

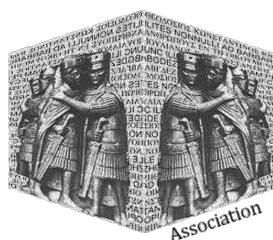
REVUE DES ÉTUDES TARDO-ANTIQUES

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APPROACH TO THE ELOQUENCE IN THE WORKS OF ISIDORE OF SEVILLE¹

Abstract: Isidore of Seville, being out of polemics between rhetoric and philosophy or between “pagan” and Christian wisdom, used the concepts and arguments originated in these “quarrels” to build his own discourse. Thus he somehow summed up the results of them. The article analyzes Isidore’s approach to the eloquence in the light of the problem of using the source material. Two lines of correlation between the notion of eloquence and that of the wisdom are detected. One originates in the opposition of “pagan” and Christian wisdom, the other goes back to rhetoric / philosophy opposition. The first is ascetic developed in *Sententiae* by using the patristic argumentation against the “pagan” culture and by elaborating the ascetic concept of “speaking well” (*bene loquor*) concentrated on the matter of speaking not on its form. The second is presented in *Differentiae* 2 and *Etymologiae*. In *Differentiae* 2 Isidore follows to Aulus Gellius and subjects eloquence to wisdom and rhetoric to dialectics. In *Etymologiae* he uses Quintilian’s concept of rhetoric and connects rhetoric and philosophy.

Keywords: Isidore of Seville; Cicero; Quintilian; Augustine; rhetoric; eloquence; philosophy; wisdom.

When considering the notion of eloquence in the Late Antiquity we should have in mind dramatic relations, on the one hand, between rhetoric and philosophy / dialectics and between philosophy (“pagan” wisdom) and Christian wisdom on the other hand. Isidore of Seville (560-636) is of interest in this perspective because he, while being out of polemics (there were no philosophers or rhetoricians proper in Visigothic Spain), summed up the results of these “quarrels”. Besides, the investigations of Isidore’s attitude to eloquence and rhetoric are somehow incomplete². The article devoted to this problem contains a good

¹ This research received funding from The Russian Foundation for Humanitarian Research (project No. 13-31-01226 “*Differentiae* of Isidore of Seville: translation, commentary, studies”).

² Vd. e.g. G. A. KENNEDY, *Classical Rhetoric and Its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times*, Chapel Hill 1999², pp. 203-204; J. J. MURPHY, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages. A History of*

introduction, but gives little attention to the way, how Isidore uses source materials³. This question is rather important in his case, since his works are of compilative character.

So the aim of this article is to fill the gap by considering Isidore's attitude to the eloquence mainly through the prism of his approach to source materials. Three Isidore's works – *Differentiae* 2, *Sententiae* and *Etymologiae* – get into the scope of this investigation. Actually there are at least two lines of correlation between eloquence and wisdom: one is evolved in the *Sententiae*, the other is expounded in the *Differentiae* 2 and the *Etymologiae*.

Sententiae

Though the target audience of this book is not clear, it might be supposed that the approach to the wisdom described in it is mainly ascetic⁴. Isidore uses the interpretation of wisdom developed by Christian authors, that was opposed to *the wisdom of this world* (1 Cor 3. 19) understood as an achievement of "pagan" thought⁵. The principal knowledge is that of true God given by Christ⁶. Consequently, the philosophers were not able to achieve this true knowledge⁷. So the content of the "pagan" culture is of no value. The main points of this critic are taken from Augustine's *Confessiones*⁸, though they could be considered as commonplaces of Christian tradition.

According to the same discourse, Isidore concerns the notion of eloquence in considering the attitude to the "pagan" books (Isid., *sent.* 1, 13). It is the eloquence that gives an advantage to these books over the Bible⁹. The art of elo-

Rhetorical Theory from Saint Augustine to the Renaissance, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London, pp. 64-66, 73-76. In the second book even the name of Isidore's main work is misspelled: *Etymologia* instead of *Etymologiae*.

³ E. MAREY, «Sapientiam sine eloquentia prodesse non est dubium: the rapport of wisdom and eloquence in the work of Isidore of Seville», *St Tikhon's University revue* 45, 2013, pp. 7-19 [in Russian].

