

Introduction

Why This Collection?

The historical tradition of classical rhetoric has been the focus of intense study in a number of academic disciplines, including the field of rhetoric and composition. Broadly, rhetorical teaching in the western world has canonized Aristotelian/Platonic rhetoric as Rhetoric, with its sanctioned principles, goals, and conventions. But recent scholarship increasingly recognizes the need to extend the historical understanding of rhetoric in a variety of ways. A number of scholars give attention to the value of the broader Sophistic rhetorical tradition as opposed to the Aristotelian (Jarratt, Neel, Poulakos, Vitanza), while others focus on the Isocratean tradition (Welch, Whitburn). Increasing numbers of scholars argue for the need to search for rhetorical traditions that don't appear in the standard texts. For instance, Patricia Bizzell and Rich Enos argue that our research must "include alternative modes used by women" (Bizzell 16; Enos "Archaeology," 65), and feminists such as Lisa Ede, Cheryl Glenn, Susan Jarratt, Andrea Lunsford, Jackie Jones Royster, Jan Swearingen, and Molly Wertheimer advocate a search for new ways to uncover the rhetorics of women, since such rhetorics are not represented in the standard rhetorical evidence and thus the available history. Such issues were raised by a panel at the 1997 Conference on College Composition and Communication on the Politics of Historiography, entitled Octalog II, which followed by approximately ten years a prior such panel—Octalog I. Responding to the second Octalog panel in 1997, printed in *Rhetoric Review*, Thomas Miller pointed out that in the ten years since the first panel's discussion of historiography of rhetoric, the convention program had far fewer presentations on classical rhetoric. Miller presented an interpretation of this phenomenon: "we have become more broadly engaged with the rhetorical practices of groups who have been excluded by the dominant intellectual tradition" (Octalog II, 42). Miller clearly favored such attention and even argued four years previously in *Learning from the Histories of Rhetoric*, that, "the rhetorical tradition is a fiction that has just about outlasted its usefulness" (26). Roxanne

Mountford expressed a similar need for rhetorical study to expand its focus: “We must look for rhetoric where it has not been found—in many cultural locations” (Octalog II, 33). While Miller points attention to the need to examine rhetorical traditions of women and people of color, Mountford includes other types of cultural locations, such as other academic fields and disciplines.

We endorse Miller’s observation that the fields of rhetoric and composition have increasingly become interested in alternate rhetorics, different from those in the Aristotelian tradition. In the later twentieth century, the dominance of an Aristotelian and Athenian-based approach to rhetoric has come into question. Feminists have particularly objected to the agonistic focus of Aristotelian rhetoric, as have those interested in creating space for a range of alternate ways of being. For example, the Winter 1992 issue of *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* was devoted to feminist perspectives on the history of rhetoric, as was the Winter 2002 issue of *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*. A collection published in 2001 by Laura Grey Rosendale and Sibylle Gruber entitled *Alternative Rhetorics* discusses rhetorics often overlooked or marginalized in contemporary western culture and raises questions about rhetorics of race, ethnicity, gender, and class. If classical Athenian rhetorical principles continue to be reified as *the* rhetorical principles, then those whose grounding involves differing approaches remain seriously disadvantaged.

Despite the increased interest in alternate rhetorics, little attention to date has been given to one type of needed addition to the history of rhetoric: examination of nonwestern rhetorics and particularly of ancient nonwestern rhetorics prior to and contemporary with the development of classical rhetoric. In an essay published in 2002, Susan Jarratt points out that studies of “ancient . . . non-Western rhetorics—including Egyptian, Chinese, and Japanese practices—broaden the field” (75–76). George Kennedy’s 1998 *Comparative Rhetoric* pioneers in this arena and is often used in the many courses being created at undergraduate and graduate levels on comparative, alternative, or multicultural rhetorics. But there is need for much more work, particularly for studies that approach the analysis of ancient cultural rhetorics from perspectives that do not seem to reify classical rhetoric as the culmination in the development of ancient rhetorical systems. The current collection is intended to begin to fill such a gap in the study of early rhetorical history and specifically to extend the examination of ancient rhetoric outside of the dominant western tradition.

Most histories of ancient rhetoric, with the prominent exception of Kennedy’s, begin with the discussion of Greek classical rhetoric as Ancient Rhetoric. Of course there’s some sense to such a practice, since the term *rhetorike* originated with the Greeks.¹ But this practice also has consequences. For one thing, it tends to normalize as rhetoric the rhetorical system of one particular western culture. Also, this practice might suggest that Aris-

tole's system represents the others preceding it, and that other early cultures followed the same approaches that Aristotle described, analyzed, and began to theorize. Alternately, this practice might suggest that other early cultures developed only primitive approaches to communication, not worthy of study, lacking interest or importance. These early cultures existed so long ago, and their rhetorics have generally disappeared by now, while classical rhetoric has prevailed in the western world for 2,500 years. On the other hand, some of these early cultures themselves thrived for 2,500 years or longer prior to the Greeks. It's difficult to believe that these cultures could have sustained their longevity and power without well-honed understandings of how to communicate for significant social functions and of how to convince and persuade, or without conceptions and practices of language use that supported the purposes and activities of these cultures. If we begin the discussion of rhetorical history with the Greeks, we lose much of our ability to see the early rhetorics, and especially to *see* the early history of rhetoric as culturally situated and embedded.

This collection, then, attempts to recover understanding of the language practices of early cultures—focusing on Mesopotamia, Egypt, China, and ancient Israel. Even in Greece itself, other rhetorics thrived, and one of these—the rhetoric of Rhodes—is here examined. Historical accuracy demands attention to the gaps in early rhetorical history, but our aim extends beyond illuminating the gaps and shadings within the current understanding of the history of rhetoric. We are firmly convinced that history matters to contemporary life. We are committed to developing a better understanding of how different rhetorical approaches functioned and were situated within very different cultures, because we believe that such knowledge can help illuminate how a range of rhetorics can and do function within our culture. And we believe that better understanding of how rhetorical historiography has led to marginalization of major ancient rhetorics other than Athenian Greek rhetoric can help illuminate similar marginalizing effects in other modern and contemporary scholarship.

