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The Mock Rock *Topos*

Michele Kennerly

A prominent strain of argument and assessment in ancient texts places stones and words side-by-side for evaluation. I call this strain “the mock rock topos,” exploiting the ambiguity of mock (mimic/taunt) to capture a common ancient attitude toward verbal representations, written especially: that they share certain qualities with stone and stonework but outperform them, too. The mock rock topos consists of four main sub-topoi—masterpiece, mimēsis, movement, and memory—whereby graphic rhetors assert the superiority of their products. Detractors of writers and writing often use lithic language in their criticisms as well. The practice of pairing busts of representative authors with their book-rolls in ancient libraries complicated the representation competition between stone and scroll and enhanced the cultured and cultural experience of readers in those spaces.

Like the persona in Elton John’s “Your Song,” many ancient writers clearly felt their expressive talents lay with the manipulation of media other than stone. A representative example is Lucian, a perky member of the so-called Second Sophistic, who describes parental pressure to pick a pursuit and the subsequent dream that helped him settle on one. His family’s meager economic circumstances necessitated he pick a banausic *technē* that would bring in money quickly rather than a bombastic *technē* that might never pay dividends. Since Lucian’s maternal uncle was a sculptor, and Lucian himself enjoyed scraping the wax out of his writing tablets and fashioning figures with it, his family arranged for an apprenticeship in sculpture. He gets off to a rocky start when he hammers a chisel too hard and breaks a plaque. His uncle beats him. After running home to mother and sniveling that his brutish uncle foresees and envies his superior talent, Lucian falls into a vivid dream.

In it, two female figures physically and verbally yank Lucian in their respective directions. They are Sculpture (*Hermogluphikē technē*)—“worker-like, man-like, with dusty hair, calloused hands, and garment bunched up; she was all powdery, like my uncle when he was smoothing stone by filing it”—and Culture (*Paideia*),

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who “had a beautiful face, fit figure, and well-ordered attire” (“The Dream, or Lucian’s Career,” §6).¹ Asking him not to balk at her unkempt appearance, Sculpture compares her look to that of famous sculptors like Pheidias, Polyclitus, and Praxiteles, rough and dirtied from their work. She promises Lucian a life of hard, honest labor that will sculpt his muscles and his character and during which he will be praised “not for his words” but for his works (§7). In her rejoinder, Culture concedes that Lucian may well turn out to be a Pheidias whose art all will admire, but that no one would aspire to be like him: “whatever your real qualities, you will always rank as a common craftsman (*banausos*) who makes his living with his hands” (§9). Under her tutelage, however, he will encounter the deeds and words of hallowed men, cultivate many virtues, and aspire to greatness. So equipped, he will be able to aid his friends and his *polis* in times of need, and “at his speaking the many will listen open-mouthed, marveling at and counting you blessed in your power (*tês dunameôs*)” (§12). Upon losing the contest, Sculpture hardens into marble. Culture, meanwhile, becomes mobile, treating Lucian to a worldwide tour on her Pegasus-pulled chariot, after which she sets his father straight about the impoverished life of a sculptor.

A wandering envoy of *Paideia*, Lucian chose to produce vocal civic agents instead of mute aesthetic objects, but all the while he crafted discourses that blended the best of each effort. Although distinctive in its liveliness, Lucian’s *agôn* between Sculpture and Culture is but one instance of a prominent strain of argument and assessment in ancient texts that places stones and words side-by-side for evaluation.² I propose a four-fold schema for organizing and understanding this strain, which I call “the mock rock *topos*,” exploiting the ambiguity of mock (mimic/taunt) to capture a common ancient attitude toward verbal representations, written especially: that they share certain qualities with stone and stonework but outperform them, too. Of course, sculptors often work in materials other than stone, and I do include references to bronze, ivory, and gold as well without laboring to invent other rhyming topical categories. Further, detractors of writers and writing often use lithic language in their criticisms.

The four-fold heuristic, hereafter designated “the m-heuristic,” uses the sub-*topoi* of masterpiece, *mimêsis* (imitation, representation), movement, and memory to find and categorize dimensions of the mock rock *topos* that have the most to tell us about the competition between papyrus and stone, frequently-matched rhetorical media in Antiquity. Those four areas are “places” to which ancient writers

¹For ease of reader reference, I have adapted and adjusted translations from Loeb editions unless otherwise indicated in the Reference section.

²Stone can, of course, be a writing surface, and writing on media other than papyrus, wax, or animal skin is known as epigraphy.

repeatedly (re)turn to build arguments, appeals, and analogies that affirm their choices.³ Although individuated for analysis, the sub-*topoi* work in synthesis; in particular, because the overarching *topos* is *mock rock*, *mimêsis* threads through all four.

A marked material-mindedness drives ancient writers' articulations of the process of artistic objectification whereby ephemeral words become monumental—or just frozen stiff—texts. Accordingly, the next two sections focus on rhetoric, materiality, and criticism, the first by arguing for a more overt treatment of ancient texts as material objects moving through the world, and the second by considering the conditions that sometimes paired text and stone—resulting in their shared aesthetic and critical vocabulary—and other times pitted them against each other. Subsequently, the main sections organize Greek and Roman examples of each member of the m-heuristic, availing of discourses, dialogues, treatises, biographies, letters, and published speeches. To demonstrate the cultural complexity of ancient text-stone relations, the article concludes with a short venture into ancient libraries, wherein the representation competition between text and rock became more nuanced, and the two media complemented each other rather than competed with one another for representational supremacy.

Living in a Material World

Whether tightly rolled-up and stored, or slowly unrolled, fondled, and wound up again, the papyrus book-roll (Greek: *biblos/biblios*; Latin: *librum/libellus*) was, and in some cases scrappily remains, a material object. Although the primary medium of textual publication from the fifth-century BCE through the first-century CE, it competed with other material outlets of expression and persuasion, and many writers stake clear claims for their choice. The materiality of words struggling to earn a place on the page also holds considerable interest for ancient writers and critics. Whether graphic rhetors compare or contrast their methods, media, or products—both an orchestrated collection of words and a textual object—with those of stoneworkers, they frequently assert their superior status using elements of the m-heuristic.⁴

The mock rock *topos* highlights the thoroughgoing materiality of ancient textual composition and circulation. Materiality has lately been at the center of much scholarly activity in rhetoric. Bodies, brains, borders, and beasts, and also quilts, museums, statues, and cafés have become objects of rhetorical analysis (Selzer

³The four *topoi* I name are specific to a certain set of ancient writers who write about writing. Michael Leff, among others, traced the history of the *koinoi topoi* (common topics) from ancient to medieval rhetorical theory and also wrote about what an approach to rhetoric as action and performance entails for topical invention.

⁴For a treasure trove of detail about ancient writing materials, see Frederic Kenyon.

and Crowley; Gibbons; Cisneros; Hawhee “Toward a Bestial Rhetoric;” Morris; Dickinson, Blair, and Ott; Dunn; Dickinson).⁵ Carole Blair marks it as curious that materiality “has rarely been taken as a starting point or basis for theorizing rhetoric, despite the frequent cues in our language about its material character,” emphasizing that there are significant “similarities and differences among rhetorical media, because degrees, kinds, and consequences of materiality seem to differ significantly, but rather unpredictably, depending in part on whether the ‘rhetoric’ we describe is made of sound, script or stone” (17).

