

Introduction

Aristotle's extensive body of work has consistently attracted the attention of scholars, both ancient and modern. As a researcher of his day, Aristotle made valuable observations concerning logic, language, rhetoric, poetics, biology, meteorology, ethics and politics. All of these allowed him to engage with his environment, to participate in contemporary debates, and to become an avant-garde thinker both in his own time and for centuries to come.¹ This is not least the case with his thoughts on *lexis*. Like other terms used by Aristotle, this notion is notoriously difficult to translate,² covering in its most inclusive form the semantic field of 'language' and in its least inclusive form that of a particular 'diction'³ or 'style'.⁴

¹ See e.g. Kennedy (1963) and (1994), Halliwell (1995: 3–20); for an outline of Aristotle's place in the history of rhetoric see Lord (1981), and A. E. Walzer et al. (2000); for the novelty of Aristotle's thinking and proceeding see e.g. Haskins (2004); for Aristotle's influence within ancient scholarship see the collected volumes edited by Montanari et al. (2015), and especially the entries by Lapini (2015), Novokhatko (2015), Nünlist (2015), and Swiggers and Wouters (2015).

² For problems related to translating the term *lexis* see Chapter 1, 'Aristotle's definitions of *lexis*'.

³ Schenkeveld (1964: 67) defines 'diction' as 'choice of words, arrangement or composition of the chosen words.'

⁴ For full entries on the term *lexis* see Bonitz et al. (1870: 426), Ernesti (1983: 196–197), Dickey (2007: 245) and *LSJ ad loc.* On the development of *lexis* into *elocutio* see Calboli (1998). For the modern notion of *lexis* see e.g. Green (2000) and Barcroft et al. (2011); for the Greek notion of 'style' see Roberts (1901). For a compact overview of the main issues related to the notion and study of 'style' more generally see e.g. Winslow (2012). Even though there is a tendency among scholars to assume that style is something individual, as Rannie (1915: 1), Ullmann (1957: 25), Enkvist (1971: 50) and Russell (1981) do, in the discussion of the nature of style and stylistics critics tend to fall into one of two camps: (a) those who maintain that style and linguistics are closely connected and who thus focus on linguistic aspects and form in everyday language usage and literary artworks; (b) those who regard style as a distinctly literary phenomenon and therefore discuss the intention of the author as well as intra- and extra-textual contexts. Good instances of (a) are Dornseiff (1921), Bally (1951), Ullmann (1957), Jakobson and Lévi-Strauss (1962), Enkvist (1964) and (1971), Thorne (1964) and (1969), Fowler (1966) and (1972), Riffaterre (1966) and (1971), Hendricks (1969), Jakobson and Halle (1980), Dover (1997); of (b) Alonso (1942), Auerbach (1946), Spitzer (1962), Leo (1966), Hough (1969) and Wellek (1971). Since, as will be demonstrated in Chapter 5, Aristotle's concept of *lexis* displays striking similarities to the concerns raised by group (a), in this book the term 'style' will be used to denote linguistic choice.

His treatment of this concept, as will be argued in this book, thus includes the first traces of a systematic grammar,⁵ of sociolinguistic considerations and of concerns with style,⁶ and spans four different sets of lecture notes,⁷ namely those transmitted under the titles of *Rhetoric* (book 3), *Poetics*, *Sophistical Refutations* and *De interpretatione*.⁸ The unpolished nature of this type of writing combined with the complex transmission of Aristotle's works makes his thoughts on *lexis* hard to disentangle. As lecture notes, Aristotle's writings appear as compilations of statements whose connections are not immediately obvious and require an in-depth engagement with and analysis of his claims. To do this is challenging given that the authorship, unity and chronology of the individual works in the extant *Corpus Aristotelicum* are dubious. Problems arise already at the stage of the manuscript tradition and pervade the history of scholarship and commentary writing on Aristotle's texts.