Scholarly work on the language use in early cultures is carried out in a variety of fields. This volume presents research by prominent scholars in fields as diverse as Assyriology, biblical studies, Egyptology, and rhetorical studies. Thus, we bring together work by authors of varied scholarly backgrounds, work not readily available to nonspecialists in those areas. Four of the authors represent a range of such areas of specialty (Religious Studies, Egyptology, and Assyriology), while nine authors are specialists in fields of rhetoric and composition. While the editors have shaped the collection to respond to issues of current importance in the field of rhetoric and composition, this collection clearly speaks to the interests of a much broader audience, including scholars in anthropology, cultural history, ancient history, ancient lit-

erature, women's studies, religion, biblical studies, and the humanities more generally. Each of the authors applies knowledge and analytical systems that can enrich and challenge work in related fields. The cross-disciplinarity affords the opportunity to share understandings developed in different fields about the various rhetorical systems as they developed in and influenced particular ancient cultures; in addition, the cross-disciplinarity of the collection offers insight into how the different fields address the methodological issues involved in studying cultural rhetorics in this early period, with the concomitant limitations on available artifacts and texts, as well as on contextual information that can address understanding of expedience and particular rhetorical goals involved in specific texts.

The majority of the essays view rhetorics as situated in particular cultural settings and look to ways that particular genres, conventions, and practices functioned within their particular cultures. Significantly, one essay, by James Watts, challenges the suggestion of a cultural situatedness for rhetorical conventions, identifying and examining a set of conventions that appear similarly in very different cultures. Jan Swearingen places her project as part of a scholarly movement that is working to "bring together the traditions of the Near East, Greece, Israel, and Egypt." She suggests that similar roles existed for women across these different cultures in the early period—as singers of songs. However, her essay goes on to point to the ways that particular elements in the developing Athenian culture led to changes in these roles allotted to women, who came to fall outside of the new canonical rhetoric focused on prose.

It is not our intention to supplant or denigrate the canonical rhetorical texts, such as those in the classical tradition, nor even the rich narrative of rhetorical history. Rather we hope to extend historical understanding by spotlighting other traditions in other cultures—other ways of being, seeing, and making knowledge. Between 5000 and 1200 B.C.E., six areas of the world produced new forms of culture broadly defined as civilizations, that is, societies with a clear hierarchical state organization (Adams, 4). These areas include the Middle East, Egypt, the Indus Valley, China, Mesoamerica, and the two Andean civilizations. Of the last two listed, civilization appears to have developed almost simultaneously, but only one, the Mesoamerican-Mayan culture, developed a script, which appeared in the 3rd century A.D. In this book, we deal with only three of the six civilizations: the Middle East, Egypt, and China. Our selectivity in no way reflects an opinion or judgment of the contributions of these six civilizations, but simply results from the exigencies of space and the dominant interests of current rhetorical scholarship. We hope with this volume to encourage broader attention to early cultural rhetorics, including explorations of ancient rhetorics from the Indus Valley, Mesoamerica, and the Andean civilizations. While we are looking to the rhetorics of ancient

cultures in their own right, we recognize the possibility that some of these rhetorics might well have influenced Greek rhetoric in ways that remain subtly obscure. The influence of these cultures has only begun to be recognized in our euro-centered discipline of rhetoric and in the humanities as well. However, investigation of such influence is beyond the project of this book.

Methodological Issues in Studying Ancient Rhetorics

The recovery and analysis of ancient rhetorics is by its nature a historical enterprise, and thus work on ancient rhetorics lies at the intersection of contemporary debates about rhetoric, history, and historiography. In large part, these debates have surrounded feminist work in recovering women's rhetorics (Gale, Glenn, Biesecker, Campbell). Some of the contested issues have arisen in situations where scholars find themselves without texts, or with small numbers of texts, as is common if one wishes to study groups such as ancient women, whose rhetoric is not preserved in the artifacts. How to recover such rhetorics in a rigorous scholarly way is an issue that a number of the essays in this volume address in practice. The authors in this collection instantiate a variety of approaches to such a situation, as all seek to enhance knowledge of rhetorics that are not well known and that differ substantially from western classical rhetoric.

Undoubtedly, work in ancient rhetorics, and especially in alternative ancient rhetorics, crosses disciplinary boundaries. For fields that study the rhetorics of the ancient Near East, for instance, rhetorical scholarship depends on research in fields such as Assyriology, Mesopotamian studies, Egyptology, biblical studies, and Near Eastern studies in general. As valuable as the research in these fields is to the rhetorical study of the respective fields, the crossing of disciplinary boundaries often forces reexamination of assumptions and practices that underlie the scholarship in the fields consulted, and reflexively in one's own field as well.

The work of Jan Assmann, a prominent Egyptian scholar, whose work is itself considered interdisciplinary, offers a useful site for framing a discussion of some of these issues. In a 1996 study of ancient Egyptian history, translated in 2002, Assmann describes the major three approaches to historical study of ancient cultures. Acknowledging that history is a cultural form, a product of culture (p. x) that changes in different cultural settings, Assmann categorizes the three alternative approaches as follows: traces, messages, and memories (6). He associates the category of traces with the archaeological search for artifacts that serve as remnants of the culture. The second approach, which he terms messages, involves epigraphic and iconographic studies of inscriptions, images, and a variety of types of other texts;

