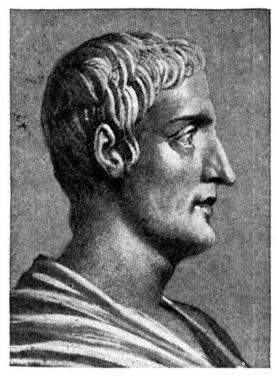
A Brief Timeline of Classical Rhetoric – From Corax to Quintilian

last edited by jousas@... 6 years ago | Page history

Corax/Tisias = Raven/Crow

A Brief Timeline of Classical Rhetoric (From Corax to Quintilian)

Created by Steven Stuglin; Georgia State University; 9/23/09



Quintilian

Time	Who	Place	Contribution	Vital Works
5th Cent. BC	Corax and Tisias[1] Orator	Greek (Sicily)	Founder of Greek Rhetoric (Corax) and his pupil (Tisias) devised an art of court defense for ordinary people to follow to defend land in the harrowing times under the tyrant Thrasybulus at Syracuse. (Prose, Narration, Argument, Refutation, Summary)	
510 – 440 BC	Parmenides[2] Philosopher, Priest	Greek (Elea)	Points of view on being and non-being (impossible and thus meaningless) may have paved for the way for the opposing skepticism and cynicism that undergirds later Sophistic rhetoric.	On Nature, The way of Truth, The Way of Opinion, Proem (parts of the same poem)[3]
490 – 420 BC	Protagoras,[4] Philosopher, Teacher	Greek	Protagoras is famously known for his ability (claim) to make the weaker case the stronger in any dispute. He conducted public debates and was the first to charge a fee for his services/training.	
487-376 BC	Gorgias[5] Philosopher	Greek (Sicily)	Gorgias was a Sophist[6] who invited random questions and gave refined impromptu replies. He used paradoxes to make the absurd seem logical. Gorgias was known for embracing nonexistence, either as a worldview or common topic for oration. If his arguments about existence are accepted, a rhetor is able to talk endlessly about anything – there are no limits when nothing exists and all is incomprehensible and incommunicable.	Enconmium, Defense, On Being or Nature
480 – 411 BC	Antiphon[7]	Greek (Athens)	The Tetrologies are a complete argument – with a first presentation and a rebuttal from each of two sides – all in the same speech. Antiphon marks a transitory period between practical oration and art or philosophical oration.	Four Tetrologies[8]
460 – 395 BC	Thucydides[9] Historian	Greek (Athens)	An advocate of practical rhetoric (what we might call instrumental rhetoric), Thucydides suggested a formulaic presentation of stock ideas and sections – to be ready for usage should the need	Pericles' Funeral Oration (in History of the Peloponnesian War)[10]

