Dictionary of Literary Biography

Volume 176:

Ancient Greek Authors

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Dictionary of Literary Biography® • Volume One Hundred Seventy-Six

Ancient Greek Authors

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Ancient Greek Authors

Edited by
Ward W. Briggs
University of South Carolina

A Bruccoli Clark Layman Book
Gale Research
Detroit, Washington, D.C., London

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Printed in the United States of America

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of American National Standard for Information Sciences–Permanence Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1984. ∞™

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Detroit, MI 48226

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Ancient Greek authors / edited by Ward W. Briggs.
p. cm. – (Dictionary of literary biography; v. 176)
"A Bruccoli Clark Layman book."
Includes bibliographical references and index.
ISBN 0-8103-9939-3 (alk. paper)
1. Greek literature – Bio-bibliography – Dictionaries. 2. Authors, Greek – Biography – Dictionaries.
I. Briggs, Ward W. II. Series.
PA3064.A63 1997
880.9'001 – dc21 97-435
[B] CIP

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

For Laura

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Plan of the Series

. . . Almost the most prodigious asset of a country, and perhaps its most precious possession, is its native literary product – when that product is fine and noble and enduring.

Mark Twain*

The advisory board, the editors, and the publisher of the *Dictionary of Literary Biography* are joined in endorsing Mark Twain's declaration. The literature of a nation provides an inexhaustible resource of permanent worth. We intend to make literature and its creators better understood and more accessible to students and the reading public, while satisfying the standards of teachers and scholars.

To meet these requirements, *literary biography* has been construed in terms of the author's achievement. The most important thing about a writer is his writing. Accordingly, the entries in *DLB* are career biographies, tracing the development of the author's canon and the evolution of his reputation.

The purpose of *DLB* is not only to provide reliable information in a convenient format but also to place the figures in the larger perspective of literary history and to offer appraisals of their accomplishments by qualified scholars.

The publication plan for *DLB* resulted from two years of preparation. The project was proposed to Bruccoli Clark by Frederick C. Ruffner, president of the Gale Research Company, in November 1975. After specimen entries were prepared and typeset, an advisory board was formed to refine the entry format and develop the series rationale. In meetings held during 1976, the publisher, series editors, and advisory board approved the scheme for a comprehensive biographical dictionary of persons who contributed to North American literature. Editorial work on the first volume began in January 1977, and it was published in 1978. In order to make *DLB* more than a reference tool and to compile volumes that individually have claim to status as literary history, it was decided to organize volumes by topic, period, or genre. Each of these free-standing volumes provides a biographical-bibliographical guide and overview for a particular area of literature. We are convinced that this organization – as opposed to a single alphabet method – constitutes a valuable innovation in the presentation of reference material. The volume plan necessarily requires many decisions for the placement and treatment of authors who might properly be included in two or three volumes. In some instances a major figure will be included in separate volumes, but with different entries emphasizing the aspect of his career appropriate to each volume. Ernest Hemingway, for example, is represented in *American Writers in Paris, 1920–1939* by an entry focusing on his expatriate apprenticeship; he is also in *American Novelists, 1910–1945* with an entry surveying his entire career. Each volume includes a cumulative index of the subject authors and articles. Comprehensive indexes to the entire series are planned.

The series has been further augmented by the *DLB Yearbooks* (since 1981) which update published entries and add new entries to keep the *DLB* current with contemporary activity. There have also been *DLB Documentary Series* volumes which provide biographical and critical source materials for figures whose work is judged to have particular interest for students. One of these companion volumes is entirely devoted to Tennessee Williams.

We define literature as the *intellectual commerce of a nation:* not merely as belles lettres but as that ample and complex process by which ideas are generated, shaped, and transmitted. *DLB* entries are not limited to "creative writers" but extend to other figures who in their time and in their way influenced the mind of a people. Thus the series encompasses historians, journalists, publishers, bibliographers, and screenwriters. By this means readers of *DLB* may be aided to perceive literature not as cult scripture in the keeping of intellectual high priests but firmly positioned at the center of a nation's life.

DLB includes the major writers appropriate to each volume and those standing in the ranks behind them. Scholarly and critical counsel has been sought in deciding which minor figures to include and how full their entries should be. Wherever pos-

**From an unpublished section of Mark Twain's autobiography, copyright by the Mark Twain Company*

sible, useful references are made to figures who do not warrant separate entries.