⁴ Isid., *sent.* 2, 1, 1: *Omnis qui secundum Deum sapiens est beatus est*. This thesis is basic for all the work. Vd. P. CAZIER, *Isidore de Séville et la naissance de l'Espagne catholique*, Paris 1994, p. 78.

⁵ Isid., *sent.* 1, 17, 1.

⁶ Isid., *sent.* 1, 17, 3-4.

⁷ Isid., *sent.* 1, 17, 5.

⁸ Aug., *conf.* 7, 21, 27; 10, 6, 10; 10, 42, 67. Vd. P. CAZIER, *Isidorus Hispalensis. Sententiae*, cura et studio P. C., Turnhout 1998, pp. 64-65.

⁹ Isid., *sent.* 3, 13, 2: *Quidam plus meditare delectantur gentilium dicta propter tumentem et ornatum sermonem, quam scripturam sanctam propter eloquium humile*; 3, 13, 3-4: *Gentilium dicta exterius uerborum eloquentia nitent, interius uacua uirtutis sapientia manent; eloquia autem sacra exterius incompta uerbis apparent, intrin-*

quence and argumentation is posed in the same line of “pagan” contrivances with pseudepigraphs¹⁰. The truth of Bible is set forth in simple words¹¹. It should be noted that Isidore in *Senteniae* includes rhetoric and dialectics in the same line not opposing them to each other, but opposing them both to the Christian virtue¹².

The same argumentation does not mean the same aim. Isidore does not need to prove the superiority of Christian wisdom over the pagan one in 7th cent. Spain. So why did he use this “anti-pagan” line of argumentation? The answer should be twofold. First, the chapter “On the pagan books” correlates with Isidore’s “Monastic Rule”¹³. Most arguments against reading “pagan” literature from this chapter possess clearly ascetic character. “Pagan” doctrine lacks the true divine knowledge; consequently, it is of no use¹⁴. At the same time, it affects the orthodoxy¹⁵. Besides, reading pagan books can arouse lust¹⁶.

Second, the interpretation of “speaking well” (Isid., *sent.* 2, 29) in the chapter on the appropriate style of speaking is ascetic. Isidore most probably following to Augustine affirms that the stylistic embellishments are contrary to the very spirit of true wisdom¹⁷. Then he reconsiders, using *Moralia* of Gregory the Great, the notion of “speaking well” (*bene loquor*). It is not a form of speaking that makes it “well” but its matter. “Speaking well” means “to proclaim the truth” (*ore bene loquitur qui ueritatem adnuntiat*). One can speak by his heart or mouth or deeds, “well” or “bad” depending on what is proclaimed¹⁸.

secus autem mysteriorum sapientia fulgent; 3, 13, 6: *Omnis saecularis doctrina spumantibus uerbis resonans, ac se per eloquentiae tumorem adtollens, per doctrinam simplicem et humilem christianam euacuata est, sicut scriptum est: Nonne stultam fecit Deus sapientiam huius mundi?*

¹⁰ Isid., *sent.* 3, 12, 5: *Doctores errorum prauis persuasionibus ita per argumenta fraudulentiae inligant auditores, ut eos quasi in laberinto implicent, a quo exire uix ualent*; 3, 12, 6: *Tanta est hereticorum calliditas ut falsa ueris malaque bonis permisceant, salutaribusque rebus plerumque erroris sui uirus interserant...*; 3, 12, 7: *Plerumque sub nomine catholicorum doctorum heretici sua dicta conscribunt, ut indubitanter lecta credantur...*

¹¹ Isid., *sent.* 3, 13, 5: *Ideo libri sancti simplici sermone conscripti sunt, ut non in sapientia uerbi.*

¹² Isid., *sent.* 3, 13, 5: *Nam si dialectici acuminis uersutia, aut rhetoricae artis eloquentia editi essent, nequaquam putaretur fides Christi in Dei uirtute, sed in eloquentiae humanae argumentis consistere; nec quemquam crederemus ad fidem diuino inspiramine prouocari, sed potius uerborum calliditate seduci.*

¹³ Isid., *reg. monach.* 8, 3: *Gentilium libros uel haereticorum uolumina monachus legere caueat.*

¹⁴ Isid., *sent.* 3, 13, 2.

