

CHAPTER ONE

The Intellectual Context



*T*he beginning of the fourth century B.C. coincided with an era of change in many aspects of the Greek world. The generation-long Peloponnesian War ended with the fall of Athens, but so weakened its belligerents that no single Greek city-state was able thereafter to claim hegemony for long. Autocrats seeking power beyond the borders of their home city-states began to play an increasing role in Greek politics, a fact that was naturally reflected in contemporary prose works. The rise of the sophists and the development of professional rhetoric by the end of the fifth century had a substantial effect upon the writing of prose but also led to various responses from Athenian intellectuals. Two of these were Socrates and Isocrates, whose reactions to the intellectual climate of their time consisted of the development and propagation of moral virtues in very different ways. As I shall argue, their influence in turn contributed to the use of the past to illustrate moral exempla in certain fourth-century prose works. Finally, the birth and flowering of historical writing during the fifth century made it a logical instrument, by the beginning of the fourth century, for the dissemination of the moral virtues considered important to its intended audience, the literate elite.

Nevertheless, the infusion of a moral agenda into historical writing during the fourth century was not entirely without precedent in the fifth.

There are certainly some signs of moralizing in the two great fifth-century historians, Herodotus and Thucydides, although the moral paradigm was not the main focus of their histories. The stated purpose of Herodotus's history, given in his opening sentence, is the commemoration of great and wondrous deeds of the past. He does include a didactic element in his *Histories*, but it is not a simplistic illustration that virtue is rewarded while vice is punished.

For Herodotus, there exists a certain balance in the universe maintained by divine providence (3.108–9).¹ The natural ebb and flow of human affairs is played out in Herodotus's *Histories* by the cycle of the rise and fall of empires.² On an individual level, those who are guilty of offenses against the gods (therefore upsetting the proper order of the universe), whether voluntarily or involuntarily, do not prosper, although Herodotus does not always lend authorial approval to the direct intervention of the divine in human affairs and often qualifies such reports with a parenthetical remark or the offering of several alternative explanations, or distances them from his narrative by attributing them to someone else (in either *oratio recta* or *obliqua*).³ Yet, to maintain balance the divine also sometimes brings misfortune even to those who have not necessarily committed a crime (although usually there is a concomitant offense) but who are facing the consequences of a choice made generations earlier (the most obvious example is Croesus, who must expiate the crime of his ancestor Gyges) or who are fated to fulfill their destined lot (as in, e.g., the case of Mycerinus at 2.133, whose personal virtue is contrary to the proper order of the universe).⁴ In spite of the element of destiny, however, the fates of the major historical personages in the *Histories* are as much due to their lack of understanding of the relevant

1. For the concept of balance in Herodotus, see Henry R. Immerwahr, *Form and Thought in Herodotus*, Philological Monographs, no. 23 (Cleveland: Press of Western Reserve University, 1966), 152 and n. 8, 172, and 312–13.

2. See F. Solmsen, *Two Crucial Decisions in Herodotus* (Amsterdam: North-Holland, 1974). On imperialism and its consequences in Herodotus, see J. A. S. Evans, "The Imperialist Impulse," in *Herodotus, Explorer of the Past: Three Essays* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), 9–40.

3. Juxtaposition of crime and punishment with no authorial endorsement: 2.111, 5.72.3–4, 5.102.1, 6.19.3, 6.138–40, 9.116–21. Authorial endorsement of divine action in human affairs: 1.119–20, 2.120, 6.91, 7.137.2, 8.129.3, 9.56.2, 9.100.2. Parenthetical remarks: 1.34.1, 8.37.2. Alternative explanations: 6.75–84. Attribution to another: 1.159.3, 3.30, 6.86a–d, 6.134. For Herodotus's caution in matters of divine action, see John Gould, "Herodotus and Religion," in *Greek Historiography*, ed. Simon Hornblower (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 91–106.

4. On the impossibility of escaping one's destiny in Herodotus, see Evans, "The Imperialist Impulse," esp. 33–38.

political and practical circumstances,⁵ an inability underscored by their failure to heed the advice of those who possess the very understanding they lack,⁶ as to their exhibition of hubris, which, for Herodotus, includes excessive prosperity.⁷ It is therefore difficult to discern an *exclusively* moral dimension to their downfalls.⁸ Nevertheless, certain moral elements in Herodotus, such as the use of digressions to give insight into his “ethical predispositions” and his moral caution against the transgression of limit,⁹ appear influential in the work of our fourth-century historians.

Unlike Herodotus, Thucydides generally avoids the insertion of the supernatural into his narrative and is more interested in the (often disastrous) effects that popular superstition could have upon the course of political and military events (e.g., 6.70.1, 7.79.3, and 7.50.4).¹⁰ Nevertheless, Thucydides too contains some moral and didactic elements. As he states at the conclusion of his section on methodology, he intends his work to be useful (ὠφέλιμα) to those who wish to achieve a clear understanding both of the events that have happened and of the very similar ones which are going to take place again at some point, in accordance with human nature (1.22.4). In spite of this explicit statement that usefulness is an important criterion, he is never “obtrusively didactic.”¹¹ Instead, his chief aim in his interpretation of the past, as indicated by the methodological section of his prologue (1.20–22), is to establish an accurate report of what happened, based on a careful analysis of the most trustworthy information available.¹² Despite the considerable pains that he takes to emphasize the

5. Carolyn Dewald, “Practical Knowledge and the Historian’s Role in Herodotus and Thucydides,” in *The Greek Historians: Literature and History*, Papers presented to A. E. Raubitschek (Saratoga, Calif.: ANMA Libri, 1985), 47–63.

6. On the motifs of the “tragic warner” and the “wise adviser,” see Heinrich Bischoff, *Der Warner bei Herodot* (diss., Marburg, 1932); and Richmond Lattimore, “The Wise Adviser in Herodotus,” *CP* 34 (1939): 24–35.

7. Donald Lateiner, “A Note on the Perils of Prosperity in Herodotus,” *RhM* 125 (1982): 97–101.

8. See, e.g., Immerwahr, *Form and Thought in Herodotus*, and K. H. Waters, *Herodotus the Historian: His Problems, Methods, and Originality* [London: Croom Helm, 1985], 110–15 (113: “Fate, fortune and necessity have little to do with morality”); *pace*, e.g., M. I. Finley, *The Greek Historians* (New York: Viking, 1959), 6.

9. Stewart Flory, “Arion’s Leap: Brave Gestures in Herodotus,” *AJP* 99 (1978): 411–21; Donald Lateiner, *The Historical Method of Herodotus*, Phoenix Supplementary Volume 23 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 140–44.

10. Simon Hornblower (“The Religious Dimension to the Peloponnesian War, Or, What Thucydides Does Not Tell Us,” *HSCP* 94 [1992]: 169–97) attempts to ascertain some of the important religious aspects of the war about which Thucydides leaves us uninformed.

11. John R. Grant, “Towards Knowing Thucydides,” *Phoenix* 38 (1974): 81–94, at 89.

12. For a comprehensive analysis of Thucydidean *akribeia*, see G. Schepens, *L’‘Autopsie’ dans la Méthode des historiens grecs du V^e siècle avant J.-C.*, *Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke*

critical procedure he employs for weighing his evidence,¹³ it is clear nevertheless that he presents his material in such a way as to induce the reader to view it in the same light as he does. Sometimes he expresses his judgment of the evidence explicitly, but more often he shapes his account in accordance with his selection of material, subtly imposing his own views upon the reader but using an objective style to do so.¹⁴

His judgment of the evidence extends not only to the political and military aspects of the conflict but also to its moral effects. In his accounts of the plague (2.47.2–54) and the stasis at Corcyra (3.81–83), he is explicit in his view that extreme hardship inevitably results in the disregard of normal social, religious, and moral restraints.¹⁵ Some concern for moral edification can be seen also in Thucydides' dramatic rendering of "purple passages" such as the Mytilenean Debate (3.37–48), the debate at Plataea (3.53–60), and the Melian Dialogue (5.85–113). Moreover, Thucydides is a master of juxtaposition; to take only the most famous examples, it is no accident that Pericles' funeral oration immediately precedes the plague in his narrative and that the Melian Dialogue is followed by the disastrous Syracusan Expedition.

Nevertheless, Thucydides' moralizing tends to be implicit, by means of juxtaposition,¹⁶ and the primary concern in his narrative is to give a careful analysis of how political institutions are affected by a decline in civic morality,¹⁷ rather than to provide moral instruction.¹⁸ As noted recently by

Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en schone Kunsten van België, no. 93 (Brussels, 1980), 113–46. See now also Gregory Crane, *The Blinded Eye: Thucydides and the New Written Word* (Lanham, Md.: Rowan and Littlefield, 1996), 50–65; John Marincola, *Authority and Tradition in Ancient Historiography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 68; and Gordon Shrimpton, "Accuracy in Thucydides," *AHB* 12 (1998): 71–82.

13. A. J. Woodman (*Rhetoric in Classical Historiography* [London: Croom Helm, 1988; Portland, Or: Areopagita Press, 1988], 1–47, esp. 22–23) argues that Thucydides thought that, in view of the care he took to weigh the evidence, he had established a more accurate report than in reality he was able to do.

14. Jacqueline de Romilly, *Histoire et raison chez Thucydide*, 2d ed. (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1967); Virginia Hunter *Thucydides: The Artful Reporter* (Toronto: A. M. Hakkert, 1973); and W. Robert Connor *Thucydides* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984).

15. On the similarities between these episodes, see Connor, *Thucydides*, 99–105.

16. Connor, *Thucydides* (conclusions 231–50).

17. Jacqueline de Romilly, *The Rise and Fall of States According to Greek Authors* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1977), 49; cf. R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1946), 29: "Herodotus may be the father of history, but Thucydides is the father of psychological history."

18. Simon Hornblower (*Thucydides* [London: Gerald Duckworth, 1987]) argues (I think, rightly) that, although "a deeply moral writer" (133), "Thucydides is not a moralist, in the sense that he does not try to improve the reader directly, or distribute praise and

R. B. Rutherford, Thucydides' aim is with *intellectual* (his italics) enlightenment, by contrast with the concern for the improvement in moral character displayed by Polybius.¹⁹ I intend to show that Xenophon, Ephorus, and Theopompus represent the transition from the historical aims and methods of Herodotus and Thucydides to those of Polybius and the Hellenistic historians.

Although our fourth-century historians borrow some of the techniques of Herodotus and Thucydides, they do so not so much to make their histories more credible or even more dramatic, but rather to ensure that their moral lessons do not escape the reader. As I shall argue, the reasons for the prominence of the moral element in fourth-century historical writing are to be found in the reverberations in the intellectual milieu from decades of political, social, and economic upheaval. Among the most dramatic influences on intellectuals, particularly in Athens, were the sophists.