Each *DLB* volume has an expert volume editor responsible for planning the volume, selecting the figures for inclusion, and assigning the entries. Volume editors are also responsible for preparing, where appropriate, appendices surveying the major periodicals and literary and intellectual movements for their volumes, as well as lists of further readings. Work on the series as a whole is coordinated at the Bruccoli Clark Layman editorial center in Columbia, South Carolina, where the editorial staff is responsible for accuracy and utility of the published volumes.

One feature that distinguishes *DLB* is the illustration policy – its concern with the iconography of literature. Just as an author is influenced by his surroundings, so is the reader's understanding of the author enhanced by a knowledge of his environment. Therefore *DLB* volumes include not only drawings, paintings, and photographs of authors, often depicting them at various stages in their careers, but also illustrations of their families and places where they lived. Title pages are regularly reproduced in facsimile along with dust jackets for modern authors. The dust jackets are a special feature of *DLB* because they often document better than anything else the way in which an author's work was perceived in its own time. Specimens of the writers' manuscripts and letters are included when feasible.

Samuel Johnson rightly decreed that "The chief glory of every people arises from its authors." The purpose of the *Dictionary of Literary Biography* is to compile literary history in the surest way available to us – by accurate and comprehensive treatment of the lives and work of those who contributed to it.

The *DLB* Advisory Board

Introduction

> We are all Greeks. Our laws, our literature, our religion, our arts have their root in Greece. But for Greece – Rome, the instructor, the conqueror, or the metropolis of our ancestors, would have spread no illumination with her arms, and we might still have been savages and idolaters; or, what is worse, might have arrived at such a stagnant and miserable state of social institution as China and Japan possess.
>
> – Percy Bysshe Shelley, Preface to *Hellas*

The view of Shelley has long survived the Romantic period that gave it birth. Though Europe had acknowledged the primacy of Aristotle as the "master of those who know," Plato as the great thinker, and Homer as the great poet, Rome was the immediate forbear in terms of the classical heritage of the West, both from the temporal view of the Holy Roman Empire and the spiritual view of the Roman Catholic Church. Though Rome conquered Greece following the First Punic War, Rome's greatest lyric poet, Horace, observed that "Captured Greece took captive her uncivilized captor"; and Rome's greatest epic poet, Virgil, wrote in his first-century-B.C. *Aeneid* that the Greeks mastered the arts, politics, and scientific inquiry, while the Romans excelled at "imposing civilization on peace," that is, the arts of war, governance, and public works.

Indeed, it is from the Greeks that the literature of Western Europe derives its epic, tragic, comic, elegiac, lyric, and pastoral poetry; of the genres of classical literature only satire, according to Quintilian, may be attributed to the Romans. In developing their literary history, the Greeks were thoughtful enough to distribute the greatest works of literature by genre and century; that is, individual genres arose (often seemingly ex nihilo), flourished, and in many cases died out in discrete centuries. The early period (eighth century B.C.) saw the rise of the Homeric epic; the seventh to sixth centuries produced lyric poetry (Alcaeus, Archilochus, Sappho); the fifth produced drama, including tragedy (Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides) and comedy (Aristophanes), and also choral lyric (Pindar); the late fifth and fourth centuries were the age of prose, which included seminal works in history (Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon), philosophy (Aristotle, Epicurus, Plato, Theophrastus), and rhetoric (Aeschines, Demosthenes, Isocrates, Lysias); the third century was marked by scholarship (Callimachus), and didactic poetry (Aratus, Callimachus); and the first and second centuries A.D. in Rome were distinguished by historians (Plutarch, Arrian, Cassius Dio).