this approach aims to determine the ways that the culture represented events in such messages, as well as the ways these representations might differ from the testimony of the archaeological traces (10). The third category, memories, involves looking at the culture's myths and traditions to ascertain the ways the culture represented its history in its collective memory—the way the culture passed on the representations of historical events over time. Assmann presents the first category—archaeological in nature—as the most scientific, with the greatest certitude and the least degree of construction; indeed he terms these traces, which bring facts to light, “nonconstructed.” Those in rhetoric and composition might well dispute Assmann's positivist depiction of the virtual lack of construction involved in the organization and presentation of archaeological artifacts, yet Dimitri and Christine Favard Meeks point out that such a view of the facticity of the artifacts, and of historical discussion of such artifacts, prevails in Egyptian studies (and we would add, in Near Eastern studies as well until recently). The Meeks point out, for instance, that ancient Egypt left large numbers of written records and texts that have not been inventoried or published, and certainly not translated (3–5). The same is true for Mesopotamia. Thus the values within the responsible fields have operated to filter “the basic facts,” by choosing what are the most important texts to develop editions of, and in developing methods for doing so. In both cultures, the systems by which the elite perpetuated themselves in scribal schools that were virtually restricted to male students yielded a set of artifacts that cannot give us a representative picture of rhetoric as deployed across the culture, since some groups are not represented. Assmann suggests that historical study involves dialogue among the three approaches, with findings from investigation of texts and from study of memories being held up against the facts—the traces—from archaeology. Traditional historiography demands such backing through documentation or facts. Yet in areas where the artifacts are not available to scholars, for a variety of reasons, alternate approaches must be utilized. Such is often the case in rhetorical study of ancient cultures.

The contributors to this volume are engaged in a specific type of historical study, one heavily oriented toward Assmann's second category: texts. Our project is to develop an understanding of the rhetorical conventions operative in each of the cultures studied, and the ways these might have changed over time with changes in cultural conditions. For some of the fields involved, such as rhetoric and composition, the project likely extends beyond describing the conventions involved to developing a sense of the underlying rhetorical theories. These scholars are interested in understanding why particular rhetorics developed in particular cultural settings—why certain genres and conventions arose, what enabled their growth, and what they themselves enabled in their

cultural settings. Scholars do not have artifacts in which the ancient cultures studied in this volume presented systematic theoretical analyses of their own rhetorical systems. On the other hand, we do have maxims or other wisdom texts that offer advice that is rhetorical in nature, addressing how to speak in specific situations, when to speak, when to be silent, etc. Some cultures, such as the Mesopotamian, provide examples of debates, diatribes, disputations, and monologues. These are often practical and situational in nature and perhaps can be seen as forming the equivalent of Assmann's third category—memories—for they present the ways that the culture viewed its rhetorical understandings through its collective memory. In ancient Egypt, for example, such wisdom or instruction texts were often fictionalized, presented as coming from a father to a son, and often as arising from a very ancient and famous figure. Many were written in Middle Egyptian, and their very language was no longer in use by the New or Late Kingdom, when they continued to be recited and copied, memorized and revered. These advice texts became memories, traditions that represented the revered way of the golden age of the culture—an age the culture desired to resurrect. But these texts do not necessarily, then, reflect the rhetorics in actual use in the culture at the time a manuscript was copied.

Clearly, then, in addition to the historical and historiographical complications, doing such work in recovering histories and theories of ancient rhetorics inevitably raises a range of methodological issues that are rhetorical in nature. To understand the rhetorical systems of a culture distant in time and space from ours, scholars must develop an understanding of the culture and its textual practices. To acquire such rhetorical understanding, one must have texts or artifacts to study along with a sense of the purposes of the texts or objects, their audiences, and contexts. Yet for many ancient cultures, the availability of textual or other artifacts is somewhat random, and often problematic. There are limits on what we can claim from the texts or objects, if we don't know how representative they are or precisely what were their exigencies or their range of goals. In undertaking such scholarship, the rhetorical scholar is often in the odd position of studying ancient rhetorics in situations that seem arhetorical, without the possibility of close knowledge of the contexts and uses of particular texts. And some of the practices of translators in dealing with copies of texts created in specific periods compound the problem by making it very difficult for scholars to actually see the precise text as fashioned for its audience in that period. That is, much of the work in the fields on which such scholarship depends has been based on sets of values and practices that can skew the objects under analysis, or skew our perspectives. The Egyptian translations into English provide a concrete, instructive example of some of the types of issues that arise.

The Example of Egyptology

The texts of ancient Egypt only began to be translated approximately 150 years ago, and for about half a century, the main attention was devoted to determining the vocabulary and grammar before substantial progress could be made in rendering full complex texts into modern languages. To carry out such translations, the fledgling field of Egyptology adopted paradigms and methods from classical studies—a much more developed field at the time. But those practices and values directed the practices of translation in ways that did not provide a good fit with the artifacts of the Egyptian culture. And the dependence on a classical studies framework encouraged an emphasis on those aspects of the Egyptian artifacts that most closely resembled the western values, at times misrepresenting Egyptian practices. Egyptian religion, for instance, was presented as monotheistic, in close alignment with western religions (Meeks, 2).

In the process of translation into English under these conditions, Egyptian texts faced some modification and skewing. While scholars found that different papyri or tablets often contained different versions of the same text, as had been the case with Greek and Roman texts as well, they adopted the classical valuation of the original, uncorrupted text, seeing variations as corruptions. However, there were too few manuscripts of any one Egyptian text to apply the main methodologies from classical studies, such as the stemmatic method, for determining the original version. In one resulting approach to translation, if the oldest manuscript is the fullest, it is translated, presented, and referred to as *the* text. In another approach, scholars create a composite text for translation, picking favored parts from the different versions and presenting them in translation as *the* text (Foster, xix). And finally, if versions of a text exist that do not overlap, with no parts in common, scholars combine these and translate them, presenting the combination as *the* text (Lichtheim, “Merikare”).