The Lost Treatise on *Lexis*

The works in which Aristotle discusses *lexis* are at the heart of this convoluted history; for in the writings of the late-antique biographer Diogenes Laertius,⁹ Aristotle is attested to have written two books of the *Rhetoric*, two books of the *Poetics* and two books of a separate work entitled Περὶ λέξεως ('On *lexis*'). The extant *Corpus Aristotelicum*, however, features three books of the *Rhetoric*, one book of the *Poetics* and no separate treatise on *lexis*. Diogenes Laertius' list suggests that Aristotle's texts have not necessarily been transmitted in the form in which they originally appeared.¹⁰ It is therefore not

⁵ In this book, the notions of 'systematic grammar', 'system' and 'theory' are used to indicate that, when read in conjunction, Aristotle's thoughts on language are coherent and include the basic elements of a language theory. They should not, however, be taken to imply any intentionality on Aristotle's part to present a systematic grammar, a theory or a system.

⁶ I disagree with Larkin (1971: 44), who claims that 'it is evident that the three works – *De interpretatione*, *Poetics* and *Rhetoric* – do not display a grammatical concern with language but rather are concerned primarily with arguments about things and with the style proper to poetry and oratory'.

⁷ See e.g. Halliwell (1987: 1) and (1995: 3–4), Green (2000: 163), Clayton (2004: 198–199), Potolsky (2006: 32), Flashar (2013: 63) and Pepe (2013: 123); for a view that Aristotle's works are not sets of lecture notes see Netz (2002: 227–228).

⁸ Even though Aristotle does not use the term *lexis* in the *De interpretatione*, the text is included here as the basic principles according to which constituents of *lexis* operate are outlined in the first few sections of this work. For details see Chapter 2.

⁹ D.L., *Vitae philosophorum* 5.22–28.

¹⁰ For inventories of Aristotelian writings see e.g. Wartelle (1963), and Argyropoulos and Caras (1980). For ancient references to Aristotle and his works see e.g. Moraux (1951) and Düring (1957). For details on the transmission history see e.g. Shute (1976), Lord (1986), Weidemann (1994: 65–71). For the idea that the *Corpus Aristotelicum* cannot be attributed to a sole author but the Peripatetic school

surprising that scholars have debated issues relating to the dating of the *Rhetoric* and the *Poetics*, the unity of the three books of the *Rhetoric* as it appears today as well as the loss of the second book of the *Poetics* and the treatise on *lexis*. The general assumption is that the third book of the *Rhetoric* is in fact the lost treatise on *lexis*, while the second book of the *Poetics*, presumed to contain a treatment of comedy, has indeed gone missing.

Halliwell (1986: 324–330), for instance, discusses the unclear date of the composition of the *Poetics* and Burkert (1975) that of *Rhetoric* 3. The latter, just like Moraux (1951: 103–104), Diels (1968), Gross and Dascal (2001), and Woerther (2005: 1–2), argues that the books 1–2 and 3 of the *Rhetoric* do not form a unity. He supports this *communis opinio*, which is accepted in this book, by analysing Aristotle's references to tragedians on stage and reaches the persuasive conclusion that the third book of the *Rhetoric* was in fact (part of) the lost treatise *Περὶ λέξεως* and was written as a continuation to the *Poetics*. This argument finds further support in the references to the *Poetics* which feature in *Rhetoric* 3 (1.1403b25–26; 1.1404a39; 2.1404b7–8; 2.1405a5–6).¹¹ It is consequently important to keep in mind that while in today's editions the most elaborate treatment of *lexis* features in the first twelve chapters of the third book of the *Rhetoric*, Aristotle's elaborations on *lexis* display a more intimate connection with the *Poetics*. This relation is especially helpful in cases where Aristotle's claims are unclear or display a lacuna, as passages from the other work can be consulted in order to gain more information on the subject in question.