¹⁵ Isid., *sent.* 3, 13, 8.

¹⁶ Isid., *sent.* 3, 13, 1.

¹⁷ Isid., *sent.* 2, 29, 12: *Horret enim sapientia spumeum uerborum ambitum, ac fucum mundialis eloquentiae inflatis sermonibus perornatum.* Cf. Aug., *doct. christ.* 4, 14.

¹⁸ Isid., *sent.* 2, 29, 18: *Corde bene loquitur qui caritatem non simulat. Ore bene loquitur qui ueritatem adnuntiat. Factis bene loquitur qui alios bonis exemplis aedificat*; 2, 29, 19: *Corde male loquitur qui interius cogitationes noxias meditatatur et cogitat. Lingua male loquitur qui pro quod male agit flagellatur et murmurat. Factis male loquitur qui male uiuendo exemplis suis alios ad prae agendum informat.* Vd. Isid., *sent.* 2, 29, 16-17, 20-21. Cf. Greg. M., *moral.* 23, 1, 5.

Isidore in *Sententiae* uses the arguments of the Christian authors (Augustine in this case) against the “pagan” culture and particularly against eloquence that is proclaimed to be the main advantage of it. But the aim of this critic is not apologetic. The eloquent pagan books could damage the morality and orthodoxy. Eloquence is superfluous for the truth, so the “well-speaking” acquires a wider interpretation of ascetic character. It depends on the matter, not on the form (here he quotes Gregory), and consists not only of speech itself, but also of intention (heart) and deed.

Differentiae 2

Differentiae 2 suggests the other attitude to the relation between wisdom and eloquence. To begin, there are three attempts to consider this problem in the book: the first (and least evident) is analysis of different notions that related to the ability of thinking (Isid., *diff.* 2, 21–23), the second is a lemma on “*eloquentia / sapientia*” (Isid., *diff.* 2, 36) and the third is on “rhetoric and dialectics” (Isid., *diff.* 2, 39).

The first passage (Isid., *diff.* 2, 21–23) could be included into the perspective of our analysis only if it is presumed that Isidore may play some game of allusions and structure. A number of notions run as follows: *ratio*, *mens*, *memoria*, *sensus*, *cogitatio*. The following structure of this passage is of interest: lemma 21 “*mens / ratio*”, lemma 22 “*sensus / memoria*”, lemma 23 “*memoria / mens / cogitatio*”. So the third lemma unites the first and the second one including the notions from them.

The definition of *ratio* in *diff.* 2, 21 literally coincides with that of the dialectics in *diff.* 2, 39¹⁹. Isidore may use several texts to elaborate it²⁰. Lemma 22 “*sensus / memoria*” contains some parallels to the definition of memory as a part of rhetoric by Cicero²¹. The third lemma is a transformed quotation from Cicero’s *Consolatio*. Isidore correlates three abilities (*memoria*, *mens*, *cogitatio*) with the past, the present and the future²². So we may conclude that in this passage Isidore alludes to the unity of the abilities related to rhetoric and dialectics.

¹⁹ Isid., *diff.* 2, 21: *Ratio uero est motus quidam animi uisum mentis acuens, ueraque a falsis distinguens*. Cf. Isid., *diff.* 2, 39: *Dialectica est ratio siue regula disputandi, intellectum mentis acuens, ueraque a falsis distinguens*.

²⁰ Cf. Ambr., in *Luc.* (prolog.); Aug., *ord.* 2, 11, 30; Aug., in *psalm.* 42, 6.