In the first approach, we are presented with a translation of a version of the text that did in fact exist, though it is only one version. In the other two approaches, we are given a translation of a text that might never actually have existed in the form we are given. As a result of such translation practices, we lack the ability to study the scribal practices involved in copying and modifying texts, since modification was considered as corruption in the antecedent discipline of classical studies. The Egyptian scribal practices clearly allowed room for a significant amount of variation—for bringing a text up to date, and for making it fit current circumstances. Copying a text did not mean rendering it word for word, line by line. Egyptian scholars had for long attempted to explain away the differences as due to mis-hearing from oral dictation, errors of student copyists, or to scribal misreading in copying. However, careful

study of the changes has found such explanations inadequate to account for the extent of the changes (Burkard, Williams).

For instance, for the popular wisdom text known as *The Instructions of Ptah Hotep*, the authoritative French edition presents the three major manuscripts in hieroglyphic and French versions. These manuscripts span the middle to late kingdoms in Egyptian history. The editor, Zaba, finds a total of 647 different lines, of which 333 occur in the oldest and longest version. A close study of Zaba's edition reveals that close to one-half of the 647 lines appear in common in the three versions, while one-fourth appear in only one or the other version. The other fourth appear in two, but not three of the versions. Thus fully one-fourth of the 647 lines of text are unique, and notably, these are not regularly to be found in the longest version. The variation is substantial, and it is clear that the practice of introducing changes must have been deliberate and part of the normal process in making new copies. Yet the values of modern textual practices lead to English translations that mask the ancient Egyptian practices and values.

Ironically, a sizable body of scholarship has arisen in classical studies in the last fifteen to twenty years that examines and reveals the extensive practice of variation in the early Greek texts (Robb, Thomas, Worthington). However, the point remains valid that the study of alternate ancient rhetorics puts pressure on the assumptions and practices that we—and the scholarship we turn to—bring to such study.

Should We Call it Rhetoric?

One such pressure point arises in the use of the term rhetoric, since the term was developed by Plato and refined by Aristotle, and carries with it a body of definitions, practices, and values. To apply this term to cultures with very different values and practices raises both ethical and methodological issues. A good deal of discussion of this issue has taken place in response to the challenge to the tradition of classical rhetoric made by scholars who look to Sophistic rhetoric as an alternative (Poulakos, Neel, Jarratt). Edward Schiappa has argued that the term rhetoric implies a set of "specific theories and doctrines. . ." ("History and Neo-Sophistic Criticism," 312), and that rhetoric did not exist before the period of Plato. Poulakos, on the other hand, counters that the existence or absence of the term rhetoric does not necessarily correlate with the existence or absence of the concept ("Interpreting," 222-3). His backward glance extends to the Greek Sophists. In our view, Aristotle's definition focuses on persuasion, and the paradigmatic text in his rhetorical system is the argument. Yet in some of the cultures studied in this volume, we do not find overt argument in general within written texts; and the cultures' maxims also project a distaste for direct argument in general cultural life, though

argument is seen in specific, well-defined locations. Such is the case for ancient Egypt. If we use the term rhetoric and its associated analytical system to examine a set of texts from a culture whose approaches and values differ markedly from those of Aristotle, are we in fact violating the term, as Arabella Lyon suggests in this volume? Are we doing a disservice to Aristotle's body of work by extending his terminology in this way to refer to systematic approaches that differ so markedly from those of classical rhetoric? Aristotle's use encompasses a body of systematic analysis and categorizing of types of texts, common situations, and suitable approaches. Is it appropriate to apply the term to language use that is not systematized but embodied? In one sense, we pay tribute to the power of the terminology by applying it to these cultures. In another sense, though, we need to be careful that we not do an injustice to Aristotle's system through such application. And we must also be careful that we do not condemn Aristotle, as developer of classical rhetoric, and the Greeks in general, for not creating an analytical system entirely appropriate for cultures they did not mean to address. And we must be extremely cautious that we not allow the lens of rhetoric to blind us or to bias us in our examination of the ancient cultures and their texts.

To avoid this problem, a variety of alternate lenses or terms might be used in place of rhetoric, each with its own disciplinary framework. These terms include discourse systems, communication norms, or principles for language use, among others. In fact, a wide range of definitions of rhetoric encompass such terms.² The more recent definitions of rhetoric have usefully acknowledged the implications of rhetoric in relations of power, an aspect that is not captured in some of the other available terminological lenses, but that is crucial to the study of ancient texts.³ Power issues determine whose rhetorics are available in writing, whose rhetorics are available only as mediated by scribes, whose rhetorics are translated and made available for study, and whose rhetorics are considered as rhetoric. In the end, none of the alternate lenses and terms has the breadth and richness of the term rhetoric, which implies invention and approaches to developing text along with guidelines for organizing and delivering text. The classical rhetorical system has built within it an understanding that *ethos* and *pathos* are central factors in the success of a text (along with *logos*), and that *ethos* and *pathos* must be appropriately suited for the particular audience. It's not much of a stretch to look at rhetoric as contextualized culturally, with practices and values and norms differing in different cultural settings. Indeed, in the field of rhetoric and composition, the term alternative rhetorics is being used to describe rhetorical approaches in particular cultures that differ from the dominant paradigm. That use has been institutionalized. It ties such work to the community of scholars who are interested in histories of rhetoric and to rhetorical issues. Despite some of the problems, we situate ourselves in the field of rhetorical studies.

In doing rhetorical study of such ancient cultures very different from the Athenian culture and from our own, we are faced with two main possible avenues of approach. One approach involves application of classical rhetorical concepts to the ancient texts we study. George Kennedy's book on comparative rhetoric demonstrates such an approach, in which he points to those elements in the texts he examines that fit with the conceptual system of classical rhetoric. An alternative approach is exemplified by Claude Calame, in his studies of texts from ancient Greece. This approach is basically anthropological, involving as much of a scholarly immersion as is possible in the ancient culture being studied, and an effort to let the resulting understanding of the culture guide the analysis. Here the scholar attempts to let the culture itself provide the analytical framework and terms. Xing Lu, in her study of the rhetoric of ancient China, calls this approach a hermeneutic method. Of course, these are two extremes. We can never entirely leave our own cultural system and its analytical categories, and we can never fully experience the ancient cultures we study and their systems of thinking. But the two approaches do designate different starting points and two different ways of addressing their objects of study. Both approaches are evident in this volume.