Furthermore, it is helpful and problematic at the same time that, as Flashar (2013: 63) points out, Aristotle is likely to have reworked his lecture notes several times. While this makes dating and arranging Aristotle's works difficult, and leads to some interpretative challenges, especially with regard to his logical works, it also helps to explain passages that are suspected interpolations. Such an excerpt encompasses the *lexis* chapters (20–22) of the *Poetics* which, due to their technical and abrupt nature, are considered to be spurious.¹² Therefore, even though the manuscript and transmission history of the passages in which *lexis* is discussed poses a series

as a whole see Grayeff (1956). For examples of doubtful passages in Aristotle's writings see e.g. the collected volume edited by Moraux and Wiesner (1983); for a discussion of the authorship and unity relating to a specific work see e.g. Blair (1999). For discussions of *lacunae* in the corpus see e.g. Schenkeveld (1993) for a passage from the *Poetics*, Masters (1977) for the missing dialogues and McMahon (1917) for the missing second book of the *Poetics*.

¹¹ See also Tamba-Mecz and Veyne (1979: 84).

¹² Given the possibility of authorial revision and for reasons explained further on in this book, this hypothesis is rejected here. See also the arguments proposed by Dupont-Roc and Lallot (1980: 314–316) in support of the authenticity of chapters 20–22 of the *Poetics*.

of unresolved questions, it does not have as great an influence on his thoughts on *lexis* as it would have had if he had not reworked the texts. Consequently, as long as this history is kept in mind, it is possible to adopt a conceptual approach to Aristotle's thoughts on *lexis* and reach a satisfying qualification and interpretation of it by relying on the evidence as it appears in the extant *Corpus Aristotelicum*.¹³

Scholarship on *Lexis* to Date

Whether or not a separate Aristotelian treatise on *lexis* ever existed, post-Aristotelian scholarship shows that the thoughts he expresses under this term had a great impact on considerations of language and style; for his successors use his ideas as a starting point for new reflections in these domains. Works representative of this type of scholarly activity date as far back as Aristotle's own time and include, among others, his pupil Theophrastus' work *On Style* (Περὶ λέξεως), the *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* attributed to Anaximenes of Lampsakos,¹⁴ Demetrius' *On Style* (Περὶ ἑρμηνείας), pseudo-Longinus' *On the Sublime*, the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, Dionysius' *On Composition*, Dionysius Thrax's *Ars grammatica*, Hermogenes' *De inventione*, Cicero's *De Oratore* and *Orator*, Quintilian's *Institutio oratoria*, Alexander's *De figuris* and Varro's *De lingua Latina*.¹⁵ Each of these texts represents a variation on a common theme and in so doing indirectly engages with Aristotle's thoughts on *lexis*. These works are therefore valuable sources of information for the development of linguistic and stylistic thought in antiquity because they demonstrate how different thinkers engaged in the same topic and how considerations of language and style have moved from being subsumed under the domains of poetics and rhetoric to increasingly being included under the notion of grammar.

Scholars interested in these writings thus rightly point out similarities and differences between Aristotle's thoughts and those expressed in these pieces.¹⁶ This manner of proceeding is especially important in order to avoid deducing the meaning of Aristotle's claims from post-Aristotelian

¹³ For a similar approach see e.g. Polansky (2007: 28–30). ¹⁴ See e.g. Matthaïos (1999: 494).

¹⁵ For a complete list of ancient works and authors who reflected on language and/or style see Schenkeveld (1964) and Steinthal (1971); for collections on Greek rhetoricians see Walz (1832–1836) and Spengel (1853–1856).