²¹ Isid., *diff.* 2, 22: *Inter sensus et memoria hoc interest: sensus est rei cuiusque adinuentio; memoria rei inuentae recordatio. Ille excogitata repperit, haec repperta custodit*. Cf. Cic., *inv.* 1, 9: *Quare materia quidem nobis rhetoricae uidetur artis ea, quam Aristoteli visam esse diximus; partes autem eae, quas plerique dixerunt, inuentio, dispositio, elocutio, memoria, pronuntiatio. inuentio est excogitatio rerum uerarum aut veri similibus ... memoria est firma animi rerum ac uerborum ad inuentionem perceptio...*

²² Isid., *diff.* 2, 23: *Inter memoriam et mentem et cogitationem talis distinctio est, quod memoria praeterita*

The correlation of the notions *eloquentia* / *sapientia* is made in the *diff.* 2, 37. It should be noted that Isidore gives two different interpretations of the word *sapientia* in lemmas 36–37. The first one is opposed to the notion of *scientia* / *prudentia*. This opposition goes back to the stoics and it is introduced in these Latin terms by Cicero²³. Jerome and Augustine somehow change the notion of wisdom in this opposition – it is related to the knowledge of divine things (in their Christian sense) and contemplation. It is their interpretation that is used by Isidore in *diff.* 2, 36²⁴. Thus, Isidore sets forth in *diff.* 2, 36 the similar notion of wisdom like that in *Sententiae*.

However, Isidore correlates the eloquence with the other interpretation of wisdom. In *diff.* 2, 37 he identifies the notion of *sapientia* with philosophy which is defined by indirect quotation from Cicero's *De officiis*²⁵. So the eloquence is compared with the wisdom in the perspective of contrasting of philosophy and rhetoric.

Isidore makes his text from the quotations from Cicero, so it appears as if the highest authority in the field of Latin eloquence compared these notions. Isidore correlates the eloquence with words and the wisdom with sentences, transforming the quotation from *De optimo genere oratorum*. Cicero attributes words and sentences to the eloquence²⁶.

The next quotation is borrowed from “philosophical” preface to *De inuentione*, where Cicero says:

...existimem sapientiam sine eloquentia parum prodesse ciuitatibus, eloquentiam uero sine sapientia nimium obesse plerumque, prodesse numquam²⁷.

retinet, mens futura praenidet, cogitatio praesentia complectit. Cf. Cic., *cons. fr.* 21 (Cic., *Tusc.* 1, 66; Lact., *ir. Dei* 10): ...his enim in naturis nihil inest, quod uim memoriae mentis cogitationis habeat, quod et praeterita teneat et futura prouideat et complecti possit praesentia. Vd. Cic., *inv.* 2, 160.

²³ Vd. Cic., *off.* 1, 153.

²⁴ Isid., *diff.* 2, 36: *Scientia temporalibus bene utitur, atque in uitandis malis, seu intelligendis uel appetendis bonis uersatur: sapientia autem tantummodo aeterna contemplatur.* Cf. Aug., *trin.* 12, 14: ...distat tamen ab aeternorum contemplatione actio qua bene utimur temporalibus rebus, et illa sapientiae, haec scientiae deputatur ... scientiam siue disciplinam qua in uitandis malis bonis que appetendis actio nostra uersatur.

Isid., *diff.* 2, 36: *Item nonnulli uiri inter sapientiam et prudentiam intelligi uoluerunt, ut sapientiam in diuinis, prudentiam autem uel scientiam in hominis negotiis ponerent.* Cf. Hier., in *Eph.* : ...sapientiam et prudentiam esse diuersas, stoici quoque opinantur, dicentes: “sapientia est rerum diuinarum humanarumque cognitio; prudentia uero tantum mortalium”. iuxta hanc diuisionem possumus sapientiam inuisibilem, et uisibilem accipere, prudentiam uero tantum uisibilem. Jerome may allude to Cic., *Tusc.* 4, 26, 57.

²⁵ Isid., *diff.* 2, 37: *Porro sapientiam ueteres philosophiam uocauerunt, id est omnium rerum humanarum atque diuinarum scientiam.* Source: Lact., *inst.* 3, 13. Lactanius here refers to Cicero quoting his *De officiis* (Cic., *off.* 1, 153).

²⁶ Cf. Isid., *diff.* 2, 37: ...eloquentia constat ex uerbis, sapientia ex sententiis; Cic., *opt. gen.* 4: *Nam quoniam eloquentia constat ex uerbis et ex sententiis* (repeated by Charisius: Char., *gramm.* 2, 199).

²⁷ Cic., *inv.* 1, 1. Augustine quotes it: Aug., *doct. christ.* 4, 5; Aug., *Epist. nuper in luc. prol.* 2.