By the time that Thucydides was composing his history, the sophists and their teachings had taken firm hold in Athens,²⁰ bringing with them a reevaluation of conventional religion and morality. The sophists, characterized as a group by a turning away from the explanation of natural phenomena to a preoccupation with human affairs, seem to have done so in large part as a reaction to the natural philosophy of the Presocratics.²¹ On the other hand, we do find in both Xenophanes and Heraclitus attacks on some of the practices of popular religion (DK 21 A 52 and B 15 and 16; DK B 5, 14, 89, and 96) and the relativism of human sensation (DK 21 B

censure on every page" (139); cf. Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 61. Two extreme opinions are those of J. B. Bury (*The Ancient Greek Historians*, 141): "He does not consider moral standards"; and M. I. Finley ("Thucydides the Moralizer," in *Aspects of Antiquity: Discoveries and Controversies*, 2d ed. [Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1977], 48–59, at 58): "... it is in the last analysis a moralist's work."

19. "Learning from History: Categories and Case-Histories," in *Ritual, Finance, Politics: Athenian Democratic Accounts Presented to David Lewis*, ed. Robin Osborne and Simon Hornblower (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 53–68; cf. Hornblower, *A Commentary on Thucydides*, 1:61. On the moralizing aim of Polybius, see Arthur M. Eckstein, *Moral Vision in The Histories of Polybius* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1995).

20. G. B. Kerferd (*The Sophistic Movement* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981], 15–23) and Jacqueline de Romilly (*The Great Sophists in Periclean Athens*, trans. Janet Lloyd [Oxford: Clarendon, 1992], 18–26) discuss the social and political factors that brought the sophists to Athens.

21. See, however, the cautionary remarks of W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, 6 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962–81), 2:345–54. For a summary of the (probable) intellectual causes of the sophistic movement, which are complex, see Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, 2:14–21. The sophists may also have been responding to a demand for their teaching, as suggested by one of the referees for the press.

38; DK 22 B 61 and 11), ideas more commonly associated with the sophists. It is important to note, however, that both Xenophanes and Heraclitus simply state that relativism is a fact of human existence and do not use it as a means to promote moral (or immoral) behavior.

This movement toward relativism and unwillingness to profess an uncritical acceptance of popular religion becomes much more pronounced in the sophists of the first generation. With the sophists, however, we are faced with a methodological problem, for much of their material is preserved by Plato, whose hostility toward them is well known; therefore, we should not accept all that he says about sophists and their teachings. As a general rule, I have tried to include as much evidence as possible from other sources, but it is an unfortunate fact that Plato (bias and all) is our main source of information about the sophists. Moreover, there has recently been a recognition that he was more influenced by the thought of some of the sophists than his hostile attitude would indicate,²² which makes it even more difficult to ascertain which ideas are theirs, and which Plato's own. Finally, although certain ideas are common to some of the sophists, theirs was not a movement defined by a unity of doctrine.²³

Protagoras, usually considered the first of the sophists,²⁴ asserts not only that humans are not capable of knowing about the gods but that he himself cannot say for certain whether or not they exist (DK 80 B 4 and A 12). He makes explicit and universal the relativism implied in both Xenophanes and Heraclitus in what is perhaps his most famous saying of all, "Man is the measure of all things" (Sextus Empiricus, *adversus Mathematicos* 7.60=DK 80 B 1; cf. A 13 and 19). Now, as the evidence of Aristotle makes clear (*Metaphysics* 1009a, 1062b13=DK 80 A 19; cf. Plato, *Theaetetus* 167a-b=DK 80 A 21a), Protagoras extends the concept of relativism to include values in addition to physical sensations.²⁵

Protagoras's successors carry his agnosticism and relativism to greater lengths. Prodicus, who is said to have been his pupil (DK 84 A 1), postu-

22. See, e.g., Thomas Cole, *The Origins of Rhetoric in Ancient Greece* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), esp. 1–30, and Michael Gagarin, "Probability and Persuasion: Plato and Early Greek Rhetoric," in *Persuasion: Greek Rhetoric in Action*, ed. Ian Worthington (London: Routledge, 1994), 46–68.

23. Although his definition of relativism is very narrow, Richard Bett ("The Sophists and Relativism," *Phronesis* 34 [1989]: 139–69) provides a useful corrective to the common view that the sophists as a group were relativists.

24. By, e.g., Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, 3:63.

25. Laszlo Versenyi, "Protagoras' Man-Measure Fragment," *AJP* 83 (1962): 178–84; reprinted in *Sophistik*, ed. Carl Joachim Classen (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1976), 290–97.

lates a purely human origin of the gods in gratitude for the gifts of nature (DK 84 B 5); not surprisingly, the verdict in antiquity was that he was an atheist.²⁶ Democritus also proposes a human origin for religious beliefs, attributing their invention to early humans' fear when confronted with natural phenomena (DK 68 A 75; cf. B 30). Similarly, if we accept Thomas Cole's argument that the ultimate source for the *Kulturgeschichte* found in most later accounts is Democritus,²⁷ then he substitutes purely natural causes for the traditional divine origins of human cultural achievement. Thus, unlike even Plato's Protagoras, in whose myth Prometheus provided humans with technological skill, while Zeus dispensed justice (*δίκη*) and shame (*αἰδώς*) (*Protagoras* 321d–23a),²⁸ Democritus gives the aetiology of contemporary morality in human rather than divine terms.

Far more radical than the agnosticism of Protagoras or the attempts by Prodicus and Democritus to look for the origin of the gods in the natural reaction of human beings toward phenomena that they do not understand is the statement in the satyr-play *Sisyphus* that religion is an artificial construct. The title character expresses the atheistic view that belief in the gods is an invention of an early lawmaker as a device to ensure lawful behavior. With the fear of divine retribution removed and no moral sanction of any kind put in its place, there is no longer any reason to obey either religious or civic law. Although this passage is traditionally included among the fragments of Critias (DK 88 B 25), whose disrespect for both the gods and the laws was notorious,²⁹ it is possible that it is derived instead from a satyr-play by Euripides.³⁰

26. The relevant passages are collected by Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, 3:238–42. Albert Henrichs ("Two Doxographical Notes: Democritus and Prodicus on Religion," *HSCP* 79 [1975]: 93–123, esp. 107–9) notes that *PHerc* 1428 fr. 19 (not included in DK 84) provides confirmatory proof of Prodicus's own admission of atheism.

27. Thomas Cole, *Democritus and the Sources of Greek Anthropology* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: Press of Western Reserve University, 1967; reprinted with additional material, Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1990). See now also Cynthia Farrar, *The Origins of Democratic Thinking: The Invention of Politics in Classical Athens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 241–64.

28. Many scholars have expressed skepticism that the agnostic Protagoras would have included a theological aspect in his myth on the origins of human society; see, e.g., Eric A. Havelock, *The Liberal Temper in Greek Politics* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1957), 407–9.

29. Critias was implicated in the mutilation of the Hermae (Andocides 1.47), was guilty of sacrilege in dragging Theramenes away from the sanctuary of an altar to his death (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 2.3.54–55), and, as the leader of the Thirty, was responsible for the most lawless government ever to be in power at Athens (Xenophon, *Hellenica* 2.3–4).

30. Albrecht Dihle, "Das Satyrspiel «Sisyphos,»" *Hermes* 105 (1977): 28–42; see now Charles H. Kahn, "Greek Religion and Philosophy in the Sisyphus Fragment," *Phronesis* 42 (1997): 247–62.

Whoever the author, this statement does reflect the cynicism of late fifth-century Athens, as exemplified by the well-known incidents of the mutilation of the Hermae and the profanation of the Mysteries. Less well known perhaps is the existence of a certain club whose members called themselves the Kakodaemonistae, a name chosen, according to Lysias,³¹ in order to mock both the gods and the laws of Athens. The practice of this club was to dine together on certain unlucky days, which suggests, as E. R. Dodds points out, that its purpose was to “exhibit its scorn of superstition by deliberately tempting the gods.”³²

An apparent reaction against the new trend toward atheism and irreligion is the series of prosecutions of prominent intellectuals on the grounds of atheism.³³ Although skepticism has been expressed about their historicity,³⁴ the evidence for these prosecutions has been preserved in many sources, and therefore it seems unlikely that it all was invented, even though some of the details are uncertain.³⁵ The prosecution of Anaxagoras is the earliest of the series, occurring before the Peloponnesian War.³⁶ Although it is possible that he was prosecuted as a result of the decree of Diopieithes for the impeachment of atheists and astronomers, as Plutarch tells us (*Pericles* 32.1), there is no reason to doubt his assertion that it was in reality directed against Pericles, especially since other friends of his found themselves on trial at about the same time. Other prosecutions, such as that of Diagoras, who may have been a member of Cinesias’s notorious dining club,³⁷ prob-

31. Lysias F 53 (Thalheim) *apud* Athenaeus 551c–52b.

32. E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational*, Sather Classical Lectures 25 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1951), 188.

33. For a comprehensive discussion of the charges, sources, and dates of these prosecutions, see Eudore Derenne, *Les procès d’impiété intentés aux philosophes à Athènes au V^{me} et au IV^{me} siècles avant J.-C.* (Liège: H. Vaillant-Carmanne, 1930; reprint, New York: Arno Press, 1976), 13–175.

34. K. J. Dover, “The Freedom of the Intellectual in Greek Society,” *Talanta* 7 (1976): 24–54, reprinted in *The Greeks and Their Legacy: Collected Papers*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 135–58; see also Robert W. Wallace, “Private Lives and Public Enemies: Freedom of Thought in Classical Athens,” in *Athenian Identity and Civic Ideology*, ed. Alan L. Boegehold and Adele C. Scaufuro (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), 127–55.

35. Kerferd, *The Sophistic Movement*, 21.

36. Ephorus, *FGrHist* 70 F 196 *apud* Diodorus Siculus 12.39.2; Plutarch, *Pericles* 32.1; and Sotion *apud* Diogenes Laetius 2.12. The trial occurred either in 450 (Leonard Woodbury, “Anaxagoras and Athens,” *Phoenix* 35 [1981]: 295–315) or, more likely, in 437/6 (J. Mansfeld, “The Chronology of Anaxagoras’ Athenian Period and the Date of His Trial,” *Mnemosyne* 4th ser., vol. 32 [1979]: 39–69 and 4th ser., vol. 33 [1980]: 17–95).