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			arise.	
4th Cent. BC	Alcidamas[11]	Greek (Elea)	Alcidamas was one of many Sophists to despise writing at the turning point from oral to written traditions, and gave a laundry list of support for extemporaneous speaking as opposed to writing, paired with complaints about the damage writing as a (bad) habit does to oratory skill.	On Sophists or Concerning Those Who Write Speeches, [12] Odysseus
436-338 BC	Isocrates Essayist, Pundit, Teacher	Greek (Attica)	Isocrates taught rhetoric as a skill, although rarely practiced himself (weak voice). He criticized the Sophists for wasting oratory (and teaching oratory) about "trivial" matters, which were only valid as topics for mental gymnastics – not as a profession.	Encomium of Helen, Antidosis, Against the Sophists[13]
469-399 BC	Socrates[14] Philosopher	Greek (Athens)	Socrates was concerned primarily with the health of the soul, and specifically with philosophy as a way of life (as opposed to oratory, which he called "flattery"). He is famous for the dialectical method that he utilizes in Plato's *Gorgias* – a process of reaching the truth/understanding by making fine distinctions about definitions in questioning.	
427-347 BC	Plato[15] Philosopher	Greek (Athens)	All of reality is divided between Truths/physical universe, in which the Truth cannot be known. Plato gives us much of what we have on Socrates in his written dialogues. His choices to give us what we have suggest that Plato favored dialectic, had a dim view of Sophistic bloviation,[16] and valued philosophy.	Phaedrus,[17] Gorgias,[18] Republic,[19] Protagoras, Five Dialogues (incl. Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Meno, Phaedo) [20]
400 BC	Anonymous Author		Although we are not sure who wrote it, [21] the Dissoi Logoi importantly introduced contrasting arguments in a single oration as a method of demonstrating skill – it also is notable for its extreme relativism: good and bad (seemly/shameful; just/unjust) are relative to context, point of view, time, place, etc).	Dissoi Logoi
400-320 BC	Aristotle[22] Philosopher, Teacher	Greek (Athens)	Analyzed what could be known by the senses (rather than Truth) and compiled long treatises on any topic he could think of – which was quite a few. In terms of rhetoric, Aristotle importantly identified (only) three *pisteis*: *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*.[23] He also distinguished between (only) three forms of rhetoric: judicial, epideictic, and deliberative;[24] and described in detail the *topos* available for each; as well as in terms of both artistic and inartistic modes.[25]	Rhetoric,[26] Politics, Poetics, Nicomachean Ethics
106-43 BC	Marcus Tullius Cicero[27] Philosopher	Roman (Rome)	Distills Aristotle and others into five canons of rhetoric (inventio, dispositio, elocutio, memoria, actio) and three kinds of speech (epideictic, deliberative, judicial) – formulating a much abridged version of Aristotle, Sophistic rhetoric & Hermagoras of Temnos (who had solidified stasis theory).[28]	De Oratore, Inventione, Rhetorica ad Herenium, On Republic, On the Laws, and various political speeches[29]
35-100 AD	Marcus Fabius Quintilian[30] Philosopher	Roman (Rome) from	Quintilian provides us with the first codified "textbook" on the theory and practice of rhetoric – divided into	Institutio Oratoria (12 volumes)[31]

		Hispania	theoretical, educational, and practical constructs.	

Others who may be added later: Xenophanes, Pythagoras, Zeno, Empedocles, Hericlitus,[32] Prodicus, Hippias

Notes

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[1] For the story of Corax and Tisias' famous court hearing, see: http://nightfly.googlepages.com/corax

[2] Parmenides at the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/parmenides/

[3] The remaining fragments of Parmenides' poem: http://www.gmu.edu/courses/phil/ancient/poem4.htm

[4] Protagoras at the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: http://www.iep.utm.edu/protagor/

[5] Gorgias at the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: http://www.iep.utm.edu/gorgias/

[6] Sophists and Sophistry have gotten a generally negative association over time. Contemporary scholars are examining this and some, like Jarratt, are finding new insight into the benefits of Sophist teachings and the art of Sophistic rhetoric. For a discussion of this, see: Susan C. Jarratt, Rereading the Sophists: Classical Rhetoric Refigured (Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1991).

[7] Antiphon at the Encyclopedia Britannica: http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/28477/Antiphon

[8] *First Tetralogy* by Antiphon in Greek and English: http://classics.mit.edu/Antiphon/antiph.2.html

[9] Thucydides at the Encyclopedia Britannica: http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/594236/Thucydides

[10] *The History of the Peloponnesian War* by Thucydides: http://classics.mit.edu/Thucydides/pelopwar.html

[11] Alcidamas at the Greek Text Online Library: http://www.greektexts.com/library/Alcidamas/index.html

[12] *On the Sophists* by Alcidamas: http://www.greektexts.com/library/Alcidamas/On_the_Sophists/eng/index.html

[13] For Isocrates' listed works and two dozen others see: http://classics.mit.edu/Browse/browse-Isocrates.html

[14] Socrates at the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy: http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/socrates/

[15] Plato at the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: http://www.iep.utm.edu/plato/

[16] Plato took a very dim view of the Sophists but later academics have acknowledged that Plato's rhetoric (and all rhetoric) is inescapably infused with Sophistic traditions – it is what it is because of the Sophists. For a description of this and an ethical/political stance on its impact, see: Richard Lee Enos, Greek Rhetoric before Aristotle (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland, 1993).