Isidore somehow rearranges the emphasis in the phrase, changing *parum prodesse ciuitatibus* into *prodesse non est dubium*. The other change is not so significant: *nimum obesse plerumque, prodesse numquam* is changed into *ualere non potest*²⁸. Why Isidore stresses the opposition, will be clear from the next quotation.

The third quotation is meaningful, too. It originates in *De oratore* but its form suggests that it was borrowed from *Noctes Atticae*²⁹. The quotation affirms the superiority of the *indiserta prudentia* over the *stulta loquacitas*. It should be noted that the logic of Isidore's passage coincides with that of Aulus Gellius that gives a special attention to the opposition of the prudence and loquacity. Isidore understands this opposition in terms of philosophy / rhetoric. His conclusion runs as follows: it is the investigation of thing that is useful, not the stylistic embellishment of words³⁰. Isidore's logic corresponds to that of Aulus Gellius. On the contrary, Cicero prefers to reconcile wisdom and eloquence.

Though this attitude to eloquence is somehow similar to that of *Sententiae*, the differences are evident. First, Isidore quotes Cicero following the discourse of Aulus Gellius, not the Christian authors. Second, he compares eloquence with the classic notion of philosophy (identifying it with that of wisdom). Third, the passage devoted to eloquence and wisdom, while explicitly praises the wisdom, implicitly shows its author's skill of quoting that should be considered as a demonstration of the eloquence. So it can be supposed that Isidore's attitude to the eloquence was somehow more complicated than it was expressed in *diff.* 2, 37.

This supposition is confirmed by *diff.* 2, 39, where Isidore considers rhetoric and dialectics as two parts of logic. While the functions of dialectics coincide with that of logic in *diff.* 2, 38 (to distinguish between true and false), the function of rhetoric is auxiliary one. Isidore quotes the paraphrase from *Aeneis* (the source is unknown): *sicut ferrum ueneno sic sententiam armat eloquio*³¹. So the eloquence is a very useful addition to the dialectics.

The eloquence in *Differentiae* 2 is understood only as a special skill that should be somehow correlated with the wisdom. It should be noted that the wisdom in

²⁸ Isid., *diff.* 2, 37: *Sapientiam sine eloquentia prodesse non est dubium, eloquentia sine sapientia ualere non potest.*

²⁹ Isid., *diff.* 2, 37: *Melior est enim indiserta prudentia quam stulta loquacitas.* Cf. Gell. 1, 15, 6: *...malim equidem indisertam prudentiam quam stultam loquacitatem;* Cic., *de Orat.* 3, 142: *...malim equidem indisertam prudentiam quam stultitiam loquacem.*

³⁰ Isid., *diff.* 2, 37: *Rerum enim studia prosunt, non ornamenta uerborum.* Some manuscripts add the phrase *eloquentia enim, ut diximus, scientia est uerborum; sapientia autem, cognitio rerum et intellectus causarum* (Vd. M. A. ANDRÉS SANZ, *Isidori Hispalensis episcopi liber differentiarum [III]* cura et studio M. A. S., Turnhout 2006, p. 96). Not being a quotation from Cicero's works (actually not being a quotation at all), this phrase does not match with all the previous. It might be considered as a later addition.

³¹ Cf. Verg., *Aen.* 11, 772: *ungere tela manu ferrumque armare ueneno.*

this correlation is considered as philosophy. Wisdom in its Christian sense is correlated with the notion of *scientia* (that, on the contrary, is related to active live). Isidore in *diff.* 2, 37 opposes the wisdom that is useful *per se* and eloquence that does not have its own value. This opposition is borrowed from the discourse of Aulus Gellius, though Isidore builds his text from quotations of Cicero's works (that shows some skill of eloquence). It could be supposed that Isidore in *diff.* 2, 21-23 playing some game of quoting and structure shows the close connection between the rhetorical ability (*memoria*) and that of dialectics (*ratio*). Isidore unites in *diff.* 2, 39 rhetoric and dialectics as two parts of logic, but the function of the first is auxiliary.

Etymologiae

On the one hand, in *Etymologiae* Isidore somehow develops the attitude to the relation between rhetoric and dialectics (Isid., *orig.* 2, 24) that was applied in *Differentiae* 2. On the other hand, he improves the notions of rhetoric and orator borrowed from Cassiodore's *Institutiones* (Isid., *orig.* 2, 1-3), the main source for sections on rhetoric and dialectics.