¹⁶ Instances of such studies include Kennedy (1957) and the studies collected in the volume edited by Fortenbaugh et al. (1985) – and especially Innes (1985) – on Theophrastus; Rhys Roberts (1902), Schenkeveld (1964) and Radermacher (1966) on Demetrius; Gigon (1959) on Cicero and Aristotle; Lallot (1989), (1998) and (2012) on the Alexandrine grammar and its representatives; De Jonge (2015)

scholars who may have attributed opinions to him which he may not have expressed himself.¹⁷ A more pressing issue is the fact that the same vocabulary is not employed in the same manner. An instance of this phenomenon is Demetrius' use of the term ἐρμηνεία to designate the notion of 'style' within the domain of poetic and rhetorical composition, while the same term stands for a more inclusive idea of 'linguistic expression'¹⁸ in Aristotle. The notion of metaphor too has undergone conceptual changes in that it is restricted to the analogical metaphor from Theophrastus onwards, while it includes four types of transferences in Aristotle.¹⁹ More importantly, the term *lexis* has undergone semantic narrowing, so that qualities subsumed under this Greek word at Aristotle's time were no longer designated by it by the time it was used in grammatical treatises, where it encompasses only the notion of 'word'.²⁰

In addition to writings on language and style, post-Aristotelian scholarship was marked by commentaries on the individual works of Aristotle. They date as far back as the Hellenistic period and were initially characterised by a detailed analysis of Aristotle's lecture notes in combination with philosophical reflections expressed by the individual commentators.²¹ Each of the three traditions of commentary writing (the Greek, the Latin, and the Syriac-Arabic)²² laid their focus predominantly on Aristotle's logical works (also known as the *Organon* and consisting of the *Prior and Posterior Analytics*, *Categories*, *De interpretatione*, *Topics* and *Sophistical Refutations*), which in some cases also included the *Poetics* and the *Rhetoric*.²³ These commentaries thus engage with Aristotle in a similar manner as ancient treatises on language and style do, but they do so by

on grammatical theory and rhetorical training; and Wouters and Swiggers (2015) on definitions of grammar.

¹⁷ See e.g. Schenkeveld (1964: 93) according to whom an instance of this pattern can be found in Pseudo-Longinus and Quintilian whose statements give the impression that Aristotle made a claim which – though present implicitly – is not explicitly stated by him.

¹⁸ See e.g. Swiggers (2013: 1); see also Weidemann (1994: 42).

¹⁹ See e.g. Schenkeveld (1964: 88–99), Tamba-Mecz and Veyne (1979: 79) and Innes (1985: 252).

²⁰ For *lexis* as 'word' in scholarly Greek see e.g. Steinthal (1971: I, 291–293) and Dickey (2007: 124–125).

²¹ See e.g. A. Zimmermann (1971: 2) and Falcon (2017).

²² Among the representatives of the Greek tradition are Adrastus, Aspasius, Alexander of Aphrodisias and the Neoplatonist commentators Porphyry, Iamblichus, Dexippus, Themistius, Ammonius, Philoponus, Olympiodorus, Simplicius and Boethius; of the Latin tradition Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas and William of Ockham; and of the Syriac and Arabic tradition Al-Farabi, Avicenna and Averroes.

²³ For details see e.g. Dahiyat (1974: 12–27). For details on ancient commentators on the *Sophistical Refutations* see e.g. Ebbesen (1981); on Aristotle more generally see e.g. Tuominen (2009) and (2012), Falcon (2017) and the database of the project 'Ancient commentators of Aristotle' led by Sorabji et al.

means of a linear disquisition of the works. This manner of proceeding is particularly prone to the introduction of non-Aristotelian thought into Aristotle's works. The Neoplatonist commentators, for instance, projected their own understanding of certain subjects onto Aristotle's claims and tried to consolidate them with those made by Plato.²⁴

