

Erik Bengtson: "**Doxa, Episteme and Rhetoric in Plato: misconceptions and possibilities**"

In this paper, I present the most significant results of the first part of my thesis, *The Epistemology of Rhetoric*, which was defended in Uppsala on March 1, 2019.

In this part of the thesis, I investigate the opposition between opinion (*doxa*) and true knowledge (*epistēmē*), which has been said to be at the very heart of the birth of rhetoric itself. I show through readings of Plato's dialogues, primarily the *Gorgias*, *Phaedrus*, and *Republic* that the contemporary rendering of this birth is, however, haunted by simplification and misrepresentation.

To put it simply, there is no explicit conflict between "doxa" and "episteme" in *Gorgias* as numerous textbooks and encyclopedias claim. I also show that when we look elsewhere in the Platonic oeuvre for that infamous conflict, we perhaps find it, but most of all, we find a more complicated and thus more interesting rendering of the epistemic tensions related to rhetoric.

I argue that locating and scrutinising the cracks in the rendering of Plato within rhetorical studies today provides avenues toward a contemporary epistemology of rhetoric, and thus to an alternative to the traditional way of reassessing rhetoric in the wake of Aristotle.