Cassiodore treats rhetoric as a "technical" discipline of *bene dicendi* (relying on the *Ars rhetorica* of Fortunatianus)³². Isidore adds the moral component: *ad persuadendum iusta et bona* (Etym. 2, 1, 1). This component is evolved in the definition of *orator*. Isidore starts from traditional definition: *uir bonus dicendi peritus* (borrowed from Cassiodore's *Institutiones*, but originating in Cato the Elder)³³. Cassiodore confines himself to this definition. Isidore reveals both parts by affirming the combination of professional and moral qualities in the figure of the ideal orator. His source in this case is Quintilian's *Instutio oratoria*³⁴. Besides, Isidore adds three components of the orator's success. These components are borrowed from *De ciuitate dei*, where Augustine elaborates them according to the threefold division of philosophy, but does not correlate them with rhetoric³⁵. In this passage Augustine uses a classic scheme, referring to Plato, so there is no specific character of the patristic thought in this discourse.

³² Cassiod., *inst.* 2, 2, 1; Fortun., *rhet.* 1.

³³ Isid., *orig.* 2, 3, 1; goes back to: Cato *ad fil.* frg 14.

³⁴ Isid., *orig.* 2, 3, 1: *Vir bonus consistit natura, moribus, artibus...* Cf. Quint., *inst.* 12, 1.

³⁵ Isid., *orig.* 2, 3, 2: *Ipsa autem peritia dicendi in tribus rebus consistit: natura, doctrina, usu. Natura ingenio, doctrina scientia, usus adsiduitate. Haec sunt enim quae non solum in oratore, sed in unoquoque homine artifice expectantur, ut aliquid efficiat.* Aug., *civ.* 11, 25: *Tria enim sunt, quae in unoquoque homine artifice spectantur, ut aliquid efficiat: natura, doctrina, usus. Natura ingenio, doctrina scientia, usus fructu diiudicandus est.*

Thus, Isidore's conceptualization of rhetoric in this passage is twofold. He adds the moral element following Quintilian's text. By allusion to Augustine, Isidore implicitly connects rhetoric and philosophy.

This connection, however, acquires explicit character when the threefold division of philosophy is explained. Isidore adds this explanation to Cassiodore's catalogue of the definitions of philosophy by developing it on the basis of different sources³⁶. He borrows Stoic concept of rhetoric and dialectics as two parts of logic from *Differentiae* 2³⁷. In *Etymologiae* he does not stress the auxiliary function of rhetoric. On the contrary, the gloss of the word *logica* suggests the equal position of the both. Isidore derives it from *λόγος* that possesses two meanings: *sermo*, related to rhetoric, and *ratio*, related to dialectics³⁸. It should be noted, however, that Isidore borrowing the definition of dialectics in *orig.* 2. 22 from Cassiodore's *Institutiones* does not correlate it with his definition of logic in *orig.* 2, 24, so in this passage logic and dialectics are equated³⁹. At the same time the sections on rhetoric and dialectic contain many errors and miscorrelations making us suppose that it was not completely edited by Isidore⁴⁰.

The passages considering rhetoric in *Etymologiae* demonstrate the development of the attitude, evolved in *Differentiae* 2. Isidore, on the one hand, presents morality as an essential element of orator and rhetoric and, consequently, of eloquence. On the other hand, he involves rhetoric into philosophy. Thus the problem of immoral and unwise eloquence is removed, and Isidore does not need to stress auxiliary function of eloquence to wisdom and that of rhetoric to dialectics. The main source Isidore uses to develop that concept is Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria*; he does not apply Christian concepts.

Conclusions

³⁶ While the explanation of the threefold division of philosophy (Isid., *orig.* 2, 24, 1-8) turns out to be a creative contamination of various sources (Aug., *civ.* 11, 25; 8, 3-4; Lact., *inst.* 3, 3; Hier. *ep.*, 30 etc.), the rest part of the chapter (Isid., *orig.* 2, 24, 9-16) is a copy of Cassiodore's text (Cassiod., *inst.* 2, 3, 4-7).