This is of course a simplified view, perhaps useful only for students facing comprehensive exams in related fields, and will not stand up to stricter delineation than has been given here. Nevertheless, it is remarkable that, though epics continued to be written, viable epic never revived after Homer, with the sole exception of the experiment of Apollonius Rhodius; there are no tragedies worthy of the name after Euripides; the New Comedy of Menander extended into the fourth century, but Aristophanic comedy died with its author. Great figures are of course not confined to these periods. Gorgias, renowned in rhetoric, was born a century before Demosthenes. The apogee of Greek philosophy is generally considered to be the century of Plato and Aristotle, but philosophy has been a principal and defining interest of the Greek mind through the centuries, and the pre-Socratics (Pythagoras, Parmenides, Heraclitus, Empedocles, Protagoras, and Gorgias) of the fifth century are vitally important, though in most cases there is little information about their lives. The philosophy of the period after Socrates (that is, Plato) and of the Christian era is represented in this volume by Epictetus, Plotinus, and Diogenes Laertius. Other genres stand apart from such temporal categorization, such as the pastoral (Theocritus), the fable (Babrius), and satire (Lucian).

But the generic approach to literary history can be problematic. The last extensive history of Greek literature in English, Albin Lesky's *A History of Greek Literature* (1966), was published more than thirty years ago. There is undeniable value to a compendious version of virtually all classical writers from a single, consistent, highly intelligent, and widely knowledgeable author. (Similar virtues attend a shorter volume, by H. J. Rose, *A Handbook of Greek Literature: From Homer to the Age of Lucian,* 1957). And yet there is also great value in an examination of individual authors by experts on those authors. A recent effort, *Ancient Writers: Greece and Rome,* edited by T. J. Luce (1982), requires two volumes to present only fifty authors of Greek and Latin (though there are some collective articles on,

for example, Hellenistic writers, that would add to the total); while the *Cambridge History of Classical Literature,* volume 1, *Greek Literature,* edited by P. E. Easterling and B. M. W. Knox (1985), tries to treat every figure of consequence in all Greek literature, from Homer to Cassius Dio and Herodian, with chapters arranged by genre within periods. Of these works on Greek literary history, the greatest is by Lesky, yet even he recognized the difficulty of making summary judgments about the complex and obscure development of literary genres. He also believed that authors who do their work in more than one genre (this is far truer for the Romans than the Greeks) can obscure the development of their own lives and careers, while masking the contributions that work in one literary field may have made to another, for example, the influence of rhetoric on drama or of drama on epic.

The present volume, therefore, assumes a different posture from the eminent works noted above. The aim of *DLB 176: Ancient Greek Authors* is to concentrate, in keeping with the purpose of the series, on bio-bibliography. The scholar Aby Warburg said that one should see the times through the man, not the man through the times. By concentrating on a defining individual such as Socrates, Callimachus, or Theophrastus, one can understand the character of the individual's time more clearly than one could ever see him through a study of his age.

Limits have necessarily been imposed on this volume. It was decided not to include Christian writers, as they are too numerous to do justice to under the limitations of this volume (indeed they should have a *DLB* volume of their own); but two important Jewish writers, Philo and Flavius Josephus, are included as representatives of an important and somewhat limited area of ancient Greek literature. Writers of the Byzantine era are not included; the latest author is Diogenes Laertius, of the third century A.D. There are no essays on the transmission of the texts to modern times or on bibliography of the history of the various periods, because these topics were deemed to be outside the scope and practice of the series.

What remains are accounts of those whom the editor considers the greatest authors of the long age of classical Greece, which lasted more than a thousand years. Ask any ten scholars who the fifty most significant Greek authors are and you are likely to get general agreement on at least thirty; the choice of the remaining twenty authors will depend on the subjective estimate of each scholar. The authors in this latter group included in this volume have likewise depended on the subjective estimate of the editor and some mitigating factors. Because the present volume aims to give an idea of the breadth of the corpus of Greek literature, the book attempts to present as many different areas as possible, including medicine (Hippocrates, Galen), science (Aristotle, Theophrastus), and geography (Strabo), to represent the enormous range of the inquisitive Greek mind. Works in these fields may not fit everyone's definition of the word *literature,* but they fairly represent the literary spectrum of ancient Greece.

The principle of selection and the allotment of pages depended upon striking a balance between those Greek authors whose importance continues into the modern era, as evidenced by their significant and influential literary remains (for example, Homer, Plato, Aristotle), and those authors significant to the ancient world whose surviving texts are few (Alcaeus) or disputed (Hippocrates). To some extent more space is given to authors whose works need careful cataloguing and explanation: this volume presents the first such consistent accounts in English for Galen and Hippocrates. More space has also been given to authors whose influence is far out of proportion to the amount of their surviving work (for example, Longinus), because in these cases there is more that needs to be said about the authors and their works than in others. In many cases, so much has been said that the articles here can serve the valuable purpose of leading the reader to other, fuller discussions of works and their attendant problems rather than outlining such matters again. The editorial goal has been not only to treat an author's extant works fairly but also to give an idea of the author's full career, including the lost writings that helped to constitute the writer's importance.