Rhetorical scholarship about Antiquity also participates in this move toward matter, finding in ancient ways of thinking, arguing, doing, and building resources for our contemporary conversations about materiality (see, e.g., Hawhee “Somatography”; Hawhee *Bodily Arts*). Some of this scholarship discounts the materiality of textuality despite the awareness ancient writers display about the distinctive physical assets and liabilities of their written words and fibrous medium. For instance, James Fredal has called for and provided examples of an “archeological rhetoric” that “begin[s] by looking rather at a cultural, social, bodily, topographic, and not merely textual domain,” at “public spaces, lines of sight, and [the] sparkle” of marble (7, 9, 3). Although he does not, of course, exclude texts from his treatment of “persuasive artistry” in ancient Athens, he clearly excludes them from the category of ancient material culture (see the introduction, e.g., especially 7). Richard Enos, too, has urged a push beyond “the book” and into “nontraditional literary sources” and surfaces. His recent work has focused on epigraphy, that is, inscriptions (official or illicit, like graffiti) etched into the surfaces of “durable material such as marble, metal, or wood” (“Rhetorical Archaeology,” 42; see also “Writing Without Paper”). He also encourages historical work on “architecture, the plastic arts, and other aspects of archeology [that] could also expand our insights” into rhetoric’s past (“Rhetorical Archaeology,” 42). Somewhat incongruously, Enos argues for the importance of this “rhetorical archeology” by providing a pedagogical example that has more than a little to do with textual practices: he tells his classical rhetoric students that “most Greeks and Romans could not read silently” (“Rhetorical Archaeology,” 43).⁶ Such details, he posits, help students “reflect on the most fundamental of notions” about being a reader, writer, speaker, or listener in any given historical period (“Rhetorical Archaeology,” 43). My analysis forwards this effort, but by taking another look

⁵This list pulls from recent articles and anthologies in rhetorical studies. Further, Greg Dickinson and Brian Ott led a workshop on “Rhetoric’s Materiality” at the 2011 Rhetoric Society of America Summer Institute in Boulder, Colorado.

⁶Actually, this view—and its uncritical linking of Greece and Rome as if there were not substantial differences in their literate and literary cultures—has been complicated by several classicists, the most recent being Holt Parker. One similarity in the literary cultures of ancient Greece and Rome hinges on genre: certain genres were made for ears, others for eyes. For a treatment of reading and writing in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, see Richard Graff.

at “the book” and how and why its users compare and contrast it to statues and reliefs.

Seeking out, feeling, and listening for the rhetorical dimensions of ancient materiality or the material dimensions of ancient rhetoric can be done in ways other than the polemically anti-textual. Robert Gaines’ “corpus conception” (67) promotes an understanding of ancient rhetoric as “that body of information that contains all known texts, artifacts, and discourse venues that represent the theory, pedagogy, practice, criticism, and cultural apprehension of rhetoric in the ancient European discourse community” (65). Such an approach helps sustain the viability and continued theoretical applicability of ancient rhetoric without either restricting ourselves to or abandoning “the book.” A collaborative digital humanities project currently underway is a prime if not altogether representative example (and enviably so) of this corpus conception in action. Richard Graff and Christopher Johnstone are pooling aural, visual, textual, and digital resources to produce the fullest picture, and to conjecture as to the sonic effects, of stony ancient discourse venues given our piecemeal, limited evidence. Further, Kathleen Lamp’s attention to orators’ strategic use of their built environments in their speeches and memory training offers a rock *topos* of another kind. Like mine, her arguments demonstrate that those working with written words incorporated elements of their material culture for persuasive purposes. Unlike Lucian, we rhetoricians do not have to choose between Sculpture and Culture, stone and text. By combining the two—as the mock rock *topos* does—we stand to learn more about what ancient writers who mocked (in both senses) rock professed to achieve or avoid. Analyses of recurring stone-text connections forged by assorted ancient writers also correct a recent trend toward excluding “traditional” writing processes and products from consideration as material rhetoric. As such, the m-heuristic contributes toward a greater refinement of our contemporary efforts to theorize and criticize the suasive contours of all manner of matter(s), whether classical or contemporary.

Graphic Language: A Lexicon of Textual–Sculptural Artistry

Scroll and stone became both analogous and agonistic due to an aesthetico-critical awakening in fifth-century BCE Greece whereby senses and sensibilities became attuned to materiality: not only to the way objects look, feel, and sound, but also to how they are constituted in the first place. That ancient arts—from song to architecture to sculpture to speech—“share so much descriptive and critical vocabulary” is one result of this “aesthetic materialism,” as James I. Porter has named it (61, 482). Porter accounts for the terminological overlap between categories like the visual and the verbal by suggesting that, among other possibilities, “languages of description and analysis in different areas evolve[d] in coordinated ways, feeding off and into one another in a series of transformations, both together and essentially over time” (62). Andrew Ford’s study of how the “textualization”

of song and speech powered the rise of ancient literary criticism also aligns the objectification of discourse with its aesthetic valuation (*Origins*, 155). The availability of the book-roll as a medium of discourse delivery materialized words in new ways. For ancient writers and readers, words came to have shapes, sizes, weights, and textures that could be measured, assessed, and compared. On the critical side, possessing a text or putting texts side-by-side enabled close analysis. On the creative side, once words were thought to have matter, they could be artistically, even masterfully, managed and manipulated (*manus* = hand and *pleno* = fill), like plastic media.

In his study of the criticism, history, and terminology of Greek art, J. J. Pollitt credits the third book of Aristotle's *Rhetoric* and its focus on the *aretai* (distinctive excellences) of style with jump-starting critical interest in and "an acute awareness of personal style as well as style in general" (60). Emergent from this attention were canonical lists of rhetors who exemplified particular styles. Some critic or another, Pollitt writes, "hit upon the idea of comparing specific orators with specific sculptors and painters thereby creating a comparative canon that included a description of the *aretai* of different artists" (60). As I show below, Cicero and Quintilian continued such comparisons to forward arguments about the development of rhetoric and the impossibility of seeking a singular model of oratorical perfection.

A major marker of the relationship between sculptural and textual processes, products, and qualities is the lexicon of artistry. Several ancient Greek and Latin words span the creative space between the plastic and verbal arts, connecting the respective activities and productions of stone- and word-workers and the qualities of those productions. This lexical kinship becomes, quite frequently, a contest. An inventory of the most striking shared terms is shown in Table 1.⁷

Graphic rhetors, rhetoricians, and critics readily used items from this lexicon for a range of reasons, as I show. In his treatment of formalism in Isocrates, Ford suggests that rhetors and rhetoricians used such terms to bolster their "claim to the status of artist, purveying a valuable product" ("Price," 33). Since a fixation on artistry can come at the expense of concern for argumentative merit, ethical soundness, and civic utility, users of this lexicon supplement it with grand appeals to those mainstays of rhetorical discourse, which we see clearly in the first sub-*topos*.

⁷Table 1, populated by mock rock terms I frequently encountered while reading primary texts, offers a sliver of the possible terms one could include. For a more extensive but still not exhaustive collection of terms often shared by the visual and verbal arts, see the "Glossary" of terms and textual citations in Pollitt (113–449).

