Numerous publications on the history of rhetoric deal with their subject either in its totality or in certain cultural periods such as classical Antiquity or the Renaissance. By contrast the history of antirhetoric remains a yet unwritten desideratum. In spite of its title Samuel Ijsseling’s monograph *Rhetoric and Philosophy in Conflict* (1976) provides only sporadic glimpses of this history, which begins with Plato and the Sophists, reaches as far as Immanuel Kant’s *Critique of Judgment*, and extends well into the twentieth century. It always, however, emerges in the context of philosophy, especially idealistic philosophy, and later in the context of German *Geistesgeschichte*. These contexts have so far been the focus of existing studies of antirhetoric. Compared with antirhetorical philosophers, Lucian of Samosata (b. ca. 120 AD), prominent representative of the so-called Second Sophistic Age, has been neglected as a member in the chain of antirhetoricians. First “a pleader (Suidas) and later a travelling lecturer who practised the art of Sophistic rhetoric as far as afield as Gaul” (*Oxford Classical Dictionary*), Lucian, notorious as an eiron from other works, also displayed enough self-irony as to satirize the new Sophistic fashion in oratory. He engages in this (Menippean) satire in a piece entitled ΡΗΤΟΡΩΝ ΔΙΔΑΣΚΑΛΟΣ (in Latin: *Rhetorum praeceptor*; in English literally *Teacher of Rhetoricians*), which is rendered in English by A. M. Harmon in the fourth volume of his Loeb edition of Lucian’s works (pp. 133-71) as *A Professor of Public Speaking*.

Because no further edition with translation appeared after the one by Harmon, there was an editorial lacuna as well as one of scholarly criticism. Both lacunae have now been filled by the book of Serena Zweimüller, which originated as a 2007 Swiss doctoral dissertation at the University of Zurich. The content of the voluminous work is divided into six parts: 1. an introduction to the rhetorical and literary fashioning of the treatise together with an examination of its philosophical and comical elements on the basis of subtexts and analogous texts; 2. a short summary and structural-rhetorical analysis of *Rhetorum praeceptor*; 3. an outline of the level of education and the culture of oratorical performance in the age of the Second Sophistic; 4. on
pseudo-philosophers and ideal representatives of philosophy, together with parallels in Lucian’s motifs of mockery; 5. text and translation; commentary; 6. the reception of Lucian’s Rhetorum praeceptor by Willibald Pirckheimer and Desiderius Erasmus in the Renaissance.

The Greek text is based on the Oxford edition of M. D. Macleod (Luciani opera. Tomus II (1974, reprinted 1993)), with a few different readings of certain textual variants that are indicated in the apparatus criticus. As for the editor’s German translation, not a single word is devoted to this topic, though the historical translation by the German classicist poet Christoph Martin Wieland (reprinted in the three-volume edition of Jürgen Werner (1981)) would have deserved one.

The commentary elucidates both linguistic problems and the historical background of the text. This is often done with reference to the available research literature, as is evident, for instance, in the explanations of the important terms rhetor and sophistes on pp. 172-74. Here the point is justly emphasized that in the period of imperial rule the term sophistes by no means always carried negative connotations, though it could for the purpose of denigrating an opponent. This would, however, have been the right place to insert a digression on the Second Sophistic, since there is no introductory chapter where such a presentation would have been appropriate. Here the author could have made use of valuable studies on the history of classical rhetoric by such eminent American scholars as George A. Kennedy (A New History of Classical Rhetoric (1994), 230-56: “The Second Sophistic”) or, more recently, Jeffrey Walker (Rhetoric and Poetics in Antiquity (2000), chap. 4 (pp. 71-135): “‘Rhetoric’ from Cicero to the Second Sophistic”).

Serena Zweimüller’s interpretation of Lucian’s Rhetorum praeceptor begins with a summary of its contents and a “structural-rhetorical” analysis of the text. Its communicative structure is determined by two speakers: an adviser and a teacher of rhetoric. The adviser is the speaker who, having established contact with a disciple, outlines two possibilities of rhetorical education: first a long and arduous way and then a short and convenient one. This double way is an allusion to the myth of Hercules at the Crossroads, the difference being that their evaluation, as was favoured by tradition, is here reversed. For Lucian’s adviser recommends the short and easy way. In order to illustrate the two opposing standpoints two orators appear, each of whom expounds the advantage of one way. This procedure takes place in the rhetorical genus deliberativum. The representative of the short way, the rhetorum praeceptor after whom the treatise is named, is henceforth the central figure employed by the adviser for the purpose of outlining his doctrine at length in direct speech. His main task is to teach the disciple the whole range of rhetorical tricks, thus enabling him to enter upon a career that will elevate him to the position of a highly successful star Sophist. At the end of the treatise the adviser again makes his appearance and undermines his former opinion by discrediting the short way as a dubious short cut in the education of a perfect orator.
According to the editor and author the two persona of adviser and teacher effect a twofold division of the text. The deliberative oration constituting its rhetorical dispositio is not realized in its true form but is mixed with other genres such as the letter (epistola), the Platonic dialogue, Aristophanic comedy (e.g. The Clouds), Menippean satire, Sophistic declamation, and the epirrhematic agon. Thus in Rhetorum praeceptor such different genres come together as oratio, epistola, dialogus philosophicus, and ekphraseis to constitute the mixtum compositum of a textual hybrid. As many other testimonies demonstrate, this is typical of the literature of late Antiquity. The tradition to which this Lucianic work belongs is antirhetoric, which is part of the rhetorical tradition itself.

