the blank pages that appear in the middle of the text in the introductions to On Invention, book 2 (p. 32), and to On Method (p. 202); this is unseemly and avoidable.

The book closes with a brief “Glossary and Index of Technical Terms” (pp. 269-271), which is instructive but far too selective for the specialist’s interests. There is no index of proper names or of citations. For both of these, and for a more complete index verborum, the reader is referred to the indices in Rabe and Patillon (p. 269). For this and other reasons the specialist will find it imperative to use Kennedy’s book only in conjunction with Rabe’s edition and Patillon’s translation. The book contains much fine scholarship and many inspiring thoughts, but, regretfully, the essential part of it, the translation, is unsuitable as a tool for scholarly work. Only a specialist will be able to assess when Kennedy’s translation is right or wrong. Unfortunately, the book may have the effect of forestalling a more reliable English translation for a long time to come. The student or scholar with little or no knowledge of Greek or French is therefore well advised to continue regarding the Pseudo-Hermogenic treatises as unsafe territory.

7 See, for example, the reviews by R. F. Hock (published May 27, 2006) and J. Verheyden (published July 1, 2006) in Review of Biblical Literature (accessible on-line at http://www.bookreviews.org).
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