Table 1 Inventory of the Most Striking Terms

Term in Greek	Term in Latin	English translation	Process, product, quality
<i>graphô</i>	<i>scribo</i>	scratch, scrape, represent, draw, paint, write	process
<i>technê</i>	<i>ars</i>	craft; an explainable, teachable set of techniques or tactics for producing something	process
<i>ergon</i>	<i>factum</i>	deed, be it a symbolic activity or not	process and product
<i>ponos</i>	<i>labor/opus</i>	work	process and product
<i>mimêsis</i>	<i>imitatio</i>	representation, imitation, likeness	process and product
<i>eikôn</i>	<i>imago</i>	image, portrayal, likeness	product
<i>schêma</i>	<i>figura/forma</i>	figure or form	product
<i>paradeigma</i>	<i>exemplum</i>	model; precedent/example; copy	product
<i>mnêmeïon</i>	<i>monumentum</i>	memorial, remembrance, record; monument	product
<i>kosmos</i>	<i>ornatus</i>	ornament, decoration, embellishment	quality
<i>chrôma</i>	<i>color</i>	color (some ancient statues were painted)	quality
<i>glaphuros</i>	<i>politum/expolitum</i>	polished, finished, exact	quality
<i>akribeia</i>	<i>accuratio,</i> <i>diligentia</i>	exactitude, an etched or etched-like precision	quality

Sub-Topos 1: Masterpiece

“Words! / Pens are too light. / Take chisel to write.” Basil Bunting, *Briggflatts* (Part 1)

Isocrates’ careful craftsmanship was and continues to be legendary. His writings contain the rhetorical tradition’s first public defense of the defining burden of texts that challenge the beauty and obduracy of rock masterpieces: polish. He speaks not only for the *polis* but also for the polish that makes his *logos politikos* shine, and by implicating one with the best interests of the other. To put it in rhyming chiasmic form, which befits the figure-loving Isocrates: political discourse without polish is all bluster whereas polished discourse without political import is all luster. They need one another, Isocrates proposes, to be at their best. His *polis*–polish link has two orientations in time. In his time, it provides the benefit of advisory words born of extensive reflection and revision. He laboriously produces thoughtful and actionable meditations on broad and significant cultural matters, asserting the superiority of his polished political discourse over the bang of inexperienced youngsters and the flash of the new sophists. In the long term, his tributes to Athens and certain esteemed members of the pan-Hellenic political

community function as an enduring record of the kind of rhetorical artistry and civic virtue his *polis* inspired and honored.

His is not quick work. The rhetorical critic Dionysius of Halicarnassus, a Greek transplant to Augustan Rome, and Quintilian, among others, record ten years, at least, as the time Isocrates required to complete his *Panegyricus* (*On the Putting Together of Words* §25, *Institutio Oratoria* 10.4.4). Isocrates frequently and assertively professes to be a meticulous artisan of master works, never hiding his labor or denying how long he worked (cf., e.g., the last third of *Panathenaicus* and the opening passages of *Philip* (§1–30) and *Antidosis*). To craft a model discourse demands intensive scraping and scrapping, fitting and re-fitting of segments, and the final harmonizing and polishing of the whole. Plutarch later sneers that Pericles directed the construction of the Parthenon (which features the sculpture of Pheidias) in the same amount of time that Isocrates “sat at home, poring over his work [the *Panegyricus*], seeking out word choices” (*Moralia* 350e–351a). Cicero also deploys the comparative construction claim, but to rank “useless” beauty above useful banality. In his history of rhetoric’s formal development, Cicero asserts that “it was more important to the Athenians to have a secure roof on their homes than the superlatively lovely ivory statue of Minerva; however, I should have preferred to be Phidias to the very best fabricator of roofs” (*Brutus* §257). Any orator with serviceable skills can reach out, roof-like, and protect a friend when troubles rain down, but few have what it takes to fashion Wisdom in words. Shortly after Cicero, Dionysius of Halicarnassus compares Isocrates’ works to Pheidias’ on the basis of their shared “solemnity, consummate technique, and reputation” (*to semnon kai megalotechnnon kai axiōmatikon*) (*Isocrates* §3).

Skillfully exploiting the homology between craftsmen emergent from the lexical ambiguities listed in the table above, Isocrates plainly situates himself among the finest craftsman of Hellas in the proem to his *Antidosis* (§2). He analogizes that to dismiss him as a dikographer (writer of law-speeches) is to call Pheidias a fashioner of mere figurines, or Zeuxis or Parrhasias, premiere painters, mere tablet daubers (*ta pinakia graphousin*; note the *graph-* verb). There is nothing “mere” about the way the four of them have perfected their respective art forms. Cheap logography, statuettes, and portraits might be hawked and haggled over in the agora, but a masterpiece is harder to come by. And more expensive by magnitudes. If we believe Plato’s Socrates (always risky for us rhetoricians), then preeminent craftsmen of *logos* seem to have profited far more than other top creators: “I know of one man, Protagoras, who got more money from his skill than Pheidias, who wrought such celebrated works of art, or any ten other statue makers” (*Meno* 91d). Isocrates commanded huge sums for his commemorative *logoi* in particular, receiving 120,000 drachmas from Nicocles to eulogize Evagoras, his departed father (Plutarch *Lives of the Ten Orators* 838a). The average Athenian laborer made about 1 for a hard day’s work. Along with the aesthetic objectification of words came their commodification, giving words worth of another kind.

The two most famous critics of graphic rhetors in the early fourth-century BCE were Alcidas (*On Sophists or On the Writers of Written Discourses*) and Plato's Socrates (*Phaedrus*).⁸ Among other points of criticism, they chide graphic rhetors for treating their writing like artistic masterpieces made of stone. Both Alcidas and Socrates rib graphic rhetors for requiring a lot of time first to shape and then to polish their words (*Writers* §4, 10; *Phaedrus* 228a). They also describe the resultant constructions as *akribês*, painstakingly precise (*On Writers* §12, 16, 25, 33, 34; *Phaedrus* 234e). *Akribêia* (precision, exactitude) is a common term of critical analysis for both plastic and linguistic objects (Pollitt 122ff).

For his part, Alcidas begins his chain of insults by calling any given writer not a rhetor but a *poiêtês*, "maker" (§2). Next, Alcidas calls the products of graphic rhetors *tupoi*—meaning molds or figures wrought of stone or metal—with exactitude and flair that their extemporaneous speech could never match (§14). Then, using an architectural analogy, Alcidas imagines each block of their meticulous "house of words" (*tês tôn onomatôn oikodomian*) toppling and crashing down when they try to insert spur-of-the-moment phrases and arguments (§25). Finally, Alcidas returns to statuary, comparing carefully wrought discourses to bronze and stone statues and life drawings (*tôn chalkôn andriantôn kai lithinôn agalmatôn kai yegrammenon zôiôn*) that trump living bodies in beauty but not in utility (§27–28).

Socrates, who evidently thought that true communication could not be set in stone (literally or figuratively), wrote not one iota. In *Phaedrus*, Plato's version of him also compares writing to life drawing (*zôgraphia*), "for the creatures of drawing stand like living beings, but if one asks them a question, they preserve a solemn silence." Likewise, one might reckon that written words "spoke as if they had intelligence, but if you question them, wishing to know about their sayings, they always say one and the same thing" (275d–e). In Plato's *Protagoras*, Socrates likens all sophists to book-rolls, in that they repeat the same lines over and over, however arrestingly beautiful (329a).

The sub-*topos* of masterpiece comes to prominence in the burgeoning vocabulary of rhetorical criticism that Socrates applies to Lysias' written *logos* on love. A fixation with control renders Lysias' *logos*, like the non-lover he champions within it, unfeeling and deadened. Structure-wise, Lysias reiterates the few points he sets forth in several different ways (235a), showing a reluctance to really warm to his subject. Structurally and stylistically, Socrates judges Lysias "to have thoroughly turned/chiseled" (*apotetorneutai*) his words in an effort to render them "clear and compact and precise" (*saphê kai stroggula, kai akribôs*) (234e). Plato's lexical choices here cast Lysias as an artisan of cold, hard objects. Again, *akribês* describes precision and exactitude in compositions of words or of stone. *Stroggula* describes

⁸The latter portion of *Phaedrus* is the *locus classicus* of so-called Socratic views on writing, but see also Plato's *Seventh Letter* and the last third of *Protagoras*.

the result of wearing down processes—like erosion—that polish rough, jagged edges of words or stones over time periods of near geological length. Socrates later compares Lysias’ *logos* to an inscription on a bronze statue placed on the tombstone of Midas (264d–e). Devastatingly, he deems Lysias’ book-roll to be a curious mix of the rock-solid and the easily deconstructed, the precise and the splattered (*beblêsthai*, 264b), the compact and the loose.