37. Leonard Woodbury, “The Date and Atheism of Diagoras of Melos,” *Phoenix* 19 (1965): 178–211, who dates Diagoras’ prosecution to the politically charged atmosphere of 415.

ably took place much later in the war, and the witch-hunting atmosphere in Athens midway through the war is illustrated well by Thucydides' description of the reaction to the mutilation of the Hermae and the profanation of the Mysteries (6.27–28, 53, and 60–61). Public feeling against those accused of impiety did not abate even after the end of the war, as indicated by the vehemence of the sentiments expressed against Andocides (esp. [Lysias] 6) and Socrates, whose trials occurred within a few months of each other in 399. Thus, it is hard not to come to the conclusion that the suffering caused by the Peloponnesian War and its aftermath made the Athenians more intolerant of views that could be supposed to have provoked the wrath of the gods.³⁸

Just as Protagoras's agnosticism becomes outright atheism, so his relativism becomes outright immoralism in the statements attributed to some of his successors. An example of a later application of Protagoras's relativism is the anonymous treatise written in the Doric dialect sometime shortly after the end of the Peloponnesian War (DK 90 1.8), the so-called *Dissoi Logoi* (Twofold Arguments).³⁹ Four of the chapters contain "twofold arguments" about pairs of moral terms that are usually opposite in meaning. On the basis of numerous examples, the author concludes that in each case the terms are the same because, depending upon one's point of view, an action can be simultaneously good and evil (or honorable and shameful, etc.). Of course, if there are no absolute standards and all moral concepts are relative, one can always find a justification for any action, no matter how reprehensible. It is in this spirit that a character in Euripides' lost *Aeolus* (F 19 Nauck) asks rhetorically in defense of incest, "What action is shameful, if it does not seem so to the one who does it?"

With this weakening of belief in objective standards upheld by human law (*nomos*), many of the sophists turn instead to the laws of nature (*physis*).⁴⁰ The rationale behind the rejection of *nomos* in favor of *physis* is, as

38. See, e.g., Dover (in the afterword [158] to the 1988 reprint of his 1976 "Freedom of the Intellectual,") on his discussion of the trial of Socrates: "I consider now that I attached too much weight to the political aspects of the trial, and not enough to the mood of superstitious fear ('What has *gone wrong*? Are there after all gods who can be offended?') which is very likely to have descended on Athens between 405 and 395."

39. On the dating of the *Dissoi Logoi*, see T. M. Robinson, *Contrasting Arguments: An Edition of the Dissoi Logoi* (New York: Arno Press, 1979; reprint, Salem, N.H.: Ayer, 1984), 34–41. See, however, Thomas M. Conley, "Dating the So-Called *Dissoi Logoi*: A Cautionary Note," *Ancient Philosophy* 5 (1985): 59–65.

40. The fullest treatment of the so-called *nomos* and *physis* antithesis remains the magisterial work of F. Heinimann, *Nomos und Physis: Herkunft und Bedeutung einer Antithese im griechischen Denken des 5. Jahrhunderts* (Basel: Friedrich Reinhardt, 1945).

the Platonic Hippias says in the *Protagoras*, that *nomos*, the tyrant of human beings, constrains us contrary to nature in many things (337d=DK 86 C 1). Upholders of the superiority of *physis* advocate discarding *nomos* in favor of *physis* for purely self-interested reasons. Antiphon⁴¹ argues that the most expedient way to employ justice for one's self-interest is to obey the laws when witnesses are present but otherwise to follow the dictates of nature (DK 87 B 44A).

Another statement of the *physis* doctrine holds the view that in cases when it is expedient, it is human nature for the stronger to subjugate the weaker in the name of justice. The most well known exponent of this view (although he does not frame it specifically in these terms) is Thrasymachus in the first book of Plato's *Republic*, whose arguments are also of intrinsic interest because he is historically attested as a teacher of rhetoric (DK 85). In the most extreme expressions of the *physis* doctrine, the stronger has not only the power but also the obligation to aim for absolute authority and unrestrained self-indulgence. This ideal of the selfish domination of others as a natural right is held by Callicles in Plato's *Gorgias* (481b–522e). By presenting the laws of human provenance as artificial, Callicles appeals to natural law as a justification for acts of the utmost lawlessness, tyranny, and licentiousness.

Whether or not he represented the true views of Thrasymachus and Callicles (if the latter did in fact exist as a historical person),⁴² it is certain that Plato makes them express views that were current in Athens after the end of the Peloponnesian War.⁴³ Nevertheless, as much as Plato may have wanted to attribute immoralistic doctrines of this type to the sophists, such statements stem rather from the profound political, social, and economic crises in Athens during the last quarter of the fifth century.⁴⁴ Not only was there the moral disintegration arising from the war itself,⁴⁵ but also the

41. There has been considerable debate as to whether or not Antiphon the sophist is identical with Antiphon the orator (see Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, 3:285–86 and 292–94). Recently, Michael Gagarin (“The Ancient Tradition on the Identity of Antiphon,” *GRBS* 31 [1990]: 27–44) has presented arguments in favor of the “unitarian” thesis, and Gerard J. Pendrick (“The Ancient Tradition on Antiphon Reconsidered,” *GRBS* 34 [1993]: 215–28), in favor of the “separatist” thesis.

42. See E. R. Dodds, ed., *Plato: Gorgias* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1959), 12–13.

43. For the date (both dramatic and absolute) of the *Gorgias*, see Dodds, *Plato: Gorgias*, 17–30.

44. See Charles H. Kahn, “The Origins of Social Contract Theory,” in *The Sophists and Their Legacy*, 92–108, esp. 107, and de Romilly, *The Great Sophists*, 134–61.

45. On the profound effects of the Peloponnesian War upon Greek society in general, see the discussion of Simon Hornblower, *The Greek World 479–323 B.C.* (London: Methuen, 1983; rev. ed., London: Routledge, 1991), 153–80.

effects of the plague and civil war. Furthermore, deep dissatisfaction with the policies of the radical democracy in Athens was widespread, not only from without, as we can see from the secession of many of Athens's allies, but also within, as is shown by the very fact that the oligarchic revolutions of 411 and 404 occurred at all. The members of the aristocratic class, already frustrated by the perceived incompetence of the demagogic leaders of Athens, were also suffering great financial losses as a result of the Spartan occupation of Decelea. It is perhaps not surprising that in a society in which the gods and the laws have lost their force, some of the second generation of sophists turn the skepticism expressed by Protagoras toward traditional religious and moral values into outright rejection; in short, as Jacqueline de Romilly puts it, a *tabula rasa*.⁴⁶

At the same time as the development of this new critical attitude among sophists of the second generation, the rise of rhetoric provided them with a tool by which they could teach the effective persuasion of others;⁴⁷ certainly it is no coincidence that most of the sophists appear to have had some interest in the art of rhetoric.⁴⁸ Aristotle (*apud* Cicero, *Brutus* 46) attributes the origins of rhetoric to fifth-century Syracuse, in the rash of litigation subsequent to the overthrow of the tyranny, and mentions Corax and Tisias as the first authors of theoretical handbooks on the art of effective speaking.⁴⁹ At around the same time, fifth-century Athens was faced with the problem of adapting the democratic process to judicial procedure, and so there arose a growing market for handbooks of instruction for the inexperienced prospective litigant.⁵⁰ Following Ephialtes' transference of many of the powers of the aristocratic Areopagus to the Council, the Assembly, and the law courts (*Ath. Pol.* 25.2), a political

46. de Romilly, *The Great Sophists*.

47. For an up-to-date and comprehensive bibliography of recent work on rhetoric, see T. L. Papillon, "Recent Writings in Greek Rhetoric and Oratory," *CJ* 93 (1998): 331–44, esp. 331 and n. 1.

48. Heinrich Gomperz (*Sophistik und Rhetorik* [Leipzig: Teubner, 1912; reprint Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1965], esp. 35–49) overstates the fundamentality of rhetoric to the sophistic movement.

49. For a succinct discussion of the conflicting traditions on these obscure figures, see George Kennedy, *The Art of Persuasion in Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), 58–61; Thomas Cole ("Who was Corax?" *ICS* 16 [1991]: 65–84) makes the (overly?) ingenious suggestion that the confusion that we find in our sources between Corax and Tisias arises from the fact that they are one and the same. See now also Edward Schiappa, *The Beginnings of Rhetorical Theory in Classical Greece* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 34–47.

50. Kennedy, *The Art of Persuasion*, 27–29.

career depended more upon the ability to sway one's fellow citizens to one's viewpoint in these public *fora* than upon one's family connections.⁵¹ Anyone who had the ability to pay for instruction in rhetoric now could learn how to become powerful in politics. Moreover, the great increase in legal and political business at Athens produced by the empire as it developed offered more and more opportunity for the ambitious to carve out a political career through the ability to speak persuasively.⁵²

As the way to achieve political success in fifth-century Athens increasingly depended upon one's rhetorical ability, the need for instruction beyond handbooks arose and tutors appeared on the scene. The most influential of the earlier instructors of rhetoric are probably Protagoras and Gorgias. Protagoras's curriculum appears to have had a political basis.⁵³ He seems to have applied his relativism to the art of rhetoric, for, according to Diogenes Laertius (9.51=DK 80 B 6a, cf. A 20), he was the first to claim that two contrary arguments can be made about any subject. Furthermore, he was famous for his ability to make the weaker argument the stronger (Aristotle, *Rhetoric* 1402a23=DK 80 B 6b; cf. A 21 and C 2), and it can safely be assumed that this was one of the lessons that he taught his pupils. Aristotle (*apud* Cicero, *Brutus* 46) informs us that one of Protagoras's methods of teaching was to furnish his students with ready-composed disputations on large topics, which in Cicero's time were called commonplaces (*communes loci*). Antiphon's *Tetralogies*, which consist of model speeches both for the prosecution and the defense in the same trial, may provide an example of what Protagoras had in mind;⁵⁴ the argument from probability is prominent. It is easy to see from these examples how the manipulation of arguments required to defend opposing points of view could be construed as the perversion of truth and justice.

Although Gorgias cannot be said to have brought rhetoric to Athens in his embassy of 427, for the seeds were already present,⁵⁵ it is certainly true that it thereafter became an integral part of an education in public life.⁵⁶

51. Connor, *The New Politicians of Fifth-Century Athens*, esp. 139–98.

52. Thucydides 1.77; [Xenophon] *Ath. Pol.* 1.14–18; R. Meiggs, *The Athenian Empire* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1972), 220–33.

53. “political craft” (ἡ πολιτικὴ τέχνη) (Plato, *Protagoras* 319a; cf. 322b) and “political excellence” (ἡ πολιτικὴ ἀρετή) (322e).

54. Cf. Plutarch, *Pericles* 36.5 (=DK 80 A10), where Protagoras and Pericles discuss a case identical to that of the *Second Tetralogy*.

55. See, e.g., Kennedy, *The Art of Persuasion*, 26–51, and Friedrich Solmsen, *Intellectual Experiments of the Greek Enlightenment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), 24–31.