Other factors affecting the final selection of the authors presented here involved the vicissitudes of any collaborative enterprise. Ancient authors depend upon modern authorities who are willing and able to write about them. As in any project, some scholars promised to contribute, but despite repeated promises that kept the editor in an expectant state up to and well beyond the deadline, they simply did not. It is regrettable that authors such as Pausanias and Bacchylides fell victim to their contributors' inabilities to fulfill a contract.

As the intended audience for this volume is the intelligent nonspecialist, there is a minimum of ancient Greek in the text; where passages in Greek have been directly quoted, translations by the authors of the individual articles have been used, unless otherwise specified. Moreover, the articles here are presented in alphabetical order, in accordance

with the practice of the series; but if one wished to get an idea of the chronological development of Greek literature as sketched above, one would read in the following order: Homer, Hesiod, Archilochus, Sappho, Alcaeus, Pythagoras, Parmenides, Aeschylus, Pindar, Heraclitus, Empedocles, Sophocles, Euripides, Protagoras, Herodotus, Gorgias, Hippocrates, Thucydides, Lysias, Aristophanes, Xenophon, Plato, Aeschines, Aristotle, Demosthenes, Theophrastus, Epicurus, Menander, Callimachus, Apollonius Rhodius, Theocritus, Aratus of Soli, Polybius, Strabo, Philo, Flavius Josephus, Plutarch, Longinus, Epictetus, Arrian, Lucian, Galen, Cassius Dio, Babrius, Plotinus, and Diogenes Laertius.

As editor, I have allowed the experts who contributed to *Ancient Greek Authors* to write about their subjects on more or less their own terms. Thus transliteration of Greek names, always an anarchic task, is left to each contributor. Virtually every ancient Greek is known by a name that is usually a Latinized version of his Greek name. Literary characters, particularly in the epics of Homer and the tragic dramas, are generally referred to by whatever spelling is in fashion: for example, Achilles, Akhillês, Akhilleus, and so forth. There is thus a certain level of inconsistency in spelling between the articles, but this should not unduly discomfit the reader.

Dates in each entry are generally consistent with those given in the *Cambridge History of Classical Literature* and are noted throughout by the traditional designations of B.C. and A.D. In the rubrics at the beginning of each entry, dates for literary works are specified when they are known or conjectural; when no date is given, the date is unknown. There is also a rubric for each author (with a very few exceptions) for the editio princeps, which is the first modern publication in book form of the text of the author's work in the original Greek (that is, not in translation or in part).

It remains to thank the contributors for their forbearance over the long process of assembling this volume.

– Ward W. Briggs Jr.

Acknowledgments

This book was produced by Bruccoli Clark Layman, Inc. Karen L. Rood is senior editor for the *Dictionary of Literary Biography* series. Kenneth Graham was the in-house editor.

Production manager is Samuel W. Bruce. Photography editors are Julie E. Frick and Margaret Meriwether. Photographic copy work was performed by Joseph M. Bruccoli. Layout and graphics supervisor is Pamela D. Norton. Copy-editing supervisor is Laurel M. Gladden Gillespie. Typesetting supervisor is Kathleen M. Flanagan. Systems manager is Chris Elmore. Laura Pleicones and L. Kay Webster are editorial associates. The production staff includes Phyllis A. Avant, Stephanie L. Capes, Ann M. Cheschi, Melody W. Clegg, Patricia Coate, Joyce Fowler, Brenda A. Gillie, Rebecca Mayo, Kathy Lawler Merlette, Jeff Miller, Marie Parker, Delores Plastow, Patricia F. Salisbury, William L. Thomas Jr., and Allison Trussell.