A mock rock moment in *Symposium* offers another example of rhetorical criticism. After the good-looking, prize-winning poet Agathon completes his speech on *erôs*, Socrates fusses about the unfairness of their seating arrangements such that he must follow someone whom, he puns, possesses the Gorgias/Gorgon head, whose eloquent emissions turn those within earshot to soundless stone (*lithon tei aphôniai*, 198c). Socrates chose that seat for his own amorous reasons and is, of course, being playful, but both he and Alcidas use the language of shocked-stiff amazement to describe the effect polished prose has on those who encounter it (*On Writers* §27–8; *Phaedrus* 275d). Throughout Antiquity, Agathon was infamous for being finicky about the preparation of his written words. Aristophanes describes him as “smoothing words out in wax” before “casting them into a mold” (*kêprochutei goggullei kai choaneuei*) (Aristophanes *Thesmophoriazuse* 52ff).⁹ That Agathon works in wax initially seems a clear analogy to the sculptor’s method of first modeling a figure in a cheap and pliable medium before moving to one expensive and unforgiving. But the wax could also refer analogically to a wax tablet, which was less costly than papyrus and more appropriate for the preliminary stages of writing.

Although Plato obviously wrote, he did not, like Isocrates, write about his extensive editing. But Diogenes Laertius reminds us that Plato once cared a great deal for drawing and writing poetry (*graphikês epimelêthênai kai poiêmata graphai*) (*Lives* 3.5; notice the double “*graph-*” verbs), both of which Plato abandoned after Socrates read one of Plato’s plays and asked questions of it that Plato could not answer. Despite his disavowal of his artistry, Plato eventually joins not only Lysias but also Isocrates and Demosthenes in being described as spending a lot of time with his words. In *On the Putting Together of Words*, Dionysius of Halicarnassus cites Isocrates’ at least decade-long preparation of the *Panegyricus* alongside a tale of Plato’s editorial attachment to his dialogues:

Plato did not cease, when eighty years old, to comb and curl his dialogues and reshape them in every way (*ktenizôn kai bostruchizôn, kai panta proton anaplekôn*). Surely every scholar is acquainted with the stories of Plato’s love of labor

⁹For space reasons, I will not include any other poets in my analyses, but all four sub-*topoi* of the mock rock *topos* appear with frequency in Roman poets, such as: Catullus, Horace, Ovid, Martial, and Statius. The sixth–fifth century BCE lyric poet Pindar also used the mock rock *topos* (see his Seventh Olympian and Fifth Nemean, for instance), perhaps starting the *topos* in the first place.

(*tês philoponias*), especially that of the tablet which they say was found after his death, with the beginning of the *Republic* (“I went down yesterday to the Piraeus together with Glaucon the son of Ariston”) arranged in elaborately varying (*poikilós*) orders. (§25; see also Diogenes Laertius’ *Lives* 3.37)

Because Isocrates and Plato “did not so much write words” (*ou graptóis . . . logous*) as “engrave” (*gluptois*) and “chisel” (*toreutois*) them, rhetors like Demosthenes worked to maintain the expected artistic standard of his time (§25; see also *Demosthenes* §51). In the last book of his *Institutio Oratoria*, Quintilian advises on how much written preparation an orator should do for different rhetorical situations. The ideal, he writes, is to follow this instruction he attributes to Demosthenes: that an orator will, “as far as possible, deliver only what he has sketched out (*scripta*), and, if circumstances permit, only what he has sculpted (*sculpta*)” (12.9.16). If he can help it, an orator will present to the public only that which he has artfully molded to the moment, but, of course, well ahead of the moment.

Sub-Topos 2: *Mimêsis*

Challenging Plato’s indictments of *mimêsis* throughout the *Republic*, Aristotle stresses its centrality to human being, creating, and feeling (*Poetics* 1448b5ff). We craft likenesses for all manner of communicative and expressive purposes. For their part, graphic rhetors fashion likenesses for others to look upon and emulate, and their mimetic dimension is two-fold. Graphic rhetors offer to their readers model writings—one who (be)holds them is meant to marvel at and aspire to their internal architecture and artistry—and model subject matter; one is meant to marvel at and aspire to the thoughts, deeds, and words of exemplary represented people. According to those who prefer papyrus to stone or metal, writing on book-rolls affords a greater depth of representation and thus more mimetic potential.

The taunt side of the mock rock *topos* arises when graphic rhetors decry the difficulty of imitating a bronze body and, therefore, its comparative poverty as a character model. For instance, in his richly-wrought work *Evagoras*, a *logos* explicitly addressed to Nicocles, the bereaved son of the recently deceased Evagoras, Isocrates points out that “no one would be able to make their own bodily nature resemble (*homoiôseie*) a statue or a painting (*tois men peplasmenois kai tois gegramenois*), but it is easy for those who wish to take the trouble and are willing to be the best to imitate (*mimêisthai*) the ways and thoughts (*tous tropous . . . kai tas dianoiias*) of their fellows who are represented in speeches (*en tois legomenois*)” (§75). Even the most faithful representations of people’s external forms do not showcase their *dianoia*, their complex inner-workings, their motivations, their judgment in context, all of which industrious readers could set themselves to modeling. It is for those reasons that Isocrates has “assembled

[Evagoras'] virtues, arranged them in a speech, and passed them down to you to study and practice" (§76). Memorialized and materialized in papyrus, Evagoras' example lives on.

In Rome, Cicero renews this line of comparison and exhortation in his defense of the Greek-Syrian poet, Archias. His closing pleas to the jury highlight the mimetic prowess of writing poets like Archias, but we can safely presume that Cicero thought writing rhetors similarly capable: "Many superior men have been zealous to leave behind statues and images (*statuas et imagines*), *simulacra* not of their minds, but of their bodies, but shouldn't we much prefer to leave behind effigies (*effigiem*) of our wisdom and excellence, expressed and polished by the utmost talent (*summis ingeniis expressam et politam*)?" (*Pro Archia* §30). While it is possible to read in these examples an unfortunate trumping of mind over matter, of brain over body, I read them as instances of another sort of one-upmanship: graphic rhetors asserting their mimetic superiority to sculptors.

Being arguments for resemblance, analogies can be considered another facet of the *mimēsis* sub-topos. In the previous section, we saw Alcidas' uncomplimentary comparison of carefully-crafted speeches to beautiful stone or metal bodies. He contends that graphic rhetors produce "likenesses, forms, and imitations of the spoken word" (*eidōla kai schēmata kai mimēmata logōn*), just as artists issue forth "imitations of true bodies" (*mimēmata tōn alēthinōn sōmatōn*, §27). Likewise, to Socrates' approval, Phaedrus calls writing an *eidōs* (likeness) of "the living and ensouled word," that is, the word spoken in thoughtful conversation (276a).

Graphic rhetors in Rome, on the other hand, commonly deploy elucidating comparisons of rock and recorded word as they wonder at the variety of rhetorical artistry and assess the development and increasing refinement of oratory, first in Athenian rhetorical culture and then in Roman. For example, in Cicero's *De Oratore* (3.26–31), Crassus opines that there is a single art of sculpture and a single art of painting, yet there are many "outstanding practitioners" whose statues or paintings differ widely from one another without departing from excellence; "and if this is surprising but still true in the case of these so-called mute arts (*mutis artibus*), it is certainly much more surprising in the case of speech (*oratione*), that is, language (*lingua*)." These comparisons between statues and written speeches reinforce speech's artistic objectification. And since the moment in which they originally intervened has passed, in some cases long passed, recorded speeches afford readers critical distance from which to examine form and construction.

