

Litigation and Characterization: Manipulating Stereotypes in Dem. 25 (*Against Aristogeiton I*)
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Against Aristogeiton I is a lively speech delivered by a *synēgoros* (co-speaker) in an *endeixis* trial where the politician Aristogeiton comes under vicious attack as a state debtor. Despite its entertaining narrative and exceptional invective, it remains a lesser-known speech; to date, there is still no scholarly commentary on it. What little scholarship there is has focused on the issue of authenticity (unduly, as I shall argue), though most scholars now agree that the speech is in fact Demosthenic. Rubinstein has recently opened up the discussion with her analysis of this speech as a *synēgoria* in the outstanding volume *Litigation and Cooperation* (2000). My talk will build off of Rubinstein's observations by looking closely at the interaction of characterization and invective. I contend that Dem. 25 offers us a unique view into the orator's strategy for managing the competing demands to stereotype and yet simultaneously depict a believable individual when shaping an opponent's character before a large audience.

As I shall argue, Theophrastus lies at the heart of these issues. In his *Characters* Theophrastus describes the 'man who has lost his senses' (*ho aponenoēmenos*) in a way that bears striking similarities to the character of Aristogeiton as depicted by Demosthenes. These connections have yet to be addressed by scholars. To my knowledge, only Ussher (1960) in his commentary on the *Characters* even mentions Dem. 25, noting only one specific point of comparison with *ho aponenoēmenos*. And yet the parallels between Theophrastus' 'character' and Demosthenes' Aristogeiton are too striking to ignore and cannot be coincidental; both depict a man whose nature is best described by *ponēria* (wickedness), *aponoia* (insanity) and *thēriotēs* (inhumanity/beast-like brutality).

Given that the date of both works is uncertain, we cannot specify a direction of influence between the two authors. Nonetheless, both appear to have been written within the same decade, a fact that still has great potential for broadening our understanding of stereotypes in fourth-century Athenian culture. The most plausible explanation of the chronology is neither that Demosthenes is using Theophrastus as a manual, nor that Theophrastus is taking his cue from Demosthenes, but rather that both authors are drawing from a cultural stereotype, an exaggerated caricature based on traits that have become associated with the likes of state debtors over time. This stereotype would be recognizable to a large audience, which makes it useful to the orator Demosthenes when attempting to blacken Aristogeiton's character. But what makes his depiction so effective is how Demosthenes tailors this pre-existing and widely-recognized caricature to incorporate certain prominent aspects of Aristogeiton's actual personality and temperament, features which already would have been well known from his many years as a public politician. As a result, Aristogeiton is fashioned as both an archetypal villain and a specific individual, who has wronged Athens and therefore ought to be removed from the political scene.

By bringing Theophrastus into the debate, we are better able to understand how character assassination is operating in this speech. The harsh invective, which originally caused Dionysius of Halicarnassus to doubt Demosthenes' authorship, forms a deliberate and prominent part of Demosthenes' rhetorical strategy—one that can best be understood in specific connection with the role that co-speakers play in Athenian litigation.