Structure and Contents of This Collection

Mesopotamia

Archeologists acknowledge that among the oldest written texts are those that come from Uruk toward the end of the fourth millennium B.C.E.. Written symbols were impressed on clay tablets and then baked to preserve an enduring record. The invention of writing may have spread rapidly to Egypt. Yet each culture developed its own forms to phoneticize script from pictographs. In Mesopotamia by the very early third millennium, a growing class of scribes had already begun a long literary tradition. Throughout the third millennium, Sumerian, a language of unknown antecedents, was spoken. Although gradually replaced by Akkadian, Sumerian continued as the written language through the second millennium, and the Sumero-Akkadian system of cuneiform persisted for the next three thousand years. Thus a continuous cuneiform literary tradition existed throughout this area based upon an elite class of scribes who transmitted the traditional rhetorical practices of their culture in systematically arranged archives and scribal schools. This tradition has been much studied.

Most of the texts from ancient Mesopotamia were not discovered until the mid- to late nineteenth century. Thus the predominant focus in Mesopotamian textual study has involved compiling grammars, assembling

dictionaries, and issuing editions of texts for analysis. One effect of the extensive and continuous existence of the scribal schools in Mesopotamian culture is that numerous copies exist of works the culture considered important. Thus any textual edition must take into account numerous tablets, with all the discrepancies. The nature of cuneiform itself leads to differences in scholarly readings, since the multivalent quality of cuneiform characters inevitably puts editors in a position of having to make decisions as to which of the many possible readings for a cuneiform applies in a specific instance. As a result, much of the scholarly attention has involved settling on and fixing the text. Additionally, we note that decisions as to which texts constitute important knowledge for the discipline of Assyriology have inevitably influenced decisions as to which texts merit publication and translation. Many extant texts have thus received little or no attention. To date, the predominant type of rhetorical studies of Mesopotamian texts has involved rhetorical criticism and stylistic analysis. Since an article in this volume by William Hallo offers a careful summary of the focus and content of such rhetorical studies, we will not do so here.

The three essays in this section address different aspects of the rhetoric of this long textual tradition. The first essay comes from the field of Assyriology and is written by a recently retired distinguished scholar, while the next two are written by rhetoricians, one with a coauthor in religious studies. The first essay, William W. Hallo's "The Birth of Rhetoric," points to ways that rhetoric, and the humanities, can be traced to Sumerian precedents. Professor Hallo analyzes some of the problems inherent in a rhetorical approach to cuneiform literature through a survey of the available Sumerian and Akkadian literature and the nature of cuneiform evidence. Additionally, he surveys the use of rhetorical approaches to cuneiform literature by scholars in Assyriology and biblical literature. Hallo suggests some new directions that a rhetorical approach might take, such as examination of the diatribes (involving men or women who outdo each other in inventive invective) and disputations (formal debates). The essay then focuses on the Gilgamesh Epic, looking at the use of proems and perorations and other rhetorical devices in this epic and in other Sumerian and Akkadian literature.

The essay by Roberta Binkley focuses on issues that arise in doing a rhetorical study of an ancient figure such as Enheduanna, the ancient poet, priestess, and princess (ca. 2300 B.C.E.). Binkley looks at some of the methodological conflicts involved in working across disciplinary boundaries to study the rhetoric of a noncanonical, pre-Greek figure. She points to Eurocentric assumptions embedded within the discipline-centered methodologies of rhetoric and Assyriology, assumptions that influence the interpretation of written texts and also conceptions of the Other—the Other of an alien culture, gender, and spiritual tradition. Studying the ancient figure of Enheduanna foregrounds

often unconscious assumptions, simultaneously problematizing and enlarging the conceptions and definitions of who we are and how we situate ourselves in relation to our conception of the Other that is the object of our study.

In the final essay in this section, Paul Hoskisson and Grant Boswell offer a rhetorical examination of one genre of Mesopotamian rhetoric—the Assyrian annals. Since such records have received little attention from the perspective of rhetoric, Hoskisson and Boswell closely analyze one set of annals, those that end Sennacherib's third campaign. The final campaign of this text, against the Kingdom of Judah, occurred in 701 B.C.E., at the height of Assyrian power. This annal was the last to be carved in stone and to be displayed in the palace. In the third campaign, Sennacherib encountered the most resistance; this was the most difficult of his military campaigns. King Judah was not captured or killed, though his country was devastated. He did agree to pay tribute to Sennacherib. Thus rhetorically, the annal ends with the worst case, and even that constitutes a victory. Hoskisson and Boswell argue that the arrangement seems rhetorically strategic, as do other associated phenomena: the constant revision, the repetition of wording from popular literature, and the lack of an ending. They view the annals genre as performative, embodying the continuing process of a king fulfilling his duty, demonstrating that he deserves the kingship. They suggest that the annals present an argument for the king's legitimacy; an ending to the annal would represent an ending to the kingship.

Egyptian Rhetoric

The use of writing is generally understood to have arisen in ancient Egypt in 3000 B.C.E., though recent research supports a beginning date of 3300 or 3200 B.C.E., one or two hundred years prior to the development of writing in Mesopotamia. This new dating is based upon a recent archaeological discovery by Gunter Dreyer, Director of the German Institute of Archaeology in Cairo, but remains under debate by Egyptologists (*The Write Stuff*). In any case, the ancient Egyptian culture is termed the first in which writing became central to the life of the culture (Martin). Though writing was restricted to the elite, all levels of society encountered the demands of writing through tax accounts, letters, legal petitions and decrees, and funerary objects.