In *Brutus*, a history of Roman rhetoric, and *Orator*, a treatment of the unattainable ideal of the *orator perfectus*, Cicero sets up comparisons between the development of oratory and that of other arts, such as sculpture (*Brutus* §70ff; *Orator* §5ff; see also Leen). As the fine sculpture of their predecessors did not "deter other sculptors to see what they could accomplish or what progress they could make" (*Orator* §5), so fine oratory should not cause "those who have devoted themselves to the study of eloquence" to "abandon hope or lessen their industry" (§6).

Perfection might be unattainable and exceeding the excellence of earlier practitioners of one's art might be difficult, but they are worth striving for nonetheless. Further, in books two and twelve of his *Institutio Oratoria*, Quintilian also compares oratory's formal variety and progress with that of painting and sculpture (see Austin). The *orator perfectus*, he writes:

has not yet been found, a statement which perhaps may be extended to all arts, not merely because some qualities are more evident in some artists than in others, but because one single form (*una forma*) will not satisfy all critics, a fact which is due in part to conditions of time and place, in part to the judgment (*iudicio*) and stance (*propositio*) of individuals. (12.10.2)

The comparisons of sculpture and oratory are back-to-back, and Quintilian transitions by asserting that, “[i]f we turn our attention to the various styles of oratory, we shall find almost as great variety of talents (*ingeniorum*) as of forms of bodies (*corporum formas*)” (12.10.10). Coming, as it does, on the heels of the sculpture section, “forms of bodies” likely refers to statues and their shapely varieties. These examples from Cicero and Quintilian’s *rhetorica* classify as mock rock related to writing because, they both observe, superlative rhetors are those most known for treasuring the power of the pen as an aid to eloquence and for recording their speeches for posterity.

Earlier, Quintilian had divided his discussion of rhetoric into three parts: art (*ars*), artist (*artifex*), and the work resultant from them (*opus*) (2.14.5). This division allows for an easy reliance on other arts, artists, and their works to substantiate points about rhetoric. Quintilian refers often to sculpture when he turns to the question of rhetoric’s material. If, as Plato’s Socrates suggests, the material of rhetoric is speech, and “if this view be accepted in the sense that the word ‘speech’ is used of a discourse composed on any subject, then it is not the material but the work (*non materia sed opus*), like a statue is of a sculptor” (2.21.1; see also 2.19.3). Rhetoric’s material must be something other than its product. Like Cicero, Quintilian “holds that the material of rhetoric is composed of everything that may be placed before it as a subject of speech” (2.21.4), although he concedes that this position exposes rhetoric to accusations that its scope is impossibly expansive and its material too multiple. Quintilian counters that rhetoric’s multiplicity comes with limits and summons other, “lesser arts” (*artes minores*) to make his point: sculptors and makers of vessels might use the same materials—such as gold, silver, bronze, iron, wood, ivory, marble, glass, and precious stones—and “yet there is all the difference in the world between vessels and statues” (2.21.8–10). “So,” Quintilian sums up, “that which is the material of rhetoric does not cease to be so if it is claimed by both it and other arts” (10).

Returning to fifth- and fourth-century Athens, we find that Socrates has mimetic affiliations with sculpture in both his dialogue appearances and biographical tradition. In several of Plato’s dialogues about rhetoric, Socrates makes

analogies to sculptors (and painters, cobblers, and doctors) as he tries to figure out whether rhetoric is a *techné*, what it produces, and what skills or character traits it relies upon or cultivates in its users (e.g., *Gorgias* 450d, 453c–d; *Protagoras* 311c).

Toward the end of Plato's *Symposium*, Alcibiades dares an extended comparison of the usually unwashed and unshod, always snub-nosed Socrates to statues of the satyr Silenus sold in the agora. They are both ugly, but their ugliness is only “an outward casting” (216d). Inside, they are masterpieces “golden and divine, perfectly fair and wondrous” (217a). Socrates' speech, above all, resembles Silenus statues, offering nothing attractive on the face of it:

If you chose to listen to Socrates' discourses you would feel them at first to be quite ridiculous; on the outside they are clothed with such absurd words and phrases—all, of course, the gift of a mocking satyr. . . . But when these are opened, and you obtain a fresh view (*idón*) of them by getting inside, first of all you will discover that they are the only speeches that have any sense in them; and secondly, that none are so divine, bearing so much virtue (*aretês*) in them, so largely—no, so completely—intent on all things proper for the study of such as would attain both the finest and the best. (221e–222a)

The vocabulary of internal/external has several layers. Not only Socrates' visage but also his spoken *logos* function like a cheap Silenus statue, with an outer surface that might appear simple and silly but with a deeper, richer significance that must be plumbed. That Socrates' students commemorate his words and ways in their book-rolls allows readers near and far to encounter him and learn that somatic shells and verbal forms matter less than core contents. Virtue stirs on the inside, rather than sits on the outside, and it is virtue and other features of internal character that graphic rhetors are best able to display with their tools, methods, and delivery medium.

Moving from the dialogical to the biographical in his account of Socrates, Diogenes Laertius reports that Socrates' mother practiced midwifery (*maieusis*); recall that Plato's Socrates calls his dialectical method “maieutic” in *Theaetetus* and *Symposium*. Socrates' father was a sculptor. Apparently, Socrates took after his father in a more literal sense. According to Laertius, one ancient writer called Socrates a stoneworker (*ergasasthai lithous*), and another “the sculptor, the enchanter of Greece, inventor of precise arguments (*akribologous*), the sneerer who mocked fine speeches, a somewhat Attic ironist” (§19). In Plato's *Euthyphro*, Socrates calls the famed sculptor Daedalus his “ancestor” (11c). Lucian's *Paideia*, in the aforementioned persuasive contest with Sculpture, also notes Socrates' sculpting lineage, which he abandoned for higher pursuits: “Sculpture here had the breeding of Socrates himself, but as soon as he discerned the better part, he deserted her and enlisted with me. Since then, his name is on every tongue” (§12).

As Socrates' midwifery is figurative, perhaps the stoneworking he does in his advanced years becomes such, too. If Socrates' activities resemble his mother's in that he coaxes interlocutors to deliver, that is, to externalize, internal knowledge

that accords with truth, beauty, and goodness, then perhaps they also resemble his father's: Socrates as sculptor finds the forms (*eidê*) of truth, beauty, and goodness inhering within himself and others, and he chips away in an effort to reveal them. Perhaps Socrates' philosophy is a forerunner of what Nietzsche would later call "philosophy with a hammer," only Socrates wields a chisel, too, shaping rather than destroying. Laertius notes that Socrates "used to express his astonishment that sculptors of stone images (*tas lithinas eikonas*) should fashion stone into a likeness (of a man) and should not take care lest they themselves appear to be mere blocks (and not men)" (§33). This was also a warning Lucian's *Paideia* gave him about choosing Sculpture: "all your care will be to proportion and fairly drape your works; to proportioning and adorning yourself you will give little heed, making yourself of less account than your marble" (§13). Self-crafting is an art of character—from the Greek *charaktêr*, meaning a distinctive mark pressed or stamped onto a surface—and one at which Socrates works tirelessly and mostly through the kind of extended conversational chiseling documented by Plato and Xenophon.