Walter W. Ross, Steven Gross, and Mark McEwan did library research. They were assisted by the following librarians at the Thomas Cooper Library of the University of South Carolina: Linda Holderfield and the interlibrary-loan staff; reference-department head Virginia Weathers; reference librarians Marilee Birchfield, Stefanie Buck, Stefanie DuBose, Rebecca Feind, Karen Joseph, Donna Lehman, Charlene Loope, Anthony McKissick, Jean Rhyne, Kwamine Simpson, and Virginia Weathers; circulation-department head Caroline Taylor; and acquisitions-searching supervisor David Haggard.

The publishers acknowledge the generous assistance of William R. Cagle, director of the Lilly Library, Indiana University, and his staff, who provided many of the illustrations in this volume. Their work represents the highest standards of librarianship and research.

A Note on the Manuscripts

Not a single authorial manuscript copy of any ancient Greek writer's work has survived. The medium on which most ancient works were first written was the papyrus sheet, which existed in the form of a long roll, sometimes as much as thirty feet in length; on this roll the author wrote the text in a series of columns eight to ten inches in height, containing twenty-five to forty-five lines. All the original texts of antiquity, from Homer to Aeschylus, from Hippocrates to Lucian, have long been lost to the depradations of time, wars, political upheavals, and even the religious changes that periodically altered the Greek world; and the great Alexandrian Library, the main repository of classical texts in the ancient period, was largely destroyed by fire in 47 B.C. Accordingly, all classical texts that currently exist derive from manuscripts that were produced several centuries after the original works were composed.

Although the book (that is, manuscript) trade began to flourish in Athens in the fifth century B.C., there is no record in ancient Greece of a public library in the contemporary sense of that term. Copies of major dramatic works, such as those by Sophocles, were maintained as public records, but the best collections of texts were in private hands. In the fourth century B.C. the Museum at Alexandria maintained librarians who culled and often condensed the vast number of books produced throughout the Greek world. Their replication of manuscripts necessarily introduced errors and variants into the texts and began the notion of distinct manuscript traditions for ancient authors. The other tradition that arose from this practice was the discarding of an older manuscript once a new copy had been made and the discarding of a complete work once its digest had been compiled. The Alexandrians did much to preserve the best literature, but they were also responsible for many significant losses.

The fragmentary remains of several ancient authors have survived simply because in the Roman period these authors were quoted by lesser writers who compiled reference works, dictionaries, or simple collectanea. Pamphilus in the first century A.D. compiled a work on language; Hephaestion wrote forty-eight books on metre with a vast number of quotations; the *Deipnosophistai* (Sophists at Dinner) of Athenaeus (A.D. 190) survives in fifteen books that quote seven hundred authors whose writings would otherwise be completely lost. In the Byzantine period several *florilegia* or collections preserve passages from the greatest writers. The *Anthologia* of Stobaeus (circa 480) quotes more than five hundred authors. The *Myrobiblion* of Photius (circa 820–891) describes some two hundred and eighty volumes, while in the next century the emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus founded an *Encyclopedia of History* in which passages from many historians are preserved.

For the writings of ancient authors that survived independent of their quotations in the works of others, there is the Flinders Petrie Papyri Collection, published in 1891, which dates from the middle of the third century B.C. The collection contains fragments of *Iliad* 11, the *Antiope* of Euripides, and the *Phaedo* of Plato. Other important early manuscripts named for their locations or their proprietors are the Louvre fragments of Euripides (second century B.C.), the Harris and Bankes manuscripts of the *Iliad* (first to second centuries A.D.), the Herculaneum papyri of Epicurus and Philodemus and the papyrus of Bacchylides (circa 50 B.C.), and the Mariette papyrus of Alcman (first century A.D.).

It is from the Byzantine period, from the eighth to the fourteenth centuries, that many older manuscripts derive. These are largely preserved in Italy, and Leonard Whibley's *A Companion to Greek Studies* (1906) lists the best manuscripts. Those of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Apollonius Rhodius are in Florence; those of Aristophanes are in Venice and Ravenna; those of Euripides are in Venice, Florence, and Rome; those of Hesiod and Herodotus are in Florence. The best manuscript of Homer is in Venice; those of Pindar are in Rome, Florence, Milan, and Paris; those of Thucydides are in Florence, Rome, Munich, and London. The best manuscripts of Demosthenes and Plato are in Paris, and those of Aristotle are in Paris, Venice, and Rome.

Dictionary of Literary Biography® • Volume One Hundred Seventy-Six

Ancient Greek Authors

Aeschines