In rhetoric and composition venues, half a dozen studies have appeared to date that address ancient Egyptian rhetoric; all are article or chapter length (Fox, Harpine, Kennedy, Lesko, Lipson). The first to appear was a major contribution by biblical scholar Michael Fox, in the first volume of *Rhetorica* (1983). This study looked to the popular genre of text called instructions to locate the Egyptian conception of rhetoric, delineating and discussing five major canons of ancient Egyptian rhetoric: (a) the value of silence in commu-

nication, (b) the art of knowing when to speak, (c) the art of restraint and self-control, (d) the canon of fluency, and (e) the canon of truthfulness. An article by Egyptologist Barbara Lesko on ancient Egyptian women's rhetoric appeared in a collection entitled *Listening to Their Voices*, edited by Molly Wertheimer. Within Egyptology itself, much of the work on rhetoric has involved literary analysis of tropes and figures, though in recent years, two scholars have begun to address the rhetoric of women—Barbara Lesko, cited above, and Deborah Sweeney, an aspect of whose work we are fortunate to include here.

Two essays in this volume explore facets of ancient Egyptian rhetoric. Carol Lipson, in an essay entitled “Ancient Egyptian Rhetoric: It All Comes Down to *Maat*,” looks at the ways the culture's central concept of *Maat* undergirds the conventions of a variety of major genres, as well as forming the subject of some of the major genres. This essay argues that the texts and genres not only reflect and reinforce the culture's concept of *Maat*, but also address *Maat*. That is, Lipson proposes that *Maat* serves as superaddressee for the public texts of the culture, and for many of the private texts.

In an essay entitled “Law, Rhetoric, and Gender in Ramesside Egypt,” archaeologist Deborah Sweeney studies ancient Egyptians' everyday utterances—texts that present and describe legal practices and proceedings. Since changes occurred in language use over the three thousand years of ancient Egyptian culture, Sweeney looks at one particular period known as the Ramesside era, from approximately 1300 to 1070 B.C.E.. She observes the legal practice of the time through documents that record legal cases, found in official archives and in private collections. These texts offer summaries of the proceedings, not exact wording. Women rarely served on the court, but did participate as witnesses, the accused, or accusers. With no professional lawyers in this culture, individuals presented their own cases on the whole. The summary texts are not written by women, but they do (re)present the speech of women in legal arenas within the ancient Egyptian culture. This essay thus looks closely at the evidence during this period to determine the rights and roles of women in legal situations and particularly to determine their rhetorical approaches. For both sexes, Sweeney finds little forensic oratory. She finds the speech patterns of males and females do not differ much, though she points out that the meaning of this resemblance is not clear, and the similarity itself might be an artifact of scribal representation of female speech.

Chinese Rhetoric

The earliest extant writing in ancient China dates back to approximately 1500 B.C.E.. Chinese writing was not based on phonetic symbols, but on signs

representing words or concepts. The Shang dynasty developed the earliest known Chinese writing system, which was etched onto turtle shells or animal bones and used for ritualistic purposes. In approximately 500 B.C.E., the script was simplified and widely used in the Han dynasty for bureaucratic and state purposes.

Scholarship on ancient Chinese rhetoric has explicitly addressed crucial questions about doing rhetorical study of cultures very distant from Athenian Greek culture. Robert Oliver in 1971 pointed out that rhetoric did not exist as a separate area of study in ancient China, distinct from other areas such as politics (10), and George Kennedy's recent book similarly suggests that the French Jesuits spurred development of rhetoric as a field of study in China (144). Both Oliver and Kennedy examine ancient Chinese texts to form conclusions about the culture's theoretical principles of rhetoric as well as its textual conventions and practices. Both use terms from Greek rhetoric to describe these theories and practices, and both seem to approach the culture as uniform over large periods and in different locations. Xing Lu, in 1998, protests such a tendency to describe Chinese theories and practices in western terms, pointing out that the attempt to show equivalence masks the differences and tends to favor the western terms and approaches. She advocates a hermeneutic method, which allows the ancient Chinese texts to speak for themselves without imposing assumptions or terminological equations on them. Lu examines ancient Chinese writing, identifying key Chinese terms that together comprise a conceptual framework for Chinese rhetorical theory. She goes on to compare this theory to Greek rhetorical theory.

Scholars of ancient Chinese rhetoric meet with similar hurdles as do researchers of ancient Egyptian texts. Mark Ed Lewis points out that different parts of the Shang Shi texts, for instance, were compiled at different periods for different groups. Yet the Shang Shi tends to be handled as a fixed, authoritative text, not as a rhetorical text responsive to particular exigencies. Edward Said has also pointed to what he terms orientalist tendencies that consider Chinese practices and theories as fixed, unchanging over time and place, ignoring the complexity, diversity, and responsiveness to particular underlying conditions—political, historical, or circumstantial.⁴

The three essays in this volume on ancient Chinese rhetoric are written by scholars either fluent in Chinese or conversant with the language. The caution conveyed in a powerful article by Yameng Liu in *Rhetoric Review* about the distortions and errors that can result from dependence on translations makes this fact all the more valuable. In "The Use of Eloquence: The Confucian Perspective," George Q. Xu addresses the oft-repeated statement that Chinese rhetoric, as represented in the Confucian *Analects*, abhorred eloquence, advocating and preferring silence. Xu explains the Chinese terms and concepts—particularly *li* and *ren*—looking at the historical and political con-

ditions in Confucius' time and in the period of the followers (370–230 B.C.E.), in order to contextualize the disaffection with glib tongues as endangering kingdoms and good government. Xu puts forward a scale involving moral valuation of speech, consistent with the doctrines of Confucius and his two most powerful followers, Mencius and Xunzi. Silence is at the top of the scale, associated with *tian*, or heaven. Glib talk (*ning*) is at the bottom. Addressing the irony of Confucians, as masterful speakers and writers, using rhetoric to make their presentations persuasive—presentations that denounce eloquence—Xu looks to the ways that Confucius and his followers accomplish this move rhetorically and to the political goals and results. He also points to the ways that Confucian tenets against eloquence have subsequently been promoted by rulers of China to further their own ideologies and to stifle dissent. Xu concludes that the Confucian negative attitude toward eloquence has “deeply penetrated into the collective consciousness of the Chinese people,” and has become internalized while also being reinforced from above.