56. Edward Schiappa (“Did Plato Coin *Rhētorikē*?” *AJP* 111 [1990]: 457–70; argument reprised in *Protagoras and Logos: A Study in Greek Philosophy and Rhetoric* [Columbia,

The Platonic Gorgias is aware that the students of rhetoric can put the skills they learn to immoral use but argues that the teacher is not responsible (*Gorgias* 456c–457c). Thus, even though Gorgias’s instruction may have been intentionally “morally neutral,”⁵⁷ he does put into the hands of the unscrupulous an effective tool to manipulate others into accepting doctrines of expediency and opportunism. If we can trust Plato’s portrayal, for Gorgias the chief goal of rhetoric is persuasion, especially of one’s fellow citizens (Plato, *Gorgias* 452e; cf. *Philebus* 58a–b). In his discussion of persuasion by speech in the *Helen* (DK 82 B 11.8–14), Gorgias states explicitly that a single speech, composed with skill but not truth, is able to persuade a large crowd (13).⁵⁸ Thus, he seems to have taught that that which is plausible, and therefore able to persuade, is more important than the truth, for which he, along with Tisias, is criticized by the Platonic Socrates (*Phaedrus* 267a–6=DK 80 A 26).

Like Protagoras, Gorgias prepared “commonplaces” for his students; these *logoi*, which were to be memorized, included arguments on both sides of an issue (Aristotle, *Sophistical Refutations* 183b=DK 82 B 14).⁵⁹ According to Aristotle (*apud* Cicero, *Brutus* 47=DK 82 A 25), Gorgias’s chief concern in these *loci communes* was with praise and blame, for the orator’s most important task was to magnify a subject by praise or to weaken it by blame. Gorgias was fond of antithesis, metaphors, balanced constructions, and other figures of speech, which could be adapted to suit the particular circumstances of the speaker; at first his exaggerated use of

S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1991], 39–63 and Appendix B and *The Beginnings of Rhetorical Theory*, esp. 14–29), and Cole (*The Origins of Rhetoric*, esp. ix, 2, 22–30, 98–99, 157–58) have simultaneously argued that “rhetoric,” as Plato defines it, does not occur until the fourth century, and thus cannot be applied to fifth-century practices and doctrines. Nevertheless, even if the term ῥητορικὴ appears for the first time in the fourth century, this does not preclude the fifth-century development of the teaching and theory that “rhetoric” came to denote, as Schiappa himself concedes (*Protagoras and Logos*, 68). Moreover, as Neil O’Sullivan has pointed out (“Plato and ἡ καλουμένη ῥητορικὴ,” *Mnemosyne* 4th ser., vol. 46 [1993]: 87–89), Plato’s reference to “so-called rhetoric” (ἡ καλουμένη ῥητορικὴ) in the *Gorgias* (448d) indicates that the term was already in common use. For a refutation of other aspects of Schiappa’s argument, see now Gerard J. Pendrick, “Plato and ῥητορικὴ,” *RhM* 141 (1998): 10–23.

57. The phrase is Dodds’s (*Plato: Gorgias*, 10).

58. Charles P. Segal, “Gorgias and the Psychology of the Logos,” *HSCP* 66 (1962): 99–155, at 122–23.

59. Carlo Natali (“Aristote et les méthodes d’enseignement de Gorgias [Réf. *Soph.* 34, 183b36–184a8],” in *Positions de la sophistique*, 105–16) argues convincingly that Aristotle is referring here to simple arguments, rather than to whole speeches such as Gorgias’s *Helen* and *Palamedes* (DK 82 B11 and 11a).

such figures was a novelty but eventually became considered excessive (Diodorus Siculus 12.53.4=DK 82 A 4).⁶⁰ These so-called Gorgianic figures, borrowed from poetry, were intended to deceive and bewitch the audience, resulting in successful persuasion to the speaker's point of view.⁶¹ The emphasis on praise and blame, the Gorgianic figures, and the use of deception and magic effectively aid in the subordination of truth to persuasion.

Although the ability to persuade large audiences was an effective skill for those aiming to make their mark in politics, rhetoric also brought with it a greater concern with means than with ends, and so the charge that it could be used for immoral purposes was an obvious one. One example of a refutation of arguments of the Calliclean type is the so-called *Anonymus Iamblichi*, a document by an unknown writer, dating from the late fifth or early fourth century.⁶² Because standard sophistic themes are contained in this work, the names of various known sophists have been put forward as author, none conclusively;⁶³ but given the stand the writer takes against these very themes, it seems likely that he was not a sophist. The writer suggests that if one wants to become successful, then it is a matter of both natural ability and lengthy practice in seeking after what is honorable and good (DK 89 1-2); he thus appears to attack the easily acquired tricks of rhetoric that the sophists generally teach their students (DK 89 2.6-7). The writer also provides arguments against the holders of doctrines of the Thrasymachean or Calliclean type, by attempting to make a reconciliation between *nomos* and *physis* and to demonstrate that acts of lawlessness and tyranny will in the long run not prove advantageous to those who commit them (DK 89 6.1-4). The text, as we have it, concludes with a discussion of the advantages of observing the law and justice in everyday life (DK 89 7).

The writer of the *Anonymus Iamblichi* couples success in civic life with

60. See Carl Joachim Classen, "The Study of Language amongst Socrates' Contemporaries," *PACA* 2 (1959): 33-49; reprint in *Sophistik*, 215-47, esp. 226-29; Kennedy, *The Art of Persuasion*, 64-67; Jacqueline de Romilly, *Magic and Rhetoric in Ancient Greece*, Carl Newell Jackson Lectures, 1974 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), 8-22; and Schiappa, *The Beginnings of Rhetorical Theory*, 85-98. As Schiappa notes (98-102), however, Gorgias' critics were the educated elite, whereas his speeches were oral performances to large, possibly semiliterate audiences.

61. *Helen* 8-14 (DK 82 B 11): deception (8, 10), magic (10, 14); cf. B 23 on deception in tragedy. See further Segal, "Gorgias and the Psychology of the Logos," 99-115; de Romilly, *Magic and Rhetoric in Ancient Greece*, 3-22; and W. J. Verdenius, "Gorgias' Doctrine of Deception," in *The Sophists and Their Legacy*, 116-28.

62. See Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, 3:315.

63. For a summary of various suggestions, see de Romilly, *The Great Sophists*, 169 n. 6.

moral virtue. In doing so, he shares a concern with Socrates (with whom it is more commonly associated) that the young were being taught immorality by the sophists. Because Socrates left nothing in writing, it is difficult to separate his ideas from those who preserved his memory, particularly Plato and Xenophon, whose most influential works on the “historical” Socrates, the *Apology* and the first two chapters of the first book of the *Memorabilia*, are cast in the form of defenses and are at least as much concerned with rehabilitating the reputation of Socrates against the claims of his detractors as with recording what he actually said and did.⁶⁴

There is no reason, however, to doubt the claim that Socrates disassociated himself from the sophists by claiming that he had never taught anyone and that he had never charged a fee to anyone, young or old, rich or poor, who wished to enter into discussions with him (Plato, *Apology* 19d, 33a–b; cf. Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 1.2.3, 1.2.5). Furthermore, he befriended only those whose nature would allow them to benefit from discussion with him, and sent all others to the sophists (Plato, *Theaetetus* 151b; cf. Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 1.6.13). Although later tradition holds that Socrates turned philosophical inquiry away from the natural world to human ethics,⁶⁵ it is clear that he could not have done so were it not for the contributions of the sophists to contemporary thought.⁶⁶

Socrates’ interest in the definitions of ethical terms is perhaps the best-known feature of his thought, for Plato, Xenophon, and Aristotle mention it repeatedly. A concern for the correctness of words is also a feature of the thought of some of the sophists,⁶⁷ but in Socrates’ hands it undergoes a transformation. Instead of looking for the definition of an ethical term in the expediency of the moment, he insists over and over again that it is necessary to define the fundamental, fixed nature of justice, piety, courage, and other such moral virtues. Only after determining what exactly a certain

64. On the complexities of the Socratic literature and a reasonable account of what can be deduced of Socrates’ own ideas, see Charles H. Kahn, *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue: The Philosophical Use of a Literary Form* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 1–35 and 71–100.

65. Aristotle, *De partibus animalium* 642a, *Metaphysics* 987b and 1078b; Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 5.4.10–11, *Academica* 1.4.15, and *Brutus* 8.31; see also Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, 3:410–25.

66. Kerferd, *The Sophistic Movement*, 129.

67. Although Plato attributes instruction in the “correctness of names” (ὀνόματων ὀρθότης) to Protagoras (*Cratylus* 267c; cf. *Phaedrus* 267c) and the sophists in general (*Cratylus* 391b), it is Prodicus who is particularly concerned with the precise distinctions between words of similar meaning (Plato, *Cratylus* 384b; cf. *Protagoras* 341a–e and DK 84 A 13–19).

virtue is can it be put into practice. Using the “Socratic method,” he involves his companions in informal conversation, attempting to elicit from them the definitions of basic moral virtues. Although professing his own ignorance, he then points out the flaws of the definitions proposed by his interlocutor, which often represent the traditional conception of the moral virtues under discussion, hoping that the process of clearing away false notions would lead them both closer to true knowledge. While Socrates’ method has a superficial similarity with that of the sophists in its construction of contrary arguments, he seeks not only to expose inconsistencies but to incite his interlocutors to resolve them and, in so doing, to elucidate the true meaning of the moral virtues being discussed.⁶⁸

Another well-attested feature of Socratic thought is the equation of the good with the advantageous, a notion not peculiar to Socrates alone but typical of traditional Greek thought.⁶⁹ In keeping with his characteristic common sense, Socrates argues that what is good is also useful (Plato, *Hippias Major* 295c, *Gorgias* 474d, *Meno* 87d–e; Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 3.8.5, 4.6.8–10, *Symposium* 5.4–7). Despite the apparent relativism of Socrates’ view that “the goodness of anything lies in its fitness to perform its proper function,” the end product, whether it be justice, piety, or courage, is objectively, rather than subjectively, determined.⁷⁰ For Socrates, virtue is knowledge (e.g., Plato, *Protagoras* 352a; Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 3.9.5; Aristotle, *E.N.* 1144b, *E.E.* 1216b). Because the ultimate goal of all human beings is happiness (*eudaimonia*),⁷¹ humans will do what they think is good, which leads in turn to *eudaimonia*; and if they do wrong, they do so only out of ignorance of the good.⁷²

Socrates was surrounded by a group composed of many of the young

68. On the positive aim of the Socratic elenchus, see Norman Gulley, *The Philosophy of Socrates* (London: Macmillan, 1968), 39–62; Terence Irwin, *Plato’s Moral Theory: The Early and Middle Dialogues* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1977), esp. 37–38; Gregory Vlastos, “The Socratic Elenchus,” *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 1 (1983): 27–58 and 71–74; reprinted with additional material in *Socratic Studies*, ed. Myles Burnyeat (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 1–37; for a different view, see Hugh H. Benson, “The Dissolution of the Problem of the Elenchus,” *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 13 (1995): 45–112.

69. Bruno Snell, *The Discovery of the Mind in Greek Philosophy and Literature*, trans. T. G. Rosenmeyer (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1953; reprint, New York: Dover, 1982), 156–60.

70. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, 3:462–67; quotation at 464.

71. For the concept of *eudaimonia*, see Laszlo Versenyi, *Socratic Humanism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1963), 79–81; and Gregory Vlastos, *Socrates, Ironist and Moral Philosopher* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 201–3.