Chapter 1.1 contains an extensive rhetorical analysis of the structure of the work. Beginning with the wish of the disciple to become a famous Sophist and to be taught the right methods for achieving this end, the prooemium contains the traditional functions of the opening of an oration—attentum, doctum, benevolum parare—and requires the praeceptor to display his competence in the field of rhetoric as well as his willingness to teach the discipulus lessons on the ars rhetorica. The emphasis placed on the brevity of rhetorical education and, by contrast, the greatness and significance of the subject further captures the attention of the reader by pointing out that people of low descent have become wealthy and famous members of the upper class by acquiring a proficiency in rhetoric.

The prothesis of the oration displays two ways of learning, a short and comfortable one and a long and arduous one. This antithesis refers, of course, to the mythological paradigm of Hercules at the Crossroads, which was excellently explicated by Erwin Panofsky in a monograph on this topos in art history. In resuming his image of the two ways to rhetoric, the praeceptor first represents Rhetorica as enthroned on the peak of a mountain—an eikon, which according to rhetorical theory is regarded as a witty, decorative element (ἀστειοταπεισμενον) and the source of enargeia. Moreover, the icon of Queen Rhetoric plays an important role in the history of the discipline (cf. the present reviewer’s book Rhetoric and Renaissance Culture (2004), pt. E. “Iconography of Eloquence and Rhetoric”). Having returned to the foot of the mountain, the disciple becomes aware of its steepness (stressed by alliteration) and, in a further imaginary eikon, is taken to the craggy fortress Lornos. As a conqueror of such difficult heights he will be ranked with an Alexander, Dionysos and Heracles. In a report of his own educational experience the praeceptor strengthens his credibility by explicating why he himself chose the long way and now recommends to his disciple the short one.

The argumentatio makes use of proofs (pisteis) that are customary in forensic orations. The advocate of the long way recommends study of the works of Demosthenes, Plato, and other classical authors in order finally to effect the orator’s desired happiness (eudaimonia). The negative aspects of this procedure are the excessive length of studies and the charge of immoderate tuition fees. For these reasons the long way of studying rhetoric is rejected (refutatio). On the other hand, several arguments speak for the short
way. Here the praeceptor, by using the figure prosopopoeia, speaks through the persona or mask of the advocate about the short way and resumes speaking in his own person only in the epilogue. The advocate of the short way introduces himself hyperbolically in an epideictic manner by comparing his rhetorical competence with the heroic deeds of the titanic figures Tityos, Otos, and Ephialtes. This kind of self-representation is tinged with irony, as these mythological figures are notorious evil-doers. As if these exemplars of self-praise were not enough, the speaker initiates another series of epideictic comparisons: trumpet / cicada / chorus versus flute / bee / precentor. The rhetorical technique applied here to underscore the singularity of the subject of praise is termed auxesis. The rhetorical lesson proper contains the sections vocabulary (Atticisms, Asianisms, neologisms) and literary models (Sophistic meletai (declamations) of immediate oratorical predecessors), which can be subsumed under the category of lexis or elocutio (style). Here special emphasis is placed on hellenismos (idiomatically correct manner of expression), sapheneia or perspicuitas (perspicuity), and prepon (decorum). Principal topics of rhetorical education are the heuresis (invention), taxis (structure), and hypocrisis (delivery) of an oration and its effects on the audience, with further remarks on support by claque, and strategies of dealing with possible rivals. According to Serena Zweimüller hypocrisis represents the important instrument of the oratorical show of the Sophist, to which one might add that it was Demosthenes who already had reportedly attributed the most significant function of rhetoric to delivery. As the teacher pays the greatest attention to the show elements of an oration, he omits mneme or memoria.