In her essay entitled “Confucian Silence and Remonstrance: A Basis for Deliberation?,” Arabella Lyon also looks to the Confucian preference for silence. She acknowledges the possible distortion involved in applying the term rhetoric, and in applying rhetorical concepts and terms to study ancient Chinese language practices and attitudes. Lyon points out that to do so risks “doing violence” both to Aristotle’s rhetoric and to the ancient Chinese traditions. She presents an argument for using the lens of the rhetorical concept of deliberation for examining the Confucian tradition, fully aware of the difficulty of looking for equivalent concepts; her argument for using this lens is based on current speculation that Confucian philosophy may prove supportive of the developing democracy in China and on democracy’s dependence on processes of deliberation.

Lyon’s analysis focuses attention on the Confucian valuation of silence and remonstrance, explaining each with close reference to the *Analects*. This value of silence, as she points out, goes far beyond the issue of speech, but is grounded in the need for maintaining strong relationships with others and with the world. In the *Analects*, action matters more than words, and respect for others is more desirable than persuading them to any point of view. Silence offers respect and space for growth, and promotes positive relationships. Remonstrance involves the act of demonstrating by one’s own behavior, by modeling actions. Remonstrance leaves others to recognize the value of the action and to decide how to proceed. As with silence, Lyon argues, the Confucian *Analects* presents remonstrance as preserving relationships and human connections.

Yameng Liu, in his provocative reappraisal of classical Chinese rhetoric, examines what the various ancient Chinese ideological communities had in

common, the underlying rhetorical conditions that enabled their productive critical engagement. In his chapter, “‘Nothing Can be Accomplished If the Speech Does Not Sound Agreeable’: Rhetoric and the Invention of Classical Chinese Discourse,” Liu argues persuasively for a way to restructure our view of classical Chinese rhetoric by taking a rhetorical approach rather than the traditional philosophical or linguistic approaches common to Sinology. Liu finds in the various ideological schools shared assumptions, values, criteria, techniques, and terms. He points out that a restrictive equation of rhetoric with “argumentation” or “naming” limits our understanding. Instead, looking at rhetoric as a “productive architectonic art,” and applying postmodern perspectives on the production of discourse, he demonstrates that the invention of classical Chinese discourse was dependent on the common assumptions of a highly developed rhetoric.

Biblical Rhetoric

Of all of the ancient rhetorics addressed in this volume, biblical rhetoric has received the most scholarly attention, largely due to the cultural influence of the Bible on the West. A large number of books and articles offer rhetorical criticism and rhetorical analysis of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament. The dominant approach in these studies resembles literary criticism—examining the use in the Bible of tropes and techniques and styles defined in classical rhetoric. Such a tradition was evident as early as the Renaissance, with the work of Judah Messer Leon in the fifteenth century. In a study entitled *Nophet Suphim*, Messer Leon applied Aristotelian and Ciceronian categories to the Hebrew Bible, showing that it exemplified “perfect speech.” In recent years, biblical scholarship has taken on other directions in rhetorical studies, engaging with political and cultural issues involved in the biblical text. David Metzger’s contribution to this collection exemplifies this new direction of research, examining the matrix of power relations among the groups involved in the biblical narrative, looking at the ways the text of the Bible offers persuasion for the dominance of one of these groups in particular. Such a reading of the rhetoricity of the Bible addresses the Bible as an ideological text, providing warrants for a particular position. This reading exemplifies the type of scholarship called for in a collectively constructed book from Yale University Press entitled *The Postmodern Bible*, published in 1997 (Burnett et al.).

In his study of the rhetoric of the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Hebrew Bible, David Metzger points out the difficulties of such study. We do not know who wrote the Pentateuch, or when it was written/redacted/compiled. We do not know the purposes or audiences. Entitled “Pentateuch

Rhetoric and the Voice of the Aaronides,” Metzger’s essay builds on the nineteenth-century documentary or Graf-Wellhausen hypothesis. This hypothesis sees the Pentateuch as composed of four different strands by different authors, representing different traditions. Metzger’s essay argues that the Pentateuch is not just a combination of different voices; instead, he argues that the editor rhetorically orchestrates the voices of a number of competing power groups: the priestly group who were descendants of Aaron, the descendants of the patriarchs, the Levite priests, the prophets, the descendants of the kings. Metzger demonstrates a way to conduct rhetorical examination despite the gaps of knowledge, by determining for specific sections which power group would speak that way, which would benefit by such an argument, and when would such a presentation have been beneficial. He shows that the Aaronidic priestly strand dominates in the Pentateuch and argues that the redactor would have had to be a descendant of Aaron, or associated with the interests of the descendants of Aaron. To illustrate this, Metzger analyzes a crucial section from the Book of Numbers, the fourth book of the Pentateuch, where the voice of Aaron is legitimized against the voices of the ancestral houses and the Levites.

Alternative Greek Rhetoric

In an essay entitled “The Art of Rhetoric at Rhodes: An Eastern Rival to the Athenian Representation of Classical Rhetoric,” Richard Leo Enos explains the political and cultural conditions on the Greek island of Rhodes that shaped the development of a system of rhetoric that rivaled the Athenian approach, remaining popular through the Roman Republic and into the Roman Empire. Enos points out that while Athenian rhetoric is normally thought of as representing the rhetorical approach throughout Greece, in fact references occur in ancient texts to other approaches, particularly to Rhodian rhetoric. Yet scholarship has not given much attention to this rhetorical system. The essay by Enos addresses this gap, looking at why this particular rhetorical system emerged when and where it did, why it endured, and describing its characteristics. Enos points out that such a study demands different methodologies than those employed by scholars trained in the study of Athenian rhetoric; study of Rhodian rhetoric requires investigation of primary sources, often nontraditional in nature. He finds the Rhodian system particularly flexible, suitable for interaction with a wide range of foreign cultures. The originator—Aeschines—left Athens to introduce the formal study of rhetoric on the island of Rhodes. His school of rhetoric stressed the skill of communication with those from diverse cultural backgrounds and languages, as required for the commercial interaction typical of an island strategically located to interact with other seafaring peoples. Rhodian rhetoric was especially suited for

declamation and was seen as a moderate alternative to the direct Attick style and the emotional Asiatic style.