72. For the ancient references to this “paradox,” see Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, 3:459–61.

aristocrats who were most active in Athens toward the end of the fifth century. Even though he himself took little part in active politics (e.g., Plato, *Apology* 31c–33b), he often discussed with his young friends the way they could govern the city most justly and honorably,⁷³ because many of those in his circle possessed the means and the family connections to pursue a political career. For Socrates, in order to do what is good, one must first know what is good, and so it is necessary to instill moral virtues into those ambitious for a political career.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, his emphasis on knowledge for right action was profoundly undemocratic, as both Plato and Xenophon felt obliged to note,⁷⁵ and therefore appealed to those who had little interest in conforming to the democratic system, which was eventually one of the major, although underlying, causes of his trial and condemnation.⁷⁶

Socrates' concern for a moral basis of public life, while unpopular with the Athenian democracy, did find fertile terrain in the group of (mainly) aristocratic young Athenians who followed the philosopher around as he engaged others in discussions upon moral subjects. It is indeed not surprising that the works of both Xenophon and Plato, although very different, center around ethical matters. Socrates' search to elicit from his interlocutors the definitions of basic moral virtues in order to help them see the best method to achieve right conduct in their given sphere of life thus seems to have induced both Plato and Xenophon, the two of his circle whose works containing historical material are extant, to use the past as a means of moral instruction of the elite.

Like Socrates, Isocrates stood apart from public life. Although he claimed to lack the voice and the confidence to play an active role in politics,⁷⁷ this claim of physical weakness is likely to be a rhetorical *topos*, designed to reinforce his efforts to distinguish himself from the orators of the law courts, whom he considered corrupt.⁷⁸ Instead of engaging in

73. E.g., Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 1.6.15.

74. Cf. Werner Jaeger, *Paideia: The Ideals of Greek Culture*, trans. Gilbert Highet, 3 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1939–44), 2:48–57; and Mario Montuori, *Socrates: An Approach* (Amsterdam: J. C. Gieben, 1988), 18–19 and 72–75.

75. Plato, *Apology*, and Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, 1.2.

76. On Plato's representation of Socrates' philosophy as outside the Athenian democracy, see Andrea Wilson Nightingale, *Genres in Dialogue: Plato and the Construct of Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 13–59.

77. 5.81, 12.9–10, *Ep.* 8.7; cf. *Ep.* 1.9.

78. Gunther Heilbrunn, "Isocrates on Rhetoric and Power," *Hermes* 103 (1975): 154–78; and Yun Lee Too, *The Rhetoric of Identity in Isocrates: Text, Power, Pedagogy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 74–112.

politics himself, Isocrates first wrote forensic speeches for others to deliver in the courts, and then opened a formal school, in which, according to tradition, he taught many of the leading figures in the political and literary spheres in the fourth century.⁷⁹ In particular, he appears to have been an effective facilitator of the entry of young aristocrats into the public sphere. Although his aim of training future statesmen was similar to that of the sophists and (to a certain extent) that of Socrates, Isocrates was very careful to distinguish himself from the other schools of his day. In both defenses of his system of education, one dating from the beginning of his teaching career (*Against the Sophists*) and the other from toward the end (*Antidosis*),⁸⁰ as well as the introductory section of the *Helen* (10.1–15),⁸¹ Isocrates offers explanations for his criticisms of his rivals. In short, he particularly objects to the impracticality of the high-flown ethical discussions of the Socratics and to the indifference to political morality of some of the sophists.

Unfortunately, the only extant sections of *Against the Sophists* contain Isocrates' criticism of the other schools, and his own theory of education is lost; such, at least, is the traditional view.⁸² Recently, several scholars (following Wilamowitz) have challenged this assumption, arguing that Isocrates deliberately left the text incomplete.⁸³ Be that as it may, it is necessary in any case to infer Isocrates' own system of education, which he describes as education in discourse (ἡ τῶν λόγων παιδεία),⁸⁴ from scat-

79. R. Johnson ("A Note on the Number of Isocrates' Pupils," *AJP* 78 [1957]: 297–300) reviews the evidence for the number of pupils whom Isocrates had both in his lifetime and in any given year.

80. Isocrates himself tells us when they were written at 15.9, 193, and 195.

81. John Poulakos ("Argument, Practicality, and Eloquence in Isocrates' *Helen*," *Rhetorica* 4 [1986]: 1–19) argues that Isocrates offers an alternative to his competitors' system of education in the *Helen* (but see Terry L. Papillon, "Isocrates on Gorgias and Helen: The Unity of the *Helen*," *CJ* 91 [1996]: 377–91, who argues that Isocrates intends a more general paideutic function).

82. See, e.g., Kennedy, *The Art of Persuasion*, 177.

83. Christoph Eucken, *Isokrates: Seine Position in der Auseinandersetzung mit den zeitgenössischen Philosophen* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1983), 5–6; Michael Cahn, "Reading Rhetoric Rhetorically: Isocrates and the Marketing of Insight," *Rhetorica* 7 (1989): 121–44; and Too, *The Rhetoric of Identity in Isocrates*, esp. 171–79 and 194–99.

84. See, e.g., 15.180. I note that Edward Schiappa (*The Beginnings of Rhetorical Theory*, 170) has offered the same translation for this loaded phrase. On Isocrates' use of *paideia*, see Edmund Buchner, *Der Panegyrikos des Isokrates*, *Historia Einzelschriften* 2 (Wiesbaden: F. Steiner, 1958), 54–55. The term *paideia* is made famous to the modern world by Werner Jaeger, who used it as the title for his three-volume work on the development of Greek intellectual culture.

tered references in other works.⁸⁵ While the subject matter of his curriculum is “philosophy” (e.g., 1.3, 13.1, and 21, 15.271), he aims to provide instruction that will result in both practical benefit and moral political conduct (15.168; 10.4). Although his chief educational focus is the art of speaking well (3.5–9=15.253–57, 4.47–49), technical skill in speaking is not to be subordinated to producing students of good moral character (cf. 1.4, 12.87, 13.21).⁸⁶ Moreover, he emphasizes that a good speaker ought to offer some kind of benefit to the listener (4.4; cf. 12.11–14 and 271, 15.3). Because the process of theorizing about the moral virtues serves to make them inaccessible to the ordinary person, Isocrates advocates as a basis of his conception of rhetoric a workable morality accepted by all, bringing immediate benefit without empty speculation that is of no practical use to anyone (15.84).

Furthermore, the achievement of virtue should have a more practical aim than the improvement of the individual character. It is not surprising, then, that civic virtue, as well as individual virtue, is the ultimate goal of Isocrates’ system of education (12.137 and 15.285).⁸⁷ The emphasis upon moral virtue in the *Antidosis* and in his Cyprian orations makes it especially clear that Isocrates aims at achieving moral reform in the political arena by influencing the character of the leaders who will dominate it.⁸⁸ By providing the future political leaders of his time with a grounding in workable morality, Isocrates hopes to make them not only more upstanding in private life but also more valuable in their service to the state. Thus, Isocrates’ view of moral virtue appears essentially pragmatic.⁸⁹ In his political orations, he

85. On Isocrates’ system of education, see R. Johnson, “Isocrates’ Methods of Teaching,” *AJP* 80 (1950): 25–36; Frederic W. Schlatter, “Isocrates, *Against the Sophists*, 16,” *AJP* 93 (1972): 591–97; and Erika Rummel, “The Effective Teacher and the Successful Student,” *EMC/CV* 21 (1977): 92–96.

86. For Isocrates’ concern for moral edification, see Daniel Gillis, “The Ethical Basis of Isocratean Rhetoric,” *PP* 24 (1969): 321–48; Erika Rummel, “Isocrates’ Ideal of Rhetoric: Criteria of Evaluation,” *CJ* 75 (1979): 23–35; and now Schiappa, *The Beginnings of Rhetorical Theory*, 170–74.

87. In antiquity, Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Isocrates* 4) concurs that Isocrates’ work had a civic as well as an individual aim. P. Cloché (*Isocrate et son temps* [Paris: Belles Lettres, 1963], 19) brings out the fact that for Isocrates, social virtues are inseparable from individual virtues and are “plus hautes et plus précieuses encore”; see now also Schiappa, *The Beginnings of Rhetorical Theory*, 174–80. Too (*The Rhetoric of Identity in Isocrates*) argues that Isocrates’ writings and his pedagogy focus exclusively on civic identity, which causes her to overlook his other interests, especially those in the sphere of political morality.

88. Cf. Jaeger, *Paideia* 3:105.

89. On the relevance of Isocrates’ thought to contemporary pragmatism, see Edward Schiappa, “Isocrates’ *philosophia* and Contemporary Pragmatism,” in *Rhetoric, Sophistry, Pragmatism*,

urges his readers to practice various combinations of moral virtues, less for their own sakes than because those who do will gain the advantage over others and achieve success in public life (8.31–35, 63, 15.281–82, 12.185–87, 14.39; cf. 12.30–32).

Isocrates' own political views appear equally pragmatic. While a staunch defender of the achievements of the Athenian democracy in speeches intended to showcase Athens's glory (esp. *Panegyricus* and *Panathenaicus*), he paints a less rosy picture in the *Peace* and in the *Antidosis* (15.316–19), where he demonstrates that imperialism based on the desire for material benefit leads to decadence and disaster;⁹⁰ the differing viewpoints expressed in his speeches reflect their different contexts.⁹¹ Although the conservatism of Isocrates' own political views can be discerned from his corpus, he was careful to avoid open advocacy of oligarchy (a prudent decision in fourth-century Athens, after the disastrous oligarchic revolutions of 411 and 404);⁹² Yun Lee Too is convincing in her recent argument that Isocrates appropriates democratic language while attempting to replace it with an ideology of oligarchic elitism.⁹³ Unlike other Athenian conservatives, however, Isocrates remained convinced of Athens' superiority and was never attracted to the Spartan way of life, with its lack of cultural achievement (esp. 12.202–229). For pragmatic and practical reasons, his *paideia* overtly endorsed no specific political faction; note also that he, in his lengthy exposition of the services of Timotheus to the Athenian people (15.101–39), praises him for his moral leadership rather than his politics.

Isocrates' pragmatism introduces a marked duality, visible throughout his corpus, between urging moral action for others' benefit and as a means of achieving personal success. This duality is best revealed by an examination of the *Evagoras*.⁹⁴ Isocrates states that when Evagoras took over the throne at Salamis, the city was in a state of barbarism, was neither hospitable to the

ed. Stephen Mailloux, *Literature, Culture, Theory* 15 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 33–60, esp. 41–48, and *The Beginnings of Rhetorical Theory*, 180–84.

90. See James Davidson, "Isocrates against Imperialism: An Analysis of the *De Pace*," *Historia* 39 (1990): 20–36.

91. Which is not to say that he did not intend them seriously on any level, *pace* Phillip Harding, "The Purpose of Isocrates' *Archidamus* and *On the Peace*," *CSCA* 6 (1973): 137–49 at 138–40.