The second chapter of the introduction deals with the contrast of pepaideumenos (educated) and apaideutos (uneducated) in the Second Sophistic Age. The author’s source is here mostly Thomas Schmitz’s monograph on Bildung und Macht: Zur sozialen und politischen Funktion der zweiten Sophistik in der griechischen Welt der Kaiserzeit (1997) and to a lesser extent Henri-Irénée Marrou’s classic Histoire de l’éducation dans l’Antiquité (1948, 1965). According to Zweimüller the audience of a public demonstration of a Sophist’s art had to be equipped with a certain knowledge of the subjects comprising the content of the show they attended. On the one hand there was the educated elite and on the other the uneducated masses—the normal composition of the listeners attending the Sophists’ delivery of their model orations. This is not, however, an extraordinary sociological insight but one well known, for the entire population of the late Roman Empire could be described by this dichotomy. The educated class was well trained in the subjects and techniques of the contemporary septem artes liberales curriculum, especially in rhetoric, and more particularly the Atticist style of speaking and writing. This programme was completed by extensive philosophical and literary studies, including treatises by Plato and Aristotle and their followers as well as the poetic works of the Greek classical period.

The group of the educated can therefore be described as relatively homogeneous; but nevertheless something like a competition can be observed among them for a higher degree of expertise in cultural competence. In
other words, Sophistic education became a matter of social prestige. These issues then became topics of Lucian’s satires, not only of *Rhetorum praeceptor* but also of *Soloecista* and *Adversus Indoctum*, to name but two. Zweimüller provides interpretations of all these works and thus broadens the topic of the title of her book. Common to all of them is the unmasking of Sophistic pseudo-rhetoric with its repertoire of tricks and ruses. The central figure is a self-proclaimed Sophistic teacher whose alleged education is revealed as non-existent. This is done in test situations in which he is subjected to a critical examination of his extravagant claims. Thus in the dialogue with the double title *Pseudosophistes* or *Soloïkistes*, a fictitious Lucian subjects the protagonist *Sophist* to a Socratic cross-examination in which he is constrained to admit that a person who himself does not utter any solecisms can also notice such mistakes in other people and vice versa. As *Sophist* takes it for granted that he does not make such a mistake, Lucian puts his conversation partner to the test by inserting in almost every one of his subsequent utterances a solecism; *Sophist* discovers none at all and thus does not live up to his own claim. The dialogue ends with *Sophist* admitting that his initial contention is wrong and must be withdrawn. He has evidently pretended to possess a knowledge which is not at his disposal. Lack of a solid education and self-overestimation are therefore characteristics of such Sophistic teachers who pretend too much and know too little.

The dialogue analyzed above and other Lucianic dialogues present satirical images of pseudo-Sophists whose “debunking” also provides a picture of an audience of half-witted people applauding their speech shows. Therefore the reproach of a lack of education is repeated in these works time and again. By contrast the reaction of the educated people consists in compassion or derision. Nevertheless Zweimüller rightly states that those Sophists who strove after reputation and wealth could not be content with offering presentations of highbrow topics but had to stage popular shows as well. Thus a Sophist had the difficulty of facing a double audience of both highly educated and less educated people—a situation that again became relevant in the twentieth century in T. S. Eliot’s theory of poetic drama.

The final chapter (3) of Zweimüller’s historical introduction is dedicated to the contrast between pseudo-philosophers and ideal representatives of philosophy, as well as the corresponding motifs he employs for their representation. This is necessarily based on the contrast between seeming and being. It would go beyond the scope of this review to discuss all the works and their analyses here. Suffice it to mention Lucian’s *Demonax*, an outline of the life of the Athenian philosopher Demonax, and the figure of a serious-comic “debunker” (3.1); his *Piscator* and *Fugitivi* as models of satirizing pseudo-philosophers (3.2); and finally Lucian’s variations on the same subject in his literary creations, especially his typification of the pseudo-educated against their historical background (3.3). The brief chapter (6) on the reception of Lucian’s *Rhetorum praeceptor* by Willibald Pirckheimer and Erasmus of Rotterdam in the Renaissance represents more an appendix to the edition and study than a necessary and integral part. The volume is
concluded by an extensive bibliography of primary and secondary sources and indices of both quoted passages, and of names and subjects.

To sum up, Serena Zweimüller’s edition of, introduction to, and commentary on, Lucian’s satirical work *Rhetorum praeceptor* fills an important lacuna in our knowledge of the Second Sophistic Age. This is achieved by an immaculate critical edition and a good German translation. The line-by-line and chapter-by-chapter commentary provides highly useful (and necessary) information on the work’s historical background and the author’s satirical narrative techniques. Moreover, the introduction unfolds extensive information about many works of this important late classical writer and acquaints the reader with a specific phase in the long history of antirhetoric. The previous neglect of this author and his work necessitated both Serena Zweimüller’s thorough treatment of the subject and the detailed nature of this review. A book that must be wholeheartedly recommended to historians of both Greek literature and rhetorical culture.

Heinrich F. Plett

Essen