The methodology applied in recent commentaries on Aristotle's writings is very different in that modern scholars focus on understanding Aristotle's ideas without developing an individual theory on the respective subjects at the same time. Given the frequency of occurrence, it is not surprising that, in addition to some sparse remarks in general handbooks such as Lausberg (1990), most modern remarks concerning *lexis* feature in commentaries on the works in which Aristotle explicitly treats *lexis*, namely the *Poetics*, the *Rhetoric* and the *Sophistical Refutations*. However, the nature of this type of scholarly writing does not allow for a conceptual approach to the ideas presented in Aristotle's works. As a result, *lexis* is typically mentioned only in passing. Else (1957a: 63) even goes so far as entirely to exclude the treatment of *lexis*. A more thorough, but by no means comprehensive, analysis of *lexis* can be found in the works by Cope (1867), Cope and Sandys (1877, III), and Rapp (2002b, II). While the first two feature philological insights into the *Rhetoric* by including helpful notes on passages and summaries of the individual chapters, Rapp adopts a predominantly philosophical perspective on Aristotle's works. Rapp's concise sections on key issues of *lexis*, such as the *prepon*, *aretē lexeōs*, periods and metaphor, provide an excellent starting point for further investigations into each of these notions, but do not include an in-depth analysis of the concept of *lexis*.

The same verdict applies to scholarly works in which the treatment of *lexis* features more prominently. For example, Ax's *Lexis and Logos* (2000) situates Aristotle's concept of *lexis* within the historical context of ancient grammatical theories. As part of this undertaking, Ax explores the biological and psychological, the pragmatic and the semiotic aspects of Aristotle's philosophy of language. His shrewd analysis rightly establishes *lexis* as a core element in the diachronic development of ancient ideas on language and grammar, but it does not allow for a sufficiently detailed study of the concept itself. De Jonge (2008: 348–351), whose main focus is on the examination of Dionysius of Halicarnassus' thoughts on language, linguistics and literature, takes a similar approach to *lexis* by briefly

²⁴ For similar practices with regard to *lexis* and *elocutio* throughout the Renaissance see e.g. Green (2000: 149–165).

commenting on Aristotle's idea of an *aretē lexeōs*. In addition to identifying correctly that this excellence is not solely defined by clarity, de Jonge points out that Aristotle focuses on the avoidance of overly poeticised prose and that he thus criticises and distances himself from the *lexis* of early prose writers such as Gorgias. These sparse yet important remarks allow de Jonge to place Aristotle's ideas on this concept in the history of stylistics by demonstrating their influence on Dionysius of Halicarnassus. At the same time, de Jonge's observations complement Rapp's and offer at least a glimpse into the nature of Aristotle's concept of *lexis*, on which he slightly expands in his most recent entry in the *EAGLL*.²⁵

In addition to these brief considerations of Aristotle's concept of *lexis* in the context of other investigations, a few scholars have analysed certain aspects of *lexis* without discussing the concept of *lexis* in its entirety. Instances of this pattern include Zaslavsky (1986), Schreiber (2003), Woerther (2005), Porter (2010: 312–319), Di Lascio (2013) and Seitz (2013). While the first three deal with *lexis* as a part of fallacies in dialectical arguments, the others examine facets of *lexis* that are important for rhetoric and poetry: Woerther concentrates on the notion of *ēthos* with regard to *lexis*, or as she calls it, the λέξις ἠθικῆ; Seitz focuses on the λέξις γελοία; and Porter refers to *lexis* in his discussion of the φωνή. All four facets are integral parts of Aristotle's concept of *lexis*, but do not represent the totality of this notion. Furthermore, it is interesting that scholars to date have analysed and commented on specific aspects of *lexis*, such as metaphor, *energeia*, *phantasia*, or different word categories, but have not considered *lexis* as a broader concept. There is thus a need for a study which unites these elements by examining the concept to which they belong.

The only account which comes closest to examining *lexis* as a concept with multiple facets has been provided by Halliwell (1993),²⁶ who explicitly enquires into this concept. By discussing the relationship between *lexis* and *didaskalia* and, in a further step, that between *lexis* and *dianoia*, Halliwell provides an excellent basis for further investigations in this field. Even though his focus lies on the relation of *lexis* to and interaction with the other two notions, *lexis* receives considerable attention in that Halliwell (1993: 53–54) briefly touches on fundamental issues raised by this concept. He recognises that the term *lexis* exhibits 'facets of a compound phenomenon'. These facets, according to him, are (a) ordinary or standard speech; (b) 'the specific form of a word or group of words'; and (c) social and

²⁵ De Jonge (2014).