[17] Plato, Phaedrus, trans. Alexander Nehamas and Paul Woodruff (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1995).

[18] Plato, Gorgias, trans. Donald J. Zeyl (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1987).

[19] Plato, Republic, trans. G.M.A. Grube (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1992).

[20] Plato, Five Dialogues, trans. G.M.A. Grube, 2 ed. (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2002).

[21] Some attribute *Dissoi Logoi* to Sextus Empiricus.

[22] Aristotle at the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: http://www.iep.utm.edu/aristotl/

[23] Aristotle, On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse, trans. George A. Kennedy (London: Oxford University Press, 1991) 309.

[24] Aristotle, On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse 309.

[25] Aristotle, On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse 310.

[26] Aristotle, On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse.

[27] Cicero at the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: http://www.iep.utm.edu/cicero/

[28] Aristotle, On Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse 307.

[29] Speeches against Verres, Catiline, Marcellus can be found in: Cicero, Political Speeches, trans. D.H. Berry (London: Oxford University Press, 2006).

[30] Quintilian at the NNDB: http://www.nndb.com/people/898/000087637/

[31] For full text online of all 12 volumes, see: http://honeyl.public.iastate.edu/quintilian/index.html

[32] Hericlitus at the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy: http://www.iep.utm.edu/heraclit/

Comments (8)

George Pullman said
at 3:47 pm on Sep 23, 2009

This is really coming along.

Nicole Barnes said
at 11:34 pm on Sep 27, 2009

This is a useful timeline (especially come Comps time, I would assume). My question would be, what were the criteria for inclusion in the timeline? I would like to see a more in depth explication of what you see as each entry's contribution to the study of Classical Rhetoric today.

jousas@... said
at 11:05 am on Sep 28, 2009

That would be nice Nicole – oh if only there was time. :) In truth, those included are included because for me – they deserve inclusion. In theory, with a public wiki, others would add others and we would get a timeline with 200 classical rhetoricians on it.

It would be interesting to have an argument/support section for each listing – as to why each was included, but that might be better served as a footnote to each, it seems like it might clutter up the timeline.

I hope that this timeline helps others (who struggle like myself) with putting names in time periods and in relation to each other. Without the benefit of a timeline I tend to forget that so and so wrote AFTER so and so and BEFORE so and so – which means whatever meaning I am getting out the text may be inaccurate.

Nicole Barnes said
at 4:18 pm on Sep 28, 2009

Yes, they have obviously been included here because you believe they deserve inclusion– it is your list! I would even just look for even a brief reasoning that applied to all entries, apart from they're all Classical Rhetoric. I didn't know if this intended to be a time line for this class, for classical rhetoric in general, etc.

Laurissa Wolfram said
at 11:47 pm on Sep 28, 2009

Wow, this is really great. It's simple, but I think that is part of what makes it so great. It's really easy to read and understand, and can be a wonderful referencing tool to print out and tuck into your book. I'm always getting confused as to who came first and who was influenced by whom. Awesome job.

Stephanie Abram said
at 11:29 am on Sep 29, 2009

You did an excellent job on this timeline. I did a similar one in my 20th Century Comp. Theory class, but your timeline is much better.

Robert Manfredi said
at 11:20 am on Nov 17, 2011

Timelines are underrated. If I had my way, all survey classes that are organized temporally would have a timeline. Every topic should be located in its place and time, thus I approve of this wiki timeline. It seems to me that, in the beginning, both philosophy and rhetoric were one. Diogenes Laertius calls the wise ones philosophers AND sophists, thus I would add the line of philosophers into this list and create another box, "Philosopher" or "Rhetor" or "Both."

bwang8@student.gsu.edu said
at 8:07 pm on Nov 17, 2011

I agree with Robert. In China, it seems philosophy and rhetoric never separate. Is philosophy a kind of rhetoric in persuading people's minds or rather souls?

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