Cross-Cultural Rhetorical Studies

Two essays study rhetorical usage across cultural boundaries, looking at similarities and possibilities of cultural diffusion. James Watts analyses rhetorical conventions over a range of cultures and periods in the ancient Near East. In an essay entitled “Story-List-Sanction: A Cross-Cultural Strategy of Ancient Persuasion,” Watts examines a particular combination of genres that he finds in examples from Mesopotamia in the third millennium B.C.E.; from ancient Egypt, Babylonia and Mesopotamia in the second millennium B.C.E.; and from Egypt, Mesopotamia, Syro-Palestine and Anatolia in the first millennium B.C.E., among others. At times, all three elements of the story-list-sanction pattern appear, while often only two of the three are used. Watts finds the pattern in texts as widely ranging as dedicatory inscriptions, law codes, treatises, and the Hebrew Bible. Most of the examples were written for public presentation and are royal in origin. Watts points out that each of the three parts in the structure serves a particular purpose meant to enhance the persuasive power: on the whole, the lists draw attention to the current time, the story draws attention to the past, and the sanction focuses on the future. While the development of Greek rhetoric denigrated the use of stories and sanctions for persuasive purposes in argument, Watts traces the continuing appearance in western culture from medieval times on.

Two approaches to rhetorical study inform Jan Swearingen’s analysis of women’s songs and lamentations in the ancient Near East. Her chapter, “Song to Speech: The Origins of Early Epitaphia in Ancient Near Eastern Women’s Lamentations,” combines *etic* and *emic* methods. The first involves application of conceptual tools from the field of rhetoric, while the second examines the Near Eastern and ancient Greek cultures through terms and concepts internal to these cultures. As Swearingen points out, such a view through the terms of another culture can help us see the blind spots of our own terminology and can help us to envision other possibilities. Through examination of biblical and Homeric texts, as well as Greek tragedies, Swearingen looks to the genres of song and speech originally practiced by women on occasions involving birth and death. This investigation reveals traces of what later became the epitaph genre in Greek rhetoric. The essay provides a possible explanation for the fact that the leadership role of women speakers in the early periods was lost with the development of Athenian rhetoric. Swearingen’s careful examination of the *topos* of Athenian citizenship in the Menexenos reveals a formula of metaphors that characterized Athenian citizens as “motherless children,” born not of women but

from the soil of the public space of the polis—a space for males. Such metaphors became integral to the developing Athenian rhetorical system, silencing women and their voices. As Swearingen concludes, the Greek enlightenment proved an endarkenment for women.

Suggestions for Teaching Ancient Rhetorics

The final section of the volume includes teaching units submitted by the authors of each individual chapter. This section will be particularly valuable for faculty who want to begin to teach any of the rhetorics and cultures discussed in this collection. The authors provide information about some of the basic references necessary for background on each culture and period discussed, as well as on the particular issues and types of texts addressed. Some authors, such as David Metzger and Rich Enos, make specific teaching suggestions. For example, Metzger takes the reader through an actual undergraduate course, and then a graduate course. He explains some of the approaches he took, such as ways of comparing texts such as Plato's *Phaedrus* and the Shir HaShirim (Song of Songs), both of which deal with love. Another comparison he describes involves pairing Deuteronomy with Books I and II of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*; here his example entails looking at the models for communal language use presented in each text. Enos gives a thorough discussion of the goals for a unit on the rhetoric of Rhodes, suggesting topics for discussion and offering a list of suggested readings.

As Jan Swearingen and Arabella Lyon note in their teaching guides, most of the primary texts from the ancient world are fragments or short pieces, or are written in small segments. Many are aphoristic in nature. Thus these texts invite close reading and lend themselves to examination in class discussion. Because the absence of women's voices and texts proves so pervasive throughout the ancient world, Swearingen suggests using historical novels to help undergraduates fill the gap left by the available corpus of male-authored and male-oriented texts.

Several authors invite faculty and students to read broadly, offering a wide range of suggestions for individual choice. For instance, William Hallo provides sources in the areas of biblical rhetoric, Sumerian literature and rhetoric, Akkadian rhetorical literature generally, the Gilgamesh epic, and on the use of colloquial language in the ancient world. Grant Boswell and Paul Hoskisson suggest readings on the Assyrian Empire and its placement within the ancient world; they also provide references relating to the major ancient texts from this culture and to study of the culture in general.

Thus the teaching unit chapter offers rich resources to help faculty introduce ancient rhetorics to their students. The authors suggest questions for class inquiry and offer ideas for juxtaposing texts and topics that can en-

courage fruitful discussion and thinking for both undergraduate and graduate levels.

Notes

1. John Poulakos points out that the term *rhetorike* in forms other than the nominative singular was in use before the period of Plato or Aristotle, from the seventh century B.C.E. See "Interpreting Sophistical Rhetoric: A Response to Schiappa." *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 23 (1990): 218–228.
2. For a range of definitions of rhetoric, see the website of Professor James Comas at the University of Missouri: http://www.missouri.edu/~engine/rhetoric/defining_main.html.
3. See definitions by Steven Mailloux ("rhetoric [is] the political effectivity of trope and argument in culture") [p. xii] and Jacques Derrida ("rhetoric, as such, depends on conditions that are not rhetorical. . . . The effects of rhetoric depend on certain situations: political situations, economical situations—the libidinal situation, also.") [Olson, pp. 15–16].
4. This discussion is deeply indebted to the work of Ph.D. student Jon Benda, a dissertator in the Composition and Cultural Rhetoric Graduate Program at Syracuse University.

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