²⁶ For a brief discussion of *lexis* passages in the *Poetics* see also Halliwell (1986: 344–349).

cultural registers, literary or generic ethos, and other variables of tone or mood which give *logos* certain qualities.²⁷ While Halliwell's observation that *lexis* is a multifaceted concept is useful, *lexis*, as demonstrated in this book, has a plethora of other qualifications in addition to those which he has attributed to these facets. Furthermore, Halliwell posits a scale ranging from *didaskalia* on the one hand, i.e. discourse grounded in knowledge and exhibiting hardly any conscious engagement with *lexis*, to epic/dithyramb on the other. This scale is useful but considers only one particular aspect of the concept of *lexis*. His conclusion that *lexis* and *dianoia* are not radically separated by Aristotle is not only correct, but also highlights Aristotle's attitude towards *lexis*, which is not a matter of ornamentation only, but is of fundamental importance for poetry, rhetoric and dialectics, since it determines the success or failure of conveying a message to an addressee.

The Aims and Methodology of this Book

This brief overview of the state of scholarship on *lexis* demonstrates that this concept has played a significant role in ancient and modern scholarship. It is therefore quite surprising that no study has yet been undertaken in which Aristotle's thoughts on *lexis* are studied in their own right. Rather, remarks on Aristotle's concept of *lexis* are scattered, incomplete and could be exploited much further than has been the case to date. More often than not, discussions of *lexis* in Aristotle have been confined to the absolute minimum – giving the impression that there is not much to be said about it. Yet close analysis of Aristotle's passages on *lexis* reveals that this concept is far from negligible. Indeed, Aristotle's ideas regarding *lexis* are complex, well-developed and intimately connected to many other fundamental theories in his works.

To fill the gap in scholarship to date and highlight the complexity of Aristotle's thoughts, this book offers the first systematic analysis of his concept of *lexis*. By placing the focus on pre-Aristotelian and synchronic conceptions of *lexis* as well as on Aristotle's contribution to them, this book sets itself apart from and simultaneously complements other publications which discuss a specific component of *lexis* or deal with the historical development and use of *lexis* in post-Aristotelian grammatical and rhetorical theories. Therefore, four goals are pursued in this book.

²⁷ See also Schreiber (2003: 19), who alludes to *lexis* as a multifaceted concept, but does not elaborate on it.

The Aims and Methodology of this Book

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The first aim is to examine in as much detail as possible the function and nature of *lexis*, i.e. the constituents, their interrelations, the conditions, necessity, importance as well as functioning of *lexis*, as presented in the extant *Corpus Aristotelicum*. Given the complexity and wealth of material, Aristotle's statements on *lexis* are structured in such a way as to approach *lexis* as a concept with three interconnected levels. While this partition has been created on the basis of Aristotle's definitions of and remarks on *lexis*, it is important to note that this tripartite division is not Aristotle's, but has been adopted because it allows for a step-by-step approach to understanding this multi-layered concept.²⁸ Aristotle's statements indicate that a first level of *lexis* can be identified on which he presents his thoughts on language as a system and on which the workings of all *lexis* are based. The second level is characterised by Aristotle's remarks which are reflective of actual language usage and which he discusses with reference to socio-linguistic factors. The third level, finally, concerns Aristotle's prescriptions with regard to the kinds of language used for poetic and rhetorical compositions.

