

PHILOLOGY

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On understanding the foundations of sophistic rhetoric

The methodological foundations of pre-Socratic rhetorical approaches of Protagoras and Gorgias are analyzed. The research is aimed at clarifying the theoretical understanding of the early ideas of the principles of public and interpersonal verbal influence, as well as with the need for subsequent critical analysis of modern discourse of political confrontation. The article reveals principal characteristics of sophistry and their assessment by the ancients from professional and social points of view. The article examines the scientific-founding postulates of rhetoric and eristic, the reliance on relativism and empiricism, and the differences in the interpretation of these approaches among the main representatives of this trend. The degree of authority of these approaches for their followers and critics is assessed.

Key words: rhetoric, sophistry, relativism, Protagoras, Gorgias.

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