

The speech delivered in 297/298 CE for the restoration of the Maenianae schools at Autun (Pan. IX=4) has attracted huge interest from modern scholars for the biographical data about its author, Eumenius, as well as for historical and topographical information on the city of Autun. By contrast, little or no attention has been paid to the cultural program envisaged in the panegyric. This paper explores the pedagogical project involved in Eumenius' request for repairing the school buildings and argues that the educational 'message' suggested by the panegyrist aims to reassert the eternal value of rhetoric and literature as a medium to prime Gaul's youth for politics. At the same time Eumenius puts forward a comprehensive new methodology in teaching and learning: while endorsing Cicero's and Quintilian's educational models he restates the primary role of the declamatory exercises in the rhetorical training of the Gaul's ruling elite and sees the combination of epideictic rhetoric with history and figurative arts as the fundamental step towards a 'renaissance' of eloquence and education.

First, I will examine the place of declamations in Eumenius' program. At the outset of the speech the rhetorical commonplace of the *recusatio* turns out to be a means of focusing on the persona of the panegyrist who, like Cicero before Caesar when delivering the *Pro rege Deiotaro*, feels at pain in displaying his oratorical abilities in a platform unfamiliar to him (*insolentia loci* cf. § 3). By picking up on well-known rhetorical metaphors Eumenius pinpoints the difference between forensic oratory and school declamation: the portrait of Eumenius as a declaimer, furthermore, draws attention on the main goal of the educational program, that is teaching rhetoric within private walls. Then I will consider epideictic rhetoric. By praising the greatness of Autun as Gaul's intellectual centre in the past and the Tetrarchs' love for arts and literature Eumenius urges the emperors to embrace the role of 'patrons' of letters in the same way as the Hellenistic kings or Augustus: he resorts to traditional examples, such as that of M. Fulvius Nobilior who erected the temple of Hercules Musarum, and follows up Cicero's classic defence of literature in the *Pro Archia*. At the same time Eumenius' oration is a master-piece of encomiastic literature. By adhering to the rules of demonstrative oratory the panegyrist offers his students a classic example of praise of the emperors' virtues and stresses the centrality of epideictic in the regeneration of rhetoric (cf. § 10). Finally, history and figurative arts. The maps depicting the entire known world posted on the porticoes of the school (cf. § 20) help to instruct the young students enabling them to memorize historical events and geographical locations: geography, history and figurative arts support rhetoric in learning process.

Eumenius' speech is a valuable piece of writing to history of education in Roman Gaul. Amid rhetorical commonplaces it provides a clear account of teaching methods in the rhetorical schools in the third-century Gaul. More important, it casts light on a new pedagogical ideal that synthesizes declamation, epideictic rhetoric, history and figurative arts and paves the way for the 'renaissance' of traditional pagan rhetoric.