The second aim of this book is to unite approaches from several modern disciplines in order to qualify better Aristotle's thoughts on *lexis*. Given the discrepancy between ancient and modern divisions between disciplines, Aristotle's remarks on *lexis* cannot be assigned to a single modern discipline. This makes discussing the concept of *lexis* difficult as each modern discipline treats a subject in different ways. Scholarship on *lexis* to date, and most notably Rapp (2002b, II) and Di Lascio (2013), has already made attempts to discuss *lexis* from a philosophical point of view. While philosophical issues are not disregarded here but are examined in as much detail as is necessary for the present endeavour, this book draws predominantly on approaches from classics and linguistics, since, as scholars have already highlighted, language and style lie at the heart of *lexis*. To shift the focus from philosophy to classics and linguistics thus introduces a new angle to the investigation of *lexis* and in so doing comes closer to the nature of the concept itself. In fact, in his discussion of *lexis* Aristotle focuses on the same sort of issues with which modern linguistics deals. Depending on the topic in question, Aristotle's ideas exhibit varying similarities to the results yielded in modern linguistic studies, as a number of critics have pointed out already.²⁹

²⁸ This tripartition does not correspond to that proposed by Halliwell (1993: 52–53), whose tripartite division of *lexis* covers only the first two of the three levels proposed here.

²⁹ See e.g. Tanner (1969), Sinnott (1989), K. Allan (2004) and Zoran (2014). Each of these scholars uses modern linguistic vocabulary and theory (such as Bloomfield's minimal free units, Jakobson's

Despite the importance of this observation, scholars attempting to elucidate Aristotle's thoughts on language by making use of modern linguistics are often accused of imposing, or even 'applying', modern theories on ancient thought. While I agree that there is always a certain danger in employing modern conceptions when discussing ancient views, the use of modern linguistic vocabulary and theory can – if used with caution – represent a highly resourceful tool for a number of reasons: modern linguistic terminology allows for a much more precise qualification and characterisation of Aristotle's thoughts by providing specialist vocabulary which was developed to label linguistic patterns and mechanisms, and make them more easily comprehensible. Furthermore, the use of and reference to modern terminology and theory help modern readers to approach Aristotle's thoughts in a manner which is potentially more familiar to them. Not to use specialist terms³⁰ if they already exist would thus represent a waste of resources and fail to engage with current issues and scholarship in this domain. Accordingly, modern linguistic terminology will here feature as a point of reference to guide the reader, without, however, implying that there is a direct continuation from and influence of Aristotle's thoughts on language to and on modern linguistic theories, or that modern linguistic theories can already be found in Aristotle.

The third aim of this book is to serve both as a detailed study of and as a reference work to Aristotle's concept of *lexis*. The collection and discussion of passages in which Aristotle treats the concept of *lexis* is the first of its kind and enables a conceptual approach to and understanding of *lexis*. Given that the passages in which Aristotle treats *lexis* exhibit a vast number of philological problems, existing editions are used as a basis. Textual issues are discussed only in places where they are significant for the clarification of

communicative functions, Chomsky's distinction between deep and surface structure, Grice's maxims or Saussure's and other linguists' semantic and semiotic theories) to explain Aristotle's own thoughts on language and draw attention to the fact that Aristotle has already made observations with which modern linguists are engaged to this day. The parallels and differences between Aristotle's thoughts on language and modern linguistic considerations depend on the respective critic's interpretation of Aristotle's texts. Some scholars use modern terminology and theory better than others, which renders some arguments more convincing than others; and some run the risk of misinterpreting Aristotle when looking at his thoughts through the prism of modern linguistics. The common factor between them, however, is that they have all recognised and rightly argue that Aristotle, to use Allan's expression, has left 'footprints' on modern linguistic thought. See also Swiggers (2013: 1), who points out that 'we owe Aristotle for the formulation of a sign-based theory of the linguistic expression (*hermeneia*) of thoughts. But it was Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913) who placed *le signe linguistique* at the center of (general) linguistics'.

³⁰ Definitions of modern linguistic terms will feature at the point where any given term is introduced for the first time.