92. See now Josiah Ober, *Political Dissent in Democratic Athens: Intellectual Critics of Popular Rule* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 248–89.

93. Yun Lee Too, *The Rhetoric of Identity in Isocrates*.

94. Cf. Stephen Halliwell, "Traditional Conceptions of Character," in *Characterization and Individuality in Greek Literature*, ed. Christopher Pelling (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990), 32–59.

Greeks nor versed in the crafts (τέχναι), and did not possess either a trading post or a harbor (9.47). He extended his civilizing mission to the hostile inhabitants of the surrounding region (9.49), led them toward mildness and moderation (ἐπι πραότητα καὶ μετριότητα), and succeeded in hellenizing and educating them as well as the inhabitants of his native city (9.66–67). There is no archaeological evidence for this alleged state of barbarism, and no decline in the arts or material culture of Salamis or Cyprus can be observed during this period of Phoenician occupation.⁹⁵ Here Isocrates invents a state of barbarism in order to employ the *topoi* used to describe stereotypical barbarians since Homer's description of the Cyclopes in the *Odyssey*; not only do they lack the technological skills of the Greeks, but they are positively uncivilized in that they do not obey the traditional Greek *nomos* of hospitality to strangers. Using the *topoi* of Greek *Kulturgeschichte*,⁹⁶ Isocrates presents Evagoras as a culture-hero, who not only raises the Cyprians and their neighbors out of a primitive state of savagery but also endows them with all the *technai*. If we look closely, however, we see that Isocrates has a specific purpose in mind with these references to the *topoi* of *Kulturgeschichte*, namely, to justify Evagoras's seizure of the throne at Salamis and conquest of the surrounding regions. In fact, if one strips away the veneer of Evagoras's alleged civilizing missions, his naked imperialism stands revealed.

It is instructive to compare with these passages another, better-known account of the rise of civilization from the *Panegyricus* (4.28–50), where Isocrates attributes to Athens the role of culture bringer. The stated purpose of this discussion is to establish Athens's right to be the leader of a panhellenic expedition against the barbarians, that is, the Persians. As such, its purpose is doubly imperialistic; not only is Athens to have hegemony over the other Greeks, but to conquer the Persians under the guise of hellenizing them.⁹⁷ Both the text and the subtext are very similar indeed to the presentation of Evagoras as a culture-hero. By using Evagoras as an example, Isocrates demonstrates that the most successful acts of imperialism are those that are disguised with altruistic motives.

95. F. G. Maier, "Cyprus and Phoenicia," in *The Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. 6, 2d ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 297–336, at 309–12.

96. Cole, *Democritus and the Sources of Greek Anthropology*, esp. 47–59.

97. Cf. Georges Mathieu, *Les idées politiques d'Isocrate* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1925), 58–59: ". . . l'hellénisme était avant tout une forme de civilisation fondée sur la raison, mais seuls les Hellènes étaient aptes à recevoir cette civilisation. En conséquence, Isocrate ne songe qu'à l'asservissement des barbares . . ."

How is it possible to reconcile this Machiavellian view of statesmanship with Isocrates' stated aim in the *Evagoras* of holding up its subjects, embodiment of the moral virtues, as a *paradigma* of the proper sort of behavior of the ideal ruler? A possible answer can be found in the proemium to the *Tō Nicocles*, which may be meant to serve as the introduction to all the Cyprian orations.⁹⁸ Here Isocrates states that the successful exhortation of a ruler to virtue brings practical benefits for all, for his rule is thereby made more secure (ἀσφαλεστέρα) for him and milder (πραότερα) for his subjects (2.8). Of course, it is impossible to tell whether Isocrates' insistence upon practical rewards arises from cynical pragmatism or from the realization that arguments for utility were needed for his exhortations to virtue to be successful.

Although he wrote no historical works, Isocrates did use historical examples in many of his orations. As he says in his advice to the Cyprian prince Nicocles, it is by remembering the past that one can take better counsel for the future (2.35; cf. 1.34, 2.35, 4.141, 6.59). While this statement is reminiscent of Thucydides (1.22.4), Isocrates intends the lessons to be learned from the past to be more explicitly moral.⁹⁹ While events of the past can and do serve as moral instruction, they do not always teach the same lesson. As Isocrates states in the *Panegyricus*, it is the mark of the good orator to be able to select material from the past to suit his purpose at the appropriate time (4.9). In the *Panathenaicus* (12.246), he puts into the mouth of an unnamed pupil the characterization of that work as "replete with history and philosophy, filled with every kind of elaboration and fiction (ψευδολογία)." He then hastily adds, lest anyone get the wrong idea of what he means by fiction, "not the kind which normally harms one's fellow-citizens, when used incorrectly, but the kind which through proper education can benefit or give pleasure to one's audience." As C. Bradford Welles remarks, "this is the useful lie, which Plato allows his rulers: an invented story which is morally true and pedagogically useful."¹⁰⁰ While it is possible to dismiss this passage as not

98. As suggested by Eucken, *Isokrates*, 216.

99. On Isocrates' use of history, see C. Bradford Welles, "Isocrates' View of History," in *The Classical Tradition. Literary and Historical Studies in Honor of Harry Caplan*, ed. Luitpold Wallach (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966), 3–25; C. H. Wilson, "Thucydides, Isocrates, and the Athenian Empire," *GR* 13 (1966): 54–63; and Charles D. Hamilton, "Greek Rhetoric and History: The Case of Isocrates," in *Arktouros: Hellenic Studies Presented to Bernard M. W. Knox*, ed. Glen W. Bowersock, Walter Burkert, and Michael C. J. Putnam (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1979), 291–98.

100. "Isocrates' View of History," 15.

being Isocrates' own thought (cf. 12.1), he does state elsewhere that he provides examples (both historical and mythical) of virtue in the express desire that his audience take them as models for their own behavior (12.136–37 and 5.113).¹⁰¹ Isocrates, it seems, claims manipulation of historical events is justified, provided that it is for the moral education (or the entertainment,¹⁰² which is perhaps not entirely separate from education) of his audience.¹⁰³ Because many of the standard *topoi* used in historical examples involve the moral superiority of Athens, it should not occasion surprise that Isocrates found them fertile terrain for his purpose of improving his audience. The lessons of the past provide instruction as to how the best sort of citizen should act, but the same historical event can furnish different lessons at different times, in the best tradition of rhetoric.

Despite his professed disagreement with the sophists' exclusion of political morality from their instruction in rhetorical techniques, Isocrates did ensure that rhetoric (as he understood it) henceforth formed the most important component of higher education.¹⁰⁴ This coupling of rhetorical techniques with the reader's moral instruction in political virtues and the art of statesmanship is present throughout the historical works of both Ephorus and Theopompus, although it is manifested differently in each writer.

Ironically, the best-documented piece of information preserved about Ephorus (*FGrHist* 70 TT 1, 2a, 3, 4, 5, 8, 24, 27, and 28) and Theopompus (*FGrHist* 115 TT 1, 5a, 5b, 6b, 20, 24, 38, and 39 and F 345), that they were pupils of Isocrates, has proved the most controversial. At the beginning of this century, E. Schwartz was the first to voice skepticism about the traditional teacher/pupil relationship between Isocrates

101. Papillon, "Isocrates on Gorgias and Helen."

102. Phillip Harding ("Laughing at Isocrates: Humour in the *Areopagitikos*?" *LCM* 13 [1988]: 18–23, and "Comedy and Rhetoric," in *Persuasion*, 196–221, at 206–9) suggests that Isocrates uses comic devices in the *Areopagiticus* to parody the popular notion that the past is better than the present. Nevertheless, the presence of some humorous elements should not be taken to exclude any serious purpose in the work.

103. Daniel Gillis ("Isocrates' Panegyricus: The Rhetorical Structure," *WS* 84 n.s., 5 [1971]: 52–73, esp. 55); but cf. Wilson, "Thucydides, Isocrates, and the Athenian Empire," 59; and Norman H. Baynes, "Isocrates," in *Byzantine Studies and Other Essays* (London: Athlone, 1960), 144–67.

104. Cf., e.g., H. I. Marrou, *A History of Education in Antiquity*, trans. George Lamb (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1956), 79–91; and M. I. Finley, "The Heritage of Isocrates," *Knowledge for What?* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1972); reprint, *The Use and Abuse of History* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1975), 193–214, esp. 198–99.

and both Ephorus and Theopompus.¹⁰⁵ Although, with the exception of Jacoby,¹⁰⁶ it was not widely accepted at first,¹⁰⁷ this view has recently gained ground.¹⁰⁸

It is important, however, not to overlook the evidence that Ephorus had some rhetorical training,¹⁰⁹ as did Theopompus, who claimed to have written a prodigious number of epideictic speeches (no less than 20,000 lines, by his own reckoning), some of which are preserved by a fragmentary book list from Rhodes (*FGrHist* 115 T 48),¹¹⁰ and to have delivered orations all over the Greek world (*FGrHist* 115 F 25).¹¹¹ It is a reasonable assumption that both Ephorus and Theopompus, with their interest in rhetoric, would turn to Isocrates' school (rather than, say, Plato's Academy), where rhetoric was the focus of the curriculum. Moreover, Isocrates' sojourn on Chios in the 390s, where he opened a small school, attested by Pseudo-Plutarch (*Vit. X Or. = Mor.* 837b–c),¹¹² lends further credence to the tradition, for even if Theopompus was not yet alive (or was very young) at the time, Isocrates' reputation and Chian connections would have made him a natural choice as instructor. Although he did not write historical works, Isocrates did use examples from the past to provide moral instruction, as we have seen. Therefore, there is no reason to doubt the tradition that his pupils included historians as well as orators and politicians. Nevertheless, even if we posit a direct teacher/pupil relationship between Isocrates and both Ephorus and Theopompus, we must still be skeptical in assigning Isocrates' political views in toto to the historians. As we shall see, both Ephorus and Theopompus had definite political views that owe little to their erstwhile teacher. Isocrates' insistence that there should be a moral basis to political life and that examples from the past could

105. E. Schwartz, "Ephoros," *RE* 6.1 (1907), 1–2.

106. *FGrHist* IIC, 22–23.

107. See, e.g., the objections of G. L. Barber, *The Historian Ephorus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1935; reprint, Chicago: Ares, 1995), 3–4.

108. See, e.g., Michael Attyah Flower, *Theopompus of Chios: History and Rhetoric in the Fourth Century BC* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1994), 42–62.

109. Cicero (*Orator* 191 = *FGrHist* 70 T 29) describes Ephorus as "himself a smooth orator with the very best training" (*levis ipse orator et profectus ex optima disciplina*).

110. The titles of these works indicate a certain Isocratean influence, for they include a *Panathenaicus* and a *Philippus* (partially restored).

111. One occasion was the funeral oration contest over Mausolus in 352 (*FGrHist* 115 TT 6 and 48), in which Theopompus boasts that he defeated Isocartes (F 345).

