

## Philostratus on Favorinus and Polemon

The quarrel that arose between Polemo and Favorinus began in Ionia, where the Ephesians favoured Favorinus, while Smyrna admired Polemo and it became more bitter in Rome; for there consuls and sons of consuls by applauding either one or the other started between them a rivalry (philotimia) such as kindles the keenest envy and malice (“envy and malice” = phthonos) even in the hearts of wise men. However they may be forgiven for that rivalry, since human nature holds that the love of glory (philotimia) never grows old; but they are to be blamed for the speeches that they composed assailing one another; for personal abuse is brutal, and even if it be true, that does not acquit of disgrace even the man who speaks about such things. And so when people called Favorinus a sophist, the mere fact that he had quarrelled with a sophist was evidence enough; for that spirit of rivalry of which I spoke is always directed against one’s competitors in the same craft. (*Philostratus Lives* p. 25–27)

## Philostratus on Nicetes

(1) We will pass over Ariobarzanes of Cilicia, Xenophron of Sicily, and Peithagoras of Cyrene, who showed no skill either in invention or in the expression of their ideas, though in the scarcity of first-rate sophists they were sought after by the Greeks of their day, as men seek after pulse when they are short of corn; and we will proceed to NICETES (nigh-KEE-tees) of Smyrna. (2) For this Nicetes found the science of oratory reduced to great straits, and he bestowed on it approaches far more splendid even than those which he himself built for Smyrna, when he connected the city with the gate that looks to Ephesus, and by this great structure raised his deeds to the same high level as his words. (3) He was a man who, when he dealt with legal matters, seemed to be a better lawyer than anything else, and again when he dealt with sophistic themes he seemed to do better as a sophist, because of the peculiar skill and the keen spirit of competition with which he adapted himself to both styles. (4) For he adorned the legal style with sophistic amplification (*peribolē*), while he reinforced the sophistic style with the sting of legal argument. His type of eloquence forsook the antique political convention and is almost bacchic and like a dithyramb, and he produces phrases that are peculiar and surprise by their, daring, like “the thyrsi of Dionysus drip with honey,” and “swarms of milk.” (*Lives of the Sophists*, pp. 63–65)

## Rhetorical Analysis

*Elaboration (exergasia) is language that adds what is lacking in thought and expression. What is “lacking” can be supplied by making clear what is obscure; by filling gaps in the language or content; by saying some things more strongly, or more believably, or more vividly, or more truly, or more wordily — each word repeating the same thing —, or more legally, or more beautifully, or more appropriately, or more opportunely, or making the subject pleasanter, or using a better arrangement or a style more ornate.* (Theon p. 72, Kennedy)

1. Read out loud. Highlight anything that has a rhetorical sound to it.
2. Reduce this to a *psilos logos*, a *really* bare-bones narrative, as brief as possible. *Just* the main point or points, no rhetoric.
  - ☞ What is it that you've cut out? It's (mostly) rhetorical elaboration, which our rhetoricians call *exergasia*, *peribolē*, or *auxēsis*.
3. Go back and try to note all instances rhetorical elaboration. Ask: How does Philostratus adorn *his* discourse with sophistic elaboration (*peribolē*)? Do you, in other words, find:
  - a. Comparisons? (Analogies, metaphors, similes, other imagery)
  - b. Contrasts, aka, antitheses? (Good versus bad, strong versus weak, etc.)
    - ☞ That can be at the level of a single word, a phrase, an idea. It can be explicit or implied.
  - c. Other seemingly resonant or striking juxtapositions?
  - d. Rhetorically striking or freighted language? (For instance, the word "sting" above, in Greek *kentron*, a "goad," what you poke an ox with to get it to move.)
  - e. How does the above seek to affect how you think or feel about the matter? How does it *color* it? (Color, *chrōma*)

## Contradiction

*Contradiction* (*antirrhēsis*) is discourse that attacks the credibility of another discourse. Try to show that the other discourse is obscure, impossible, incredible, deceitful, or inadequate in thought or expression; or, conversely, redundant or lacking vigor, or confused; or that the discourse is contradictory, or departs from what is legal, or is unseemly or inexpedient or inopportune; or that the speaker spoke as much against as for himself — what some call turning his argument against himself —, or that the rules of good arrangement are violated, or that the speech was ineffectively delivered. (Theon p. 72, Kennedy)

1. Ask: What in the Philostratus passage lends itself to some kind of plausible contradiction?
  - ☞ Not everything will, for instance, simple statements of facts (we have no counter-facts). Is there, then, a way to turn the writer's ideas or words on themselves? Does Philostratus offer an opening to cast doubt on his estimation of Nicetes' rhetoric?
2. Come up with language contradicting those points, preferably, in a "pointed" (clever or witty, but don't overdo it) way.