Sub-Topos 3: Movement

As its etymology clearly attests, a statue stands. In his aforementioned funerary work *Evagoras*, Isocrates elaborates on his point that not all artful and potentially enduring representations are created equal. He prefers his material and his method "because I know that noble men are not so much esteemed for their bodily beauty as honored for their deeds and intellect. Second, images stamped into metal or stone (*tous tupous*)¹⁰ must necessarily remain solely among those who set them up, whereas images stamped into words (*tous logous*) can be circulated throughout Hellas" (§74). Written texts are mobile monuments. The words Isocrates provides in the face of death are not just epigraphs or epitaphs, which are written or spoken upon (*epi-*) a memorial; they are themselves a memorial. The mobility of book-rolls allows them to access, be passed around among, and dwelled on by those who think well (*diadothentas en tais eû phronountôn diatribais*, §74), performing on behalf of the dead Evagoras (and eventually dead Isocrates) a textual *danse macabre* as they roll from reader to reader: he did this; what will *you* do while there's still time? *Graphô* sits at the root of "grave," and the written memorial highlights that connection.

The circulation of graphic rhetoric provides an advantage enjoyed by neither volatile vocalizations nor stationary epigrammatic objects, the former of which evaporate into, the latter of which sit unread in, the open air. Sit unread? In his book *The Scroll and the Marble*, Peter Bing examines relevant material evidence and holds "the un-read Muse"—punning on his earlier book, *The Well-Read*

¹⁰As highlighted above, *tupoi* is the word Alcidas uses to describe a precisely written work.

Muse—responsible for the “pervasive indifference” ancients seemed to have shown toward dedicatory writing on stone (127). Thus, even if a statue featured an epigrammatic caption detailing the *dianoia* of the depicted person, that caption was unlikely to be read; “[r]ooted to the spot, it has to wait, relying on the uncertain prospect of a literate person (not just any viewer) first of all seeing and then taking the trouble to read it” (Bing 122). Assessing processes by which Roman writers “turned paper into stone,” Thomas Habinek explains that any solid epigraphic object “was difficult to move, or at least designed to remain in its original location; and it depended for its meaning on its relationship to a particular physical, social, and cultural context. . . . The standard verb for the situating of an inscription or its monument is *loco*, that is, to place” (109). Because they are not ground-bound, texts can circulate among the elite, enter into their conversations, and extend into yet more communicative circles. In turn, members of these circles may copy the text, extending its geographical and chronological reach and influence.

While Isocrates and other ancient graphic rhetors champion the peripatetic page, others indict the slow responsive speed of graphic rhetors and either the immobility or the hypermobility of their fussily-fashioned words. This play of static and dynamic reminds us that words were fixed on a material surface that could circulate without the writer’s wishes and beyond his control. (Or written words could be committed to memory—often compared to a traditional writing surface—whose mobility would be under the control of the memorizer.) As we saw above, Alcidamas mocked graphic rhetors by likening their methods and products to those of slow, meticulous “makers,” especially sculptors. Graphic rhetors show overmuch “*meletê tou graphein*” (care for the written, §15 and §26), slowing if not outright stopping the situational responsiveness of their speech. Extemporaneous speakers are always on-call, ready to react at a moment’s notice “whenever there is need to advise the mistaken, to console the unfortunate, to soothe the provoked, [or] to refute sudden allegations of blame” (§10). Their kairotic interventions speedily serve corrective and philanthropic functions, ones vital to sustaining communal order and sociality. Graphic rhetoric might be more beautiful, but it is fixed in place and cannot move (*akinêtos* §28), rendering it useless in pressing, fast-paced circumstances.

Just as Alcidamas gripes about graphic rhetoric’s inflexibility during a live debate, Plato’s Socrates, as we have seen, points to the incongruity between its seeming liveliness and silent stillness. Socrates also speaks to the graphic rhetor’s struggle with looseness after letting a book-roll go out on the town. He reminds Phaedrus that “every word, once written down, is rolled around (*kulindeitai*) among both those who understand and those who have no interest in it” (275e). This rolling about smacks of textuality, of course, as readers roll, unroll, and re-roll papyrus sheets. Moving beyond Alcidamas’ critique, Socrates frames a text not as *akinêtos* but as superkinetic; once released from its writer, it really gets around.

In the *Phaedrus*, one word Socrates uses for an ingenious writer is “*logodaidalos*” (266e), a Daedalus—that is, a clever craftsman—of words and arguments. Daedalus’ statues were famous for being able to move, a paradox of fixity and flux, just like writing on book-rolls. Socrates twice mentions these oddities in other dialogues. When conversing with Socrates about holiness, Euthyphro complains that every time they articulate a line of thought, it moves about and will not stay fixed in place. Socrates attributes this mobility to Euthyphro, joking that if it were Socrates’ “works in words” (*ta en tois logos erga*) that ran away, Euthyphro would blame it on Socrates’ occupational kinship with Daedalus (*Euthyphro* 11c). Euthyphro, in turn, does blame Socrates, whereupon Socrates declares himself “more clever” (*deinoteros*) than Daedalus, since he can make both his own and Euthyphro’s words move. Socrates then offers a serious programmatic statement about his words: “I would rather have my words stay still and sit unmoving (*tous logous menein kai akinētōs idrúthai*)¹¹ than possess the know-how of Daedalus and the wealth of Tantalus besides” (11e). In using the standard language of statues, Socrates emphasizes the steadfastness of his positions and reminds (Plato’s) readers that he stands by his words and does not let them get away from him, wandering away on book-rolls, to be misinterpreted, maligned, or ignored.

The other instance appears when Socrates’ discussion with Meno about virtue turns to the difference between true opinion (*orthés doxés*) and secure knowledge (*epistémē*) (97dff). If we try merely to possess true opinion, it, like a captured statue of Daedalus, will soon pull free and continue to roam. “When fastened up,” though, they are both worth a great deal: the statue for being “an altogether fine work” (*panu . . . kala ta erga*), and true opinion for being “a fine need/utility” (*kalon to chrēma*). If we bind true opinion with calculative reasoning (*logismōi*), it “will become knowledge and stay in place (*monimoi*).” It is through the give and take of conversation that Socrates affirms his epistemic fixity. Following Socrates’ analogy in *Euthyphro* and *Meno*, his knowing words resemble a bound Daedalus statue. Amusingly, the fifth-century CE sophist Eunapius records that ancient Athenians called Socrates the “walking statue of wisdom” (*peripatoun agalma sophias*) (*Lives of Philosophers and Sophists* 462f), merging the fixity of the epistemic and the mobility of the peripatetic to capture a man set in his ways but ever moving about the city.

At least two of the cities Favorinus, a second-century sophist, visited found themselves mesmerized by his presence but unable to keep him and unable to do without him. They therefore erected statues—one of which he hails apostrophically as “O mute semblance of my *logos*” (*ô logôn emôn sigêlon eidôlon*) (Dio Chrysostom, *Corinthian Oration* §46)—to be ongoing calls to learning and culture for all those who looked upon them. After facing accusations of moral turpitude,

¹¹The verb *idruô* means to sit down, settle, set up, and also to dedicate a statue.