112. On the probable veracity of this tradition, see Slobodan Dušanić, "Isocrates, the Chian Intellectuals, and the Political Context of the Euthydemus," *JHS* 119 (1999): 1–16, at 2.

provide instruction was a legacy to both Ephorus and Theopompus, although his influence is manifested in different ways in the two historians.¹¹³

By the end of the fifth century, traditional moral values suffered a sustained attack on the intellectual level by both the sophists and Socrates, who called them into question, and simultaneously on the popular level by the disintegration of moral standards as a result of prolonged war and hardship. For the opportunistic, the techniques of rhetoric taught by the sophists offered a crash course in political success and often replaced the traditional morality of the poets in the instruction of those about to enter political life. (In the *Clouds*, Aristophanes parodies the clash between the old and the new systems of education.) Naturally, however, the moral virtues that would be persuasive to large audiences are not those that would appeal to the elite. It is natural, therefore, that intellectuals such as the author of the *Anonymus Iamblichi*, Socrates, and Isocrates equate the rhetorical techniques of the sophists with immoralism. All three of these intellectuals set themselves firmly in opposition to the teaching of rhetorical techniques for the purpose of political success without sufficient concern for the moral virtues that the educated elite must possess. While Socrates looks for true virtue in the process of clearing away false definitions, the author of the *Anonymus Iamblichi* and Isocrates are satisfied with practical political morality, as it was commonly understood. The influence of Socrates and Isocrates in particular results in a greater emphasis upon the instruction of political virtue in the interpretation of the past by fourth-century prose writers. As a result, the moral and didactic elements implicit in Herodotus and Thucydides become overt and the primary focus of the historical works of Xenophon, Ephorus, and Theopompus.

Before turning to the historians themselves, however, it would be helpful to determine more precisely what the most important contemporary moral virtues were for the educated, literate elite of the fourth century, the intended readership of our historians, as well as Plato and Isocrates. For the period prior to ca. 425, the surviving literature firmly enshrines traditional,

113. For other recent defenses of the pupil-teacher tradition, see Gordon S. Shrimpton, *Theopompus the Historian* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991), 9–10; and L. J. Sanders, "Theopompus and the Dionysian Empire," *EMC/CV* n.s., 14 (1995): 337–53, at 350 n. 35, although the latter is not convincing in his further argument that Isocrates exerted a political influence on both writers. Others have expressed skepticism about a direct relationship, but concede a profound influence of Isocrates upon Ephorus and Theopompus; see esp. Kenneth S. Sacks, *Diodorus and the First Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990), 25–26; and Diethard Nickel, "Isokrates und die Geschichtsschreibung des 4. Jahrhunderts v. Chr.," *Philologus* 135 (1991): 233–39.

aristocratic values, although there do of course exist differences in emphasis between authors. In a process beginning in the last quarter of the fifth century and continuing through the first three quarters of the fourth, the traditional aristocratic virtues of the early poets metamorphose into the civic virtues of the Athenian democracy, as we learn from comedy, oratory, and inscriptions,¹¹⁴ sources designed to play up to the masses. The Athenian democracy appropriates many of the aristocratic moral virtues but gives them a more explicitly civic (i.e., democratic) connotation.¹¹⁵ The changes in the traditional conception of virtue, however, are much more complex and multifaceted than the overly schematic hypothesis of Arthur Adkins, that the self-interested “competitive” virtues exemplified by Homer were replaced during the fourth century by “quiet” or “co-operative” virtues.¹¹⁶ Moreover, this sort of evidence is not particularly useful for us, as Plato, Xenophon, Ephorus, and Theopompus were aristocrats and, as we shall see, were not favorably disposed toward the Athenian democracy.

More useful for our purposes is a group of fourth-century prose writers, who represent a level somewhere in between popular morality and moral philosophy, and aim at the literate, aristocratic elite. This group, represented by works such as the *Evagoras* of Isocrates, the *Agesilaus* and *Cyropaedia* of Xenophon, and the *Alcibiades*, begins to replace the traditional role of the poets in the moral education of the elite.¹¹⁷ Moreover, in these works we find a trend toward the listing and definition of moral virtues (a trend culminating, perhaps, in Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics*). An identification of which moral virtues were considered important by the target audience will be very useful in situating the discussions of Plato, Xenophon, Ephorus, and Theopompus, for it will be possible to determine for each writer which of the virtues that he is praising is a standard contemporary virtue among his peers, and which is peculiar to him alone. In this

114. These are the main sources for K. J. Dover, *Greek Popular Morality in the Time of Plato and Aristotle* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1974).

115. David Whitehead, “Cardinal Virtues: The Language of Public Approbation in Democratic Athens,” *ClMed* 44 (1993) 37–75; cf. Josiah Ober, *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens: Rhetoric, Ideology, and the Power of the People* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), esp. 251–60.

116. Arthur W. H. Adkins, *Merit and Responsibility: A Study in Greek Value* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1960). On the limitations of the lexical approach, see Hugh Lloyd-Jones, *The Justice of Zeus*, Sather Classical Lectures 41 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971; rev. ed. 1983), 2–3 and 158; and Dover, *Greek Popular Morality*, 46–50.

117. Of course, performed poetry continued its paideutic function for the Athenian collective; see Jon Hesk, *Deception and Democracy in Classical Athens* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 176 n. 105 and the references contained there.

way, we shall be able to see how the individual moral interests of each influence the way in which he interprets the past, which will also serve to explain the differences between their works.

This trend toward the listing and definition of moral virtues aimed at the educated elite arises perhaps on the one hand from the reevaluation of the traditional moral virtues by the sophists and other intellectuals, such as Socrates and the author of the *Anonymus Iamblichii*, and on the other hand from the dissatisfaction of the aristocracy with both the policies and the values of the Athenian democracy, particularly after the failed oligarchic experiments of the final years of the fifth century made it unlikely, for the foreseeable future at least, that an oligarchical government would come to power in Athens. It is also probable that both Gorgias, who apparently preferred to enumerate the individual virtues rather than to make a general definition (Aristotle, *Politics* 1260a=DK 82 B 18; cf. Plato, *Meno* 71d–72a=DK 82 B 19), and Socrates, whose insistence upon general, fixed definitions of moral virtues is well attested, exerted a certain amount of influence. In the first half of the fourth century, the attributes for which it was reasonable to praise others include not only those, such as lineage and physical beauty that have little or nothing to do with the acts of their possessor but also others, such as piety, justice, moderation, and wisdom, (which is admittedly a more difficult case, as it is an intellectual excellence that can be directed either to good or bad ends) which are more dependent upon a moral choice made by the agent.

Although there appear to be some early attempts to list and group moral virtues in Pindar and tragedy,¹¹⁸ it is not until Plato that we find an attempt at systematization. Even in Plato, the grouping of moral virtues appears to have been fairly fluid. He generally fixes the number of virtues that constitute excellence (ἀρετή) at four (although the number is sometimes three or five): wisdom (σοφία), courage (ἀνδρεία), self-control (σωφροσύνη),¹¹⁹ and justice (δικαιοσύνη).¹²⁰ In some of the earlier dialogues, piety (ὁσιότης) is included,¹²¹ but it eventually drops out of the list, because for Plato piety has become subsumed into justice, that part

118. Pindar, *Isthmian* 8.24–28; Aeschylus, *Septem contra Thebas* 610; and Euripides fr. 282; see Helen North, “Pindar, *Isthmian*, 8, 24–28,” *AJP* 69 (1948): 304–8.

119. On the evolution of this loaded term, see the thorough analysis of Helen North, *Sophrosyne: Self-Knowledge and Self-Restraint in Greek Literature*, Cornell Studies in Classical Philology 25 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966).

120. *Laches* 199d, *Protagoras* 329c, 330b, 349b, *Gorgias* 507c, *Meno* 78d, *Phaedo* 69c, *Republic* 427e, *Laws* 631c–d.

121. *Laches* 199d, *Protagoras* 329c, *Gorgias* 507c, *Meno* 78d.

which is overseen by the gods.¹²² Interestingly, in the *Symposium*, Agathon lists and defines this same grouping of four virtues (194e–97e). Clearly, this self-important and pretentious speech is not intended to be taken seriously, but it does confirm that Plato’s grouping of the most important moral virtues in his other dialogues would not have been alien to his literate, upper-class readership in the fourth century.

Despite Plato’s apparent formalization of the moral virtues that make up excellence (ἀρετή), his fourfold scheme did not become immediately normative or even current in fourth-century writers.¹²³ Instead, other fourth-century prose writers tend to pick and choose from among these virtues to highlight those that are most useful for their present purposes, often linking them to other virtues, not all of which could be considered precisely moral in their import. This relativity, however, is due not so much to the influence of the sophists but rather to the nature of Greek morality in general, which was based on degree rather than absolutes.¹²⁴

Isocrates, in his encomium of Evagoras of Cyprus, exemplifies this tendency. Despite his stated rivalry with the poets (9.9–11), he goes to great pains to adapt the poetic praise tradition to fit the new conditions of the fourth century and his own moral and educational aims.¹²⁵ Like Pindar, he attempts to provide an ethical model (παράδειγμα) for future generations to follow, but his Evagoras serves a narrower didactic purpose, as an example of the moral behavior, in both political and military affairs, of the ideal leader, although, as we have seen, he also uses the Cypriote as a justification for naked imperialism. He praises his subject first for his modesty (σωφροσύνη) as a child (9.22), to which were added courage (ἀνδρία), wisdom (σοφία), and justice (δικαιοσύνη) when he became an adult (9.23). Isocrates takes great pains to emphasize that through the foresight of the divinity (ὁ δαίμων), Evagoras was able to obtain possession of the throne piously and justly (ὀσίως καὶ δικαίως),

122. See Albrecht Dihle, *Der Kanon der zwei Tugenden* (Cologne: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1968), esp. 15–23. For arguments against Dover’s putative fourth-century tendency to equate piety with virtue (*Greek Popular Morality*, 66–67), see Arthur W. H. Adkins, “Problems in Greek Popular Morality,” *CP* 73 (1978): 143–58, at 153–54.

123. John Ferguson, *Moral Values in the Ancient World* (London: Methuen, 1958), 27.

124. So James N. Davidson, *Courtesans and Fishcakes: The Consuming Passions of Contemporary Athens* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1997), esp. 207–8.

