RHETORICAL EXERCISES FROM
LATE ANTIQUITY

Produced by a team of eight scholars, this is the first translation of the Declamations and Preliminary Talks of the sixth-century AD sophist Choricius of Gaza. Declamations, deliberative or judicial orations on fictitious themes, were the fundamental advanced exercises of the rhetorical schools of the Roman Empire, of interest also to audiences outside the schools. Some of Choricius’ declamations are on generic themes (e.g., a tyrannicide, a war-hero), while others are based on specific motifs from Homeric times or from classical Greek history. The Preliminary Talks were typical prefaces to orations of all kinds. This volume also contains a detailed study of Choricius’ reception in Byzantium and Renaissance Italy. It will be of interest to students of late antiquity, ancient rhetoric, and ancient education.

RHETORICAL EXERCISES
FROM LATE ANTIQUITY

A Translation of Choricius of Gaza’s
Preliminary Talks and Declamations

with an epilogue on Choricius’ reception in Byzantium

EDITED BY
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with Eugenio Amato, Malcolm Heath, George A. Kennedy,
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D. A. Russell, and Simon Swain
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Having produced an annotated translation of Themistius’ private orations in 2000 and then of the Himerian corpus in 2007, I was eager to move on to other genres of scholarship; at the same time, I did have an interest in advancing to the School of Gaza and making a translation of Choricius’ preliminary talks and declamations, a project which, if undertaken by myself alone, and given my other commitments, would have required close to ten years to complete. I decided to go forward with this new translation project, but to make it a collaborative effort. I must begin, then, by thanking my collaborators: *sine quibus nihil*. Their effort has been pioneering, the texts they have translated often difficult. New too is Eugenio Amato’s study of the reception of Choricius in Byzantium, both broad and in-depth.

Not all translation projects are well served by collaboration: a new English Homer, for example, requiring a consistent style and striving for poetic merit in its own right, obviously needs a single and literarily gifted translator. But a corpus of discrete prose texts primarily of specialized interest, being translated for the first time, may be entrusted to a committee of scholars: if they produce accurate versions that can be easily read on their own and also be used as a vade mecum to the Greek text, the translators will have accomplished something useful.

I am grateful to Fordham University for a faculty fellowship in the spring semester of 2006, during which I was able to accomplish much on this project. William W. Reader expresses his appreciation to the Greek cultural institute of EKEMEL for granting him a summer residency in 2005 at the “House of Literature” in Lefkes, Paros, while he was translating Declamation 10 [XXXVIII]. Several individuals gave special assistance, of one kind or another, for which they deserve special thanks: Kristoffel Demoen, Malcolm Heath, William W. Reader, D. A. Russell, Simon Swain, and especially Eugenio Amato, who himself expresses thanks to Ilaria Ramelli of the Università Cattolica di Milano for her help. Craig A. Gibson kindly
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commented on my introduction. I profited from the introductions that George A. Kennedy wrote for the original drafts of his translations of *Declamations* 8 [XXIX] and 12 [XLII] and from some brief comments D. A. Russell prefixed to the original versions of his translations of 1 [X], 2 [XII], 5 [XX], and 6 [XXIII]. My editor Michael Sharp kindly – and successfully – encouraged me to stay the course at a time when I was suffering from discouragement.

The last forty years have seen a considerable increase of interest in the Second Sophistic and in the sophists and rhetors of the fourth century AD. The same period has also witnessed an explosion of interest in late antiquity in general. Both trends together inevitably lead to the School of Gaza. In addition, some scholars have more recently seen the possibility of taking ancient declamation more seriously and sympathetically than it has been in the past. We hope that all these developments make the appearance of this volume timely.

R. J. P.

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