

Progymnasmata: Greek Textbooks of Prose Composition and Rhetoric (Writings from the Greco-Roman World, V. 10)



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The progymnasmata were fundamental to the teaching of prose composition and elementary rhetoric in European schools from the Hellenistic period to early modern times. George A. Kennedy, one of the world's leading scholars of ancient rhetoric, provides in this volume an English translation of four Greek treatises written during the time of the Roman empire but studied throughout the Roman and Byzantine periods-works attributed to Theon, Hermogenes, Aphthonius, and Nicolaus. Also included in this important volume are translations of the fragments of Sopatros' treatise as well as John of Sardis' commentary on these exercises. Several of these works have never before been translated into English and are here made accessible to the general reader for the first time. The curriculum described in these works provided basic training in oral and written expression, but also inculcated cultural values and an understanding of the conventional literary forms-fable, narrative, chreia, ecphrasis, comparison, and so on-that were the building blocks of the epics, dramas, histories, and lyric poetry characteristic of the Greco-Roman period. The habits of thinking and writing learned in schools using the progymnasmata molded not only the secular literature of the Greeks and Romans, but also the writings of the early Christians through the patristic period. Paperback edition available from the Society of Biblical Literature (www.sbl-site.org).

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