125. William H. Race, “Pindaric Encomium and Isocrates’ *Evagoras*,” *TAPA* 117 (1987): 131–55. See now also Terry Papillon, “Isocrates and the Greek Poetic Tradition,” *Scholion* n.s., 7 (1998): 41–61.

while any action that involved impiety was left for someone else to carry out (9.25–26).¹²⁶

While the evaluation of character in terms of the possession or the lack of moral virtues is a typically Greek conception,¹²⁷ Isocrates brings a new element to the listing of these virtues, for, instead of defining them, he illustrates them with Evagoras's deeds in the subsequent narrative. Here, however, he moves away from a fourfold scheme of the virtues, and rather groups them at will, for he pairs justice and piety (9.26 and 38) on two occasions, and piety and humanity (θεοφιλῶς καὶ φιλανθρωπῶς) on another (9.43). He occasionally switches to a tripartite scheme, probably for its pleasing rhetorical effect, when he emphasizes the nobility, splendor, and piety of Evagoras's actions (9.39) in one place, and his courage (ἀνδρεία), wisdom (φρόνησις), and general excellence (σύμπασα ἀρετή) in another (9.65). Instead of Plato's systematic grouping of the virtues, we find Isocrates using some of these same virtues where, as he conceived it, the situation demanded. Moreover, he explicitly appeals to Evagoras's deeds as "proofs" (9:51 and 58: τεκμήριον), one of the standard techniques of rhetoric. In short, Isocrates' use of the moral virtues is more similar to the techniques of rhetoric than to moral philosophy.

In his encomium of the Spartan king Agesilaus, Xenophon combines the method of Plato's Agathon in the *Symposium*, where the virtues of the addressee are listed and defined, and that of Isocrates in the *Evagoras*, where the monarch's virtues are shown through his actions. Xenophon begins the *Agesilaus*, intended, like the *Evagoras*, as an ethical model (10.2: παράδειγμα), with a description of his subject's deeds (1.6–2.31), with the explanation that these will best illustrate his character (1.6). As one might expect from a military leader—and a Spartan, at that—the virtues of piety (1.10–12, 1.34, 2.13, 2.15, 2.17) and courage (2.12) are prominent. Nevertheless, virtues such as mildness (πραότης) and humanity (φιλανθρωπία) also appear (1.20–23); these are also key words in Isocrates' portrayal of Evagoras, as is humanity (φιλανθρωπία) in Xenophon's portrayal of Cyrus in the *Cyropaedia* (1.2.1).¹²⁸

126. Pace North, *Sophrosyne*, 147, who argues that the absence of piety from the list is "remarkable." Piety, defined as both sacrificing and keeping oaths (1.13), is also found in close association with justice (δικαιοσύνη), self-control (σωφροσύνη), and wisdom (σοφία) in the *To Demonicus* (1.15–19) and with justice in the *To Nicocles* (2.20).

127. Halliwell, "Traditional Conceptions of Character," 49–50.

128. "with respect to his soul, he was most humane, learned, and fond of honor" (ψυχὴν δὲ φιλανθρωπότατος καὶ φιλαμαθέστατος καὶ φιλοτιμώτατος); see Hans Rudolf Breitenbach, "Xenophon," *RE* 9A (1967), 1719.

Following this survey of Agesilaus's deeds, Xenophon turns to a catalogue of his virtue, in which he describes each one and gives an example from Agesilaus's life to illustrate it (3.1–9.7). He begins with Agesilaus's piety (εὐσέβεια), which he demonstrates only in terms of his trustworthiness in keeping oaths and treaties (3). Next comes praise of Agesilaus's justice (δικαιοσύνη), which is limited to money matters (4). Under this heading, Xenophon praises him for his honesty, generosity, self-control (σωφροσύνη), and freedom from sordid gain (ἀσχηροκέρδεια). He then turns to Agesilaus's temperance (σωφροσύνη), which is revealed by his self-control (ἐγκράτεια) in wine, food, and sleep, his ability to endure greater hardships and toils than his soldiers (κατεργία), and his ability to master himself in pleasures of the flesh (5). His courage is illustrated not only by his success in campaigns against the strongest enemies, in which he placed himself in the vanguard of the struggle, but also by his ability to win campaigns without a battle, which brings victory with both less risk and more profit (6.1–3).¹²⁹ Finally, his wisdom (σοφία) is shown by his ability to inspire loyalty in his fellow citizens, friends, and troops, and respect and fear in his enemies by his judicious use of deception (6.4–8).¹³⁰

Following an assessment of Agesilaus's nonmoral virtues (7–9), the final section of the encomium consists of a summary (with a mixture of moral and nonmoral virtues), in order, as Xenophon claims, that his praise may be more easy to remember (11.1–16).¹³¹ It is probably for this reason that this section is the most rhetorical in style, and some scholars have seen a close similarity to Isocrates' *Evagoras* (9.41–46).¹³² Now, Xenophon gives further details of Agesilaus's virtues, but without using relevant examples from his hero's life. In this summarizing section, for example, he does not extol piety specifically, but he does put at the head of the list of Agesilaus's virtues his reverence of sanctuaries (even those of enemies), his proper treatment of suppliants of the gods (again, even enemies), and his concern for righteous deeds and for proper religious observance (11.1–2);

129. For the combination of valor and skill implicit in military bravery, see Dover, *Greek Popular Morality*, 161–67.

130. See Breitenbach, "Xenophon," 1706.

131. For a defense of the authenticity of this section and its paraenetic function, see D. Krömer, "Xenophons Agesilaos. Untersuchungen zur Komposition" (diss., Berlin, 1971) (*non vidi*) which I know through Rainer Nickel, *Xenophon* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1979), 54–56.

132. See, e.g., Ivo Bruns, *Das literarische Porträt der Griechen im fünften und vierten Jahrhundert vor Christi Geburt* (Berlin: Wilhelm Hertz, 1896), 126–37.

in the previous section on piety (3), as we have seen, Xenophon mentions only Agesilaus's respect for oaths.

Although Xenophon centers his praise on Agesilaus's conformation to the same moral virtues that Plato grouped together, he puts a more specifically military and political focus upon their definitions. This can be explained by the subject matter of the *Agesilaus*; at the end of the *Memorabilia*, Xenophon sums up Socrates' virtues, describing him as pious, just, self-controlled, and wise (courage is not mentioned), but defines these virtues in much more general (conventional?) terms (4.8.11). With the *Cyropaedia*, however, he returns to the theme of the ideal ruler who is to set an example of moral virtue for his subjects. Therefore, Xenophon sums up Cyrus's virtues as piety, which is manifested by his maintenance of religious observance, justice in his relations with friends and allies, his concern to instill a proper sense of shame (αἰδώς) in others by his avoidance of saying or doing anything shameful, his ability to inspire obedience, and his self-control (σωφροσύνη) in his avoidance of wanton behavior (8.1.23–33; cf. 1.2.6–8); courage is conspicuous by its absence. Possibly, courage is a more acceptable virtue for a Spartan king than for a Persian ruler, at least in the eyes of Xenophon's potential readership. Like Isocrates, Xenophon is willing to toy with both his groupings of the moral virtues and their definitions to fit the context of his individual works.

A later fourth-century attempt to provide a guide to virtuous conduct for the aspiring statesman is that of [Plato's] *Alcibiades*.¹³³ The great central speech offered by Socrates to Alcibiades in praise of the Persian and Spartan kings (121a–124b) is particularly useful for our purposes, because, like Agathon's speech in the *Symposium*, it uses the standard features of encomia to extol its subjects in very conventional terms. It is especially noteworthy that the Persian prince is to be taught by four tutors, each of whom is renowned for his excellence in one of the four moral virtues grouped together by Plato, that is, the wisest, the justest, the most self-controlled, and the bravest (121c: ὁ τε σοφώτατος καὶ ὁ δικαιοτάτος καὶ ὁ σωφρονέστατος καὶ ὁ ἀνδρειότατος). The task of the wisest one is to

133. That is, the work which is often referred to as the *Greater Alcibiades*, although the MSS are unanimous in calling it the *Alcibiades*. There seems to be general consensus that this dialogue, although unlikely to be the work of Plato himself, is probably by a follower (see the sensible remarks of A. E. Taylor, *Plato: The Man and His Work*, 7th ed. [London: Methuen: 1960], 12–13). R. S. Bluck ("The Origin of the *Greater Alcibiades*," *CQ* 47 [1953]: 46–52) and Cornelius Anton Bos (*Interpretatie vaderschap en datering van de Alcibiades Maior* [Culemborg: Tjeenk Willink-Noorduijn, 1970], English summary 113–17) suggest a date in the 340s.

teach him about the worship of the Persian gods and the duties of a king (τὰ βασιλικά); in this way, the author of the *Alcibiades* conflates the moral virtues of wisdom and piety. The justest one is to teach him to tell the truth throughout his whole life; the most self-controlled one must instruct him how not to be ruled by even a single pleasure, in order that he may become accustomed to be a free man and truly a king, being master and not slave to that which is in himself. Finally, the bravest is to teach him to be fearless, since to be afraid is to be a slave (122a). This description of the upbringing of the Persian king is conventional not only in its use of these four virtues, but also in its definition of what they entail (note particularly the stereotypically oriental despot/slave dichotomy), especially when compared with other (Greek) sources for the Persian education system, namely Herodotus (1.136.2) and Xenophon (*Cyropaedia*, 1.2.6–13).

Likewise, the casting of the nation in rigid stereotypes underlies the recitation of the virtues of the Spartans. In a single sentence (122c), the author of the *Alcibiades* praises the Spartans for various virtues, both moral and nonmoral. These virtues are not defined, but it is clear that the author has combined the moral virtues of self-control (σωφροσύνη) and courage (ἀνδρεία) with others, such as order (κοσμιότης) and good discipline (εὐταξία), which are characteristic of the Spartans, with their notoriously regimented lifestyle. Both wisdom and justice are absent, perhaps as a result of the stereotypical Athenian conception of the Spartans, but one wonders why piety is not part of the list, given that the Spartans were particularly assiduous in their observance of religious scruples.¹³⁴ In any case, Alcibiades must be properly educated in the same virtues as these traditional opponents of Athens if he is going to prevail over them and exercise the best possible rule over the city. Thus, like Isocrates in the *Evagoras* and Xenophon in the *Agesilaus*, the author of the *Alcibiades* uses his conception of the standard aristocratic virtues of the day as a point of departure for future political leaders.

An important development in the fourth century is the increasing trend toward the listing and describing of the moral virtues. This trend occurs not only in the philosophical works of Plato and later in Aristotle (whose writings would not have been available to our historians), but also in works intended to provide moral guidance to the elite. It is especially noteworthy that the authors of these works choose kings (Spartan and Persian) to

134. See A. J. Holladay and M. D. Goodman, "Religious Scruples in Ancient Warfare," *CQ* n.s., 36 (1986): 151–71, esp. 152–60.

illustrate the moral virtues that must be emulated, and not the common citizen often held up as the exemplar in inscriptions, oratory, and comedy. Just as the questioning of traditional moral virtues by the sophists can be turned into arguments of expediency, so too can these lists and descriptions, in that each fourth-century prose writer can choose not only which moral virtues to highlight but even what spin to put on them to make his point most effectively. Thus, by the middle of the fourth century, the new evaluations of actions that Thucydides had criticized so effectively only half a century before (3.82.4) are no longer limited to times of great civil strife, but have become commonplace.