³⁷ Isid., *orig.* 2, 24, 7. Cf. Isid., *diff.* 2, 39.

³⁸ Isid., *orig.* 2, 24, 7: *Logicam, quae rationalis uocatur, Plato subiunxit... diuidens eam in dialecticam et rhetoricam. Dicta autem logica, id est rationalis. Λόγος enim apud Graecos et sermonem significat et rationem.*

³⁹ Isid., *orig.* 2, 22, 1: *Ipsa [sc. dialectica] est philosophiae species, quae logica dicitur.* Cf. Cassiod., *inst.* 2, 2, 17: *...logicam, quae et dialectica dicitur.*

⁴⁰ Vd. P. K. MARSHALL, *Introduction*, in *Isidore of Seville. Etymologies. Book II. Rhetoric*, text edited and translated with annotations by P. K. M., Paris 1983, p. 6.

The both main oppositions – rhetoric / philosophy (dialectics) and “pagan” wisdom (philosophy) / Christian wisdom – are presented in Isidorian reflection on the eloquence.

In *Sententiae* Isidore considers the eloquence in the light of the opposition between “pagan” and Christian wisdom. The role of the eloquence is rather important: it is understood as a main advantage of the “pagan” literature over the Bible. Using the patristic argumentation, Isidore denies the value of the formal eloquence. His aim, however, is not apologetic, but ascetic. Consequently, Isidore (using some ideas of Gregory the Great) develops the ascetic concept of *bene loquor* that is concentrated on what is expressed (by words or deeds).

In *Differentiae 2* and *Etymologiae* Isidore follows the classic opposition between eloquence and philosophy, rhetoric and dialectics. Some evolution of Isidore’s approach to the problem could be detected. In *Differentiae 2* the eloquence is understood as a skill related to form, not to matter (that is somehow similar like “pagan” eloquence of *Sententiae*). It is correlated with the classic notions of wisdom (not with the Christian one) and dialectics. Contrasting the eloquence and the wisdom in *diff. 2, 36* Isidore follows the discourse of Aulus Gellius, though he builds his text from quotations from Cicero’s works. This game of quoting is somehow eloquent that makes one suppose that eloquence is not only opposed but also is correlated with the wisdom in Isidore’s opinion. This correlation is explicitly made in the case of rhetoric and dialectics in *diff. 2, 39*. The both are considered as the parts of logic, but the function of the rhetoric is only auxiliary. Besides, the structure and the allusions of *diff. 2, 21-23* suggest an idea of the profound connection between the “rhetoric” ability of mind and the “dialectic” one. It should be noted that the opposition eloquence / wisdom is borrowed by Isidore from Cicero. At the same time, he prefers to stress the superiority of wisdom over the rhetorical skill (unlike Cicero and like Aulus Gellius).

It is the concept of rhetoric that is developed on the basis of Quintilian’s work in *Etymologiae*. Rhetoric obtains the moral dimension; it is related to philosophy. Consequently, Isidore in *Etymologiae* neither stresses the auxiliary function of rhetoric nor opposes the eloquence to the wisdom. On the contrary, Isidore emphasizes this relation, on the one hand, implicitly by attributing to the ideal orator the three components of success that were elaborated by Augustine according to platonic threefold division of philosophy, and explicitly by considering rhetoric and dialectic as the parts of logic (like in *diff. 2, 39*) on the other.

It is rather difficult to correlate Isidore’s two approaches to the eloquence, that of *Sententiae* and that of *Differentiae 2* and *Etymologiae*. They are the results of different author’s “policies”. At the same time, the key problem is the same for the both approaches. It is the problem of “immoral” and “unwise” eloquence, the problem of its moral and philosophical (in its ancient sense) dimensions. In *Sententiae* it is solved in ascetic way by refuting the “pagan” eloquence with its stylistic embellishments and by developing the concept of *bene loquor* as the

expression of piety. In *Differentiae 2* Isidore, following the classic models, subjects eloquence to wisdom and rhetoric to philosophy. At the same time Isidore emphasizes that eloquence does not have its own value. In *Etymologiae* the concept of rhetoric is rooted in morality and philosophy, so that the problem itself is removed.

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