

Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik, Bd. 8 (Rhet-St), hrsg.v. Gert Ueding (et al.), Tübingen: Niemeyer 2007, cols. 1466, 135. 51 Euro.

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According to the original plan, volume 8 of the “Historical Dictionary of Rhetoric” was to be the ultimate tome. But “All’s Well That Ends Well” is not - yet - to be! In practical terms this means the last volume (9, *Stillehre-Zynismus*; the principal entry will address the concept of *topos*) will be the penultimate tome; and volume 10 will contain necessary revisions of existing articles and new material that emerged while the project was in progress.

In the course of this project, the role of non-German contributors has been decreasing. Of the 99 authors of this volume, only seven stem from other countries, and only two from Asia. On the other hand, the editors have given their contributors considerable freedom in shaping their entries according to their individual approach. This makes for very interesting, and often entertaining, reading. Six examples may illustrate this.

STILBLÜTE (“blatant howler/perle”) by Josef Kurz (Leipzig) indulges in the East-European obsession with over-classification. On some ten columns the reader is treated to an abundance of examples labeled with such terms as “Originalitätssucht” (obsession with being original) or “Ungewollt komische Gedankenreihung” (unintentionally comical serial thoughts).

SCHLAGFERTIGKEIT (“quick-wittedness/repartee prompt”) by Andreas Hettiger (Johannesburg), on the other hand, is developed over ten columns very systematically but without one single illustrating quotation.

SÄKULARISIERUNG (“secularization/sécularization”) by Philipp Stoellger (Zurich) is an incredible tour-de-force. In 16 columns one is treated to an explanation of this term, so important for our understanding of modernity, that amounts to the quality and comprehensiveness of a mini-monograph.

SELBSTÜBERREDUNG (“self-persuasion/autopersuasion”) required a co-authorship! Christian Schorno (Zurich), after an initial definition of the identity of persuader/persuadee who reconcile diverse opinions, convictions or behavior patterns, sails happily from the definition of Isocrates (the ability to take council with oneself) to the Renaissance concept of ‘negotiating with yourself’ into the 20th century where the ‘rhetorical self’ psychoanalytically constitutes itself as a personal identity by way of “psychic parliamentarism!” Olaf Kramer (Tübingen) translates these musings into a definite literary concept of modernity: the autobiographical novel.

SCHULRHETORIK (“school rhetoric/rhétorique d’école”) is a very erudite entry by Dietmar Till (Tübingen), demonstrating how, in the course of history, schoolmasters were able to reduce a more sophisticated understanding of the *ars bene dicendi et scribendi* into normative precepts of composition writing right down into our times!

SEMIKOLON (“semi-colon/point-virgule”) by Beatrice Primus (Cologne) attests to the Teutonic character of this rhetorical project: comprehensiveness. In little more than one column she states the obvious: that this orthographic hybrid signals that the writer could not quite decide whether s/he stated two consecutive thoughts or had not yet figured out a proper sequence...

As initially stated, the different approaches of the contributors to their topics makes for fascinating reading. Whether one is using it simply as a reference work or perusing eye-catching entries with delight (recognizing anticipated information and being surprised by small lots of *terra rhetorica incognita*), volume 8 of the *Historical Dictionary of Rhetoric* continues to provide delightful reading of demonstrated scholarship.