Favorinus learns that his statue at Corinth has been pulled down out of sight. Trying to account for its absence, he wonders if the statue was one of Daedalus' roving creations but dismisses that possibility because:

not since the death of Daedalus down to the present day has anyone made such progress in the art of sculpture as to impart to bronze the power of flight; no, even though they make statues of men with a fine and noble stride, and sometimes even riding on horseback, still these all maintain their pose and station and, unless someone moves them, so far as they are concerned bronze has no power to flee, not even if the statue has wings. (§10)

Bronze can mimic or suggest movement but cannot accomplish it without the assistance of, as in Favorinus' case, people eager to see it go. Athenians pull down his statue in their city as well, and, according to Philostratus, Favorinus declared that "Socrates himself would have been much better off if the Athenians had merely deprived him of a bronze statue (*tés eikona chalkén*), instead of making him drink hemlock" (*Lives of the Sophists* 490). In times good and bad for the represented person, his statue acts as a stand-in. During the former, reminding passers-by of the traits for which he was fashioned in bronze, and during the latter, taking the early and maybe the only brunt of punishment for his indiscretions. While alive, Socrates had no statue. Perhaps Socratic book-rolls could have served the same punishment-taking purpose, had he had them. For example, from quite a chronological distance, Diogenes Laertius attests that Athenians publically burned Protagoras' book-rolls because of their atheistic content, while allowing him to undertake his mandated exile physically unscathed (*Life of Protagoras* §52). I return to Socratic and sophistic statues in the next section. For Favorinus—and Athenians and Corinthians for a time—his statues acted as immobile substitutes for his moving eloquence. In the discourse he publishes to redress its disappearance, he attempts to reassert control over his image, reputation, and fame through another medium, one proven to be far longer-lasting.

Sub-Topos 4: Memory

“Sculpte, lime, cisèle; / que ton rêve flottant / se scelle / dans le bloc résistant!”

“Sculpt, file, chisel / let your floating dream / be sealed / in the resistant block . . .”

Théophile Gautier “L’ART” (187)

Most graphic rhetors consider written *logoi* the superior if not the superlative mimetic media, since they display the *dianoia* (thought) and *dunamis* (capacity/power) of the writer and the commemorated person, lend themselves readily to character modeling, and travel among many circles that can copy the text easily, begetting yet more mimetic cycles. Given that stone, bronze, gold and other statue materials might seem more obdurate and enduring than a thin sheet of treated

plant fiber, graphic rhetors make strange claims about the staying power of their texts. Yet it is the very material of statues—being expensive and designed for outdoor public places and spaces—that puts them at high risk of destruction. As J. E. G. Whitehorne writes, “even during periods of relative peace and stability one man’s dreams of eternal recognition, for himself or his gods, had a habit of running foul of another’s greed and ambition. Statues made of gold for the express purpose of ensuring their subjects’ immortality disappear with almost indecent haste” (109–110).

Upon learning that his statue in Corinth had been pulled down, Favorinus enters into the record arguments on its behalf, as he might were it a sentient defendant on trial. In his defense, he mentions several destructive eventualities for statues: extreme weather, being melted down for the reuse of their raw material, sometimes for coin currency, and “though each statue is erected as if it will last forever, still they perish by this fate or by that, the most common and fitting fate and the one ordained for all things being the fate of time” (§37). Favorinus recalls the inscription borne by the bronze maiden placed at Midas’ tomb—the very inscription that Socrates plays with as the *Phaedrus* turns to the topic of writing (264d–e)—and announces that seekers have found neither her nor the tomb (§38–9). Further, statues are often mislabeled and mistreated. Although Favorinus does not dispense with all forms of image-crafting, the vicissitudes of plastic media have become vices and no longer interest him. He concludes his discourse with an appeal to the goddess Fame. He pledges to place his image in her precinct so that no one and nothing can pull it down. “Forgetfulness,” he claims, “has tripped up and cheated others, but judgment (*gnômê*) plays no tricks on any man of worth, and because of this, you stand upright for me like a man” (§47). The “you” is the new image of himself that Favorinus constructs with these words, one he credits not bronze or stone but fame and judgment with preserving from oblivion. Of course, fame is conferred by and judgment possessed by communities, in this case, readers of this and other published speeches.

The word Isocrates, Alcidas, and other writers use for their own sort of artful supplements to memory is *mnêmeïon* (memorial, remembrance, record). In the *Phaedrus*, Plato’s Socrates uses the word *hupomnêma* (reminder, 276d) to describe writing, which Isocrates sometimes uses as a synonym of *mnêmeïon*, and not disparagingly (*To Nicocles* §36). In Latin, those words become “*monumentum*,” monument, literally, an object that teaches, warns, or advises the mind. Cicero refers to the collective papyrus pages of his Athenian predecessors as a looming “*monumentis litteris*” (literary monument, *Brutus* §26), emphasizing their physicality and instructional value and alluding to them as markers—and makers—of memory.

In the proem to his self-defense in *Antidosis*, Isocrates volunteers that he intends to “write a speech (*graphein logos*) that would be, as it were, an *eikôn* of my thoughts and my life as a whole. I hoped this would be the best way to make

the facts about me known and to leave this behind as a memorial (*mnêmeion*), much finer than dedicatory constructions of bronze (*polu kallion tôn chalkôn anathêmatôn*)” (§7). Within his discourse for Nicocles, in its famous hymn to *logos*, Isocrates calls speech “the *eikôn* of a good and faithful soul,” in contrast to statues, which are likenesses of the body (*Nicocles* §5–9). We have seen before that Alcidas unfavorably compares written speeches to statues. But, of course, Alcidas also succumbs to writing’s various seductions, boasting that with just a squeak of work (*mikra ponêsantes*, *Writers* §30) he can outdo graphic rhetors in their own medium (*logous graphein*, §32), explaining that not everyone has had a chance to hear him in person, adding that writing over time reflects growth in one’s thinking and thus can be viewed as wholesomely diagnostic, and admitting his desire to leave behind “a memorial of myself” (*mnêmeia . . . autôn*, §32). For all their supposed differences, he and Isocrates call their rhetorical projects by the exact same name.

The impulse to leave behind a trace of oneself or another after death is a major contributor to the sub-*topos* of memory, tying together immortality in memory and textual monumentality. Isocrates opens his written monument for Evagoras by emphasizing that “men of ambition and greatness of soul . . . do all that lies in their power to leave behind a memory of themselves that shall never die” (*athanton . . . mnêmên*) (*Evagoras* §3). Whereas the lavish displays Nicocles held at this father’s tomb are a thoughtful tribute (§1–4), Isocrates divines that Evagoras most longs for “a deserving account of his activities and the dangers he undertook” (§2). Isocrates insists that “a fine speech (*logos kalós*) that recounts Evagoras’ deeds would make his excellence/virtue (*aretê*) ever-remembered (*aeimnêston*) among all men” (§4). Tomb-side recitals of song and dance are momentarily impressive, but the monumentality of a written speech ensures the longevity of its celebrant. Isocrates claims that he has not needed to rely on rhetorical amplification to commemorate Evagoras, who, though mortal, “left an immortal memory (*athanton . . . mnêmên*) of himself” through his deeds and character (§71). Isocrates’ written *logos*, he wants readers to believe, merely prolongs Evagoras’ unforgettable reputation.

Statues were made of or promised to several illustrious fifth- and fourth-century Greek rhetors and philosophers. Most notorious is the golden statue of Gorgias at Delphi. According to various traditions, he commissioned it himself, and it was either gilded¹² or solid gold. His nephew dedicated a statue to him at Olympia, whose inscribed black limestone base was uncovered in the nineteenth century and celebrates Gorgias’ soul-training (see Morgan 378). Not once, but twice Phaedrus promises to erect a statue of Socrates if he outdoes Lysias’ *logos* on *erôs* (*Phaedrus* 235d and 236b). Although Phaedrus never gets around to it—Diogenes

¹²Recall Alcibiades’ description of Socrates as a common Silenus statue, ugly on the outside but golden on the inside.

Laertius reports that a contrite Athens erected a bronze statue to Socrates shortly after his state-mandated suicide (*Life of Socrates* §43)—Plato’s Socratic dialogues themselves serve this function. He thus joins Isocrates, Alcidamas, and other graphic rhetors in using writing to preserve aspects of a person that spoken words, stone, and metal cannot. Isocrates was also memorialized with a statue, furnished by his grateful student Timotheus (Plutarch, *Lives of the Orators* 838d), and it did not outlive the *eikôn* presented and preserved in *Antidosis*.

