

## — 2. The Form of the Prose Hymn Pg. 22 by Micheal Trapp

In choosing praise of the gods as material for prose oratory, and in calling the resulting products “hymns”,<sup>88</sup> Aristides was not doing anything startlingly new or original for his times. What gives him his special status in this connection is the fact that later writers on oratory, particularly Menander Rhetor, identified him as the classic model for this kind of composition, and that he himself in the opening paragraphs of his *Sarapis* explicitly defended the production of hymns in prose as well as in verse. In this programmatic statement (*Sarapis* [Or. 45] 1–14) he argues that poets cannot reasonably claim sole rights over the praising of the gods for a whole series of reasons, ranging from the greater degree of system and completeness that goes with prose as opposed to verse delivery, to the priority of prose over verse in age and value, and (most strikingly) the alleged ability of prose to embody the key quality of metron (measure-metre) to a higher degree.<sup>89</sup> For Menander Rhetor, writing in the following century, this generic self-consciousness combined with the volume of his output of prose hymns made Aristides the prime model for the form, as is shown not only by his glowing praise at the end of his book of instructions on hymns (*Treatise* I, 344.1–4 Spengel 3) but also in the advice he gives for beginning an oration in praise of Apollo (a ‘*Sminthiac*’), which echoes the opening of the *Sarapis* (*Treatise* II, 437.6–27 Spengel 3).

## 9. Cato, M. P. & Mazzarino, A. (1982) *M. Porci Catonis de agri cultura*. 2. Aufl. Leipzig: Teubner.

1. It is true that to obtain money by trade is sometimes more profitable, were it not so hazardous; and likewise money-lending, if it were as honorable. Our ancestors held this view and embodied it in their laws, which required that the thief be mulcted (fined) double and the usurer (money lender who collects interest) fourfold; how much less desirable a citizen they considered the usurer than the thief, one may judge from this. And when they would praise a worthy man their praise took this form: “good husbandman, good farmer”; one so praised was thought to have received the greatest commendation. The trader I consider to be an energetic man, and one bent on making money; but, as I said above, it is a dangerous career and one subject to disaster. On the other hand, it is from the farming class that the bravest men and the sturdiest soldiers come, their calling is most highly respected, their livelihood is most assured and is looked on with the least hostility, and those who are engaged in that pursuit are least inclined to be disaffected (discontented). And now, to come back to my subject, the above will serve as an introduction to what I have undertaken.

## REFERENCES

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