Isocrates, for one, prophesied that his memorializing self-defense in *Antidosis* would outclass and outlast a bronze statue. In his evaluation of Attic writers, Dionysius of Halicarnassus justifies their painstaking procedures similarly. Scoffers may call Demosthenes, for example, “so poor a creature that, whenever he was writing out his speeches (*hote graphoi tous logous*), he would work in meters and rhythms after the fashion of clay-modelers (*hoi plastai paratithemenos*), and would try to fit his clauses into these molds (*tupois*), twisting the words to and fro (*strephôn anô kai katô ta onomata*)” (*On the Putting Together of Words* §25). His physical manipulation of words and sounds strikes them as paltry and passive. Dionysius rallies that Demosthenes wrote because he had a greater reputation (*doxa*) for clever/forceful speaking (*deinotêti logôn*) than his predecessors (§25) and wished to “leave behind an undying memory of his thoughts” (*mnêmaia tês hautou dianois athanata katalipeîn*) (*Demosthenes* §51). Detractors of graphic rhetoric who compare it unfavorably to stonework are mistaken:

for it is far more reasonable for a man who is composing public speeches (*logous politikous*), eternal memorials (*mnêmeia . . . aiônia*) of his own powers (*dunameôs*), to attend even to the slightest details, than it is for the disciples of painters (*zôigraphôn*) and workers in relief (*toreutôn*), who display the dexterity and industry of their hands in a perishable material (*hulêi phthartêi*), to expend the finished resources of their art (*tês technes*) on veins and down and bloom and similar minutiae (*tên akribeian*).” (*On the Putting Together of Words* §25)

The juxtaposition of the artistic media of writers and sculptors and the respective staying power of their products complicates an easy comparison of their methods. Dionysius even uses *akribeia* here in the negative sense of a trivial fussiness with minor details. He uses it elsewhere to compliment the “precision” of graphic rhetors, such as Lysias.

The memory sub-*topos* is sustained by both orality and textuality in at least two of Cicero’s recorded speeches. In his third Catilinarian, he expresses a desire for a highly social *memoria* of himself rather than a quiet *monumenta* (§26). “Nothing mute delights me, nothing silent, nothing, really, of the kind that those less worthy can attain,” he declares. He does allow that Romans might build him a monument, but one stored in and adored by their minds, extended by their conversations, and allowed to grow old and strong in the monuments of their letters

(*litterarum monumentis*). His monumentalized memory relies on minds contemplating his achievements in talk or in text.

When agitating against Marcus Antonius years later, Cicero delivered to the senate what has come to be called the ninth Philippic. This speech abounds with the language of memorializing. In it, Cicero calls for the erection of a pedestrian (on-foot) bronze statue of dutiful Servius Sulpicus—who has died while undertaking an ambassadorial journey to Antonius’ camp—on the speaking rostra. Cicero begins by establishing that such a dedication would be in keeping with the ways of their ancestors, who gave men who died for the sake of the republic a long-lasting memory (*diuturnam memoria*) in exchange for a short life (*pro brevi vita*) (§4), a *statua pro vita* (§5). What Cicero passes over is that the precedents he names were envoys to enemies, which Antonius is not, at least not formerly. Cicero wants to change that. Since the senate dispatched Sulpicius, thereby causing his death (*mortem*), they should grant him immortality (*immortalitatem*) by means of a statue (§10). The statue would diminish the sorrow of those mourning Sulpicius’ death and demonstrate senatorial gratitude for his life-giving service, but, probably more significantly for Cicero, it would function as a very public announcement of Antonius’ enemy status. It would be “an everlasting testament” (*testificatio sempiterna*) to his treachery against the Republic (§15). Strangely, Cicero points to the vulnerabilities of statues, pointing out their slow death by the turning of the seasons and aging of the material (§14). He likely makes this argument as a way of dismissing a competing proposal that Sulpicius be interred in a sepulcher, which, as nearly all tombs were, would be constructed outside of Rome rather than in the middle of the forum. Since a tomb outside of the city would not suit Cicero’s purpose of hyperpublicizing Antonius’ enmity, he deems it inappropriate for Sulpicius. But one could read Cicero’s speech as operating as an epideictic public statue that at once praises and blames while avoiding the ravages of time, being first spoken into the air and then written on a page that brings about iterations of itself. At the emotional fulcrum of the speech, Cicero posits that “the life of the dead is set up (*est posita*) in the memory of the living” (§10). This verb, *pono*, can mean “erect or build” or “form or fashion,” all possibilities that lie within the possibility of speech and its crafters to achieve, thanks to centuries of the mock rock *topos*.

Displaying Culture

The mock rock *topos*’ m-heuristic of masterpiece, *mimēsis*, movement, and memory demonstrates that graphic rhetors mimicked or taunted sculptors or sculpture to promote their own medium and methods, to explain the development of their art, and to manage how they would be remembered, among other reasons. Whether complimentary or critical, many ancient writers display sensitivity to the materiality of words plied for and applied to papyrus—also material—and released to readers. Their excessive matter-mindedness troubles the easy dichotomy between the symbolic and the material that undergirds some current work

on material rhetoric, giving us reason to be cautious about excluding the creation and circulation of written words from that category. In 1982, in an early contribution to our understanding of rhetoric's materiality and in terms that fit this article uncannily well, Michael Calvin McGee stressed that "to say that we study rhetoric in a material way is not to claim that rhetoric is material because it is a sensible discourse I may handle and manipulate like rock" (32). Rather, it is to appreciate that a matrix of material conditions gives shape to "sensible discourse," both its production and its reproduction. In that spirit, I conclude with a larger, longer look at the mock rock *topos*.

Despite the frequent claims of graphic rhetors that it is their nested media—words written on book-rolls—that confer long life, it is actually successive generations of readers who do. Masterpieces require admirers, *exempla* require emulators, movement requires movers, and memory requires rememberers. The preservative role played by beautiful words is not to be discounted, for they arouse in readers an urge to copy, an urge all writers rely upon. But, being material objects, book-rolls were also display objects, emblems of education and culture that communicated learning and refinement. The symbolic value and actual cost of texts made them worth having and showing off, and private and public libraries were prime *loci* of exhibition.

Coincident with the development of the mock rock *topos*, proprietors of ancient libraries placed both book-rolls and portrait busts of particular authors in close proximity. Yun Lee Too traces this pairing practice back to the Hellenistic era, suggesting that author images in libraries "might stand as self-conscious gestures of textual origination" (195). The coordination of text and stone amplified the impact of a cultural and cultured experience for a reader-viewer in a library. Having translated Cicero under the stony glare of his bust in my undergraduate Latin course, I can attest to the rich imagined interactions it induces. The pairing of an image of an author's visage with a record of his (usually, although busts of Sappho survive) thoughts and talents brings an intimacy to the encounter that neither image nor text can achieve alone.

Statues located in libraries were a mute call to virtuosity in a number of publically-esteemed areas. While it was still standing, Favorinus' Corinth statue was located in its library, its center of culture, what Favorinus calls "a front-row seat," where Corinthians "felt it would most effectively stimulate the youth to persevere in the same pursuits as myself" (§8). Presumably, his texts were also available in the library; those stirred by his visage or the very notion of being publically memorialized could seek out the source of his renown. Author images reinforced the cachet of contributing to culture through written words, acting as a visual who's who of the most celebrated or most cherished writers in a given collection.

As Too and others have emphasized recently, libraries were social sites where ideas were exchanged and imaginations engaged. Books brought people together, as they still occasionally manage to do. The mock rock *topos* promised readers that

the labors of writing and the pleasures of reading were worthwhile. That ancient written works containing that pledge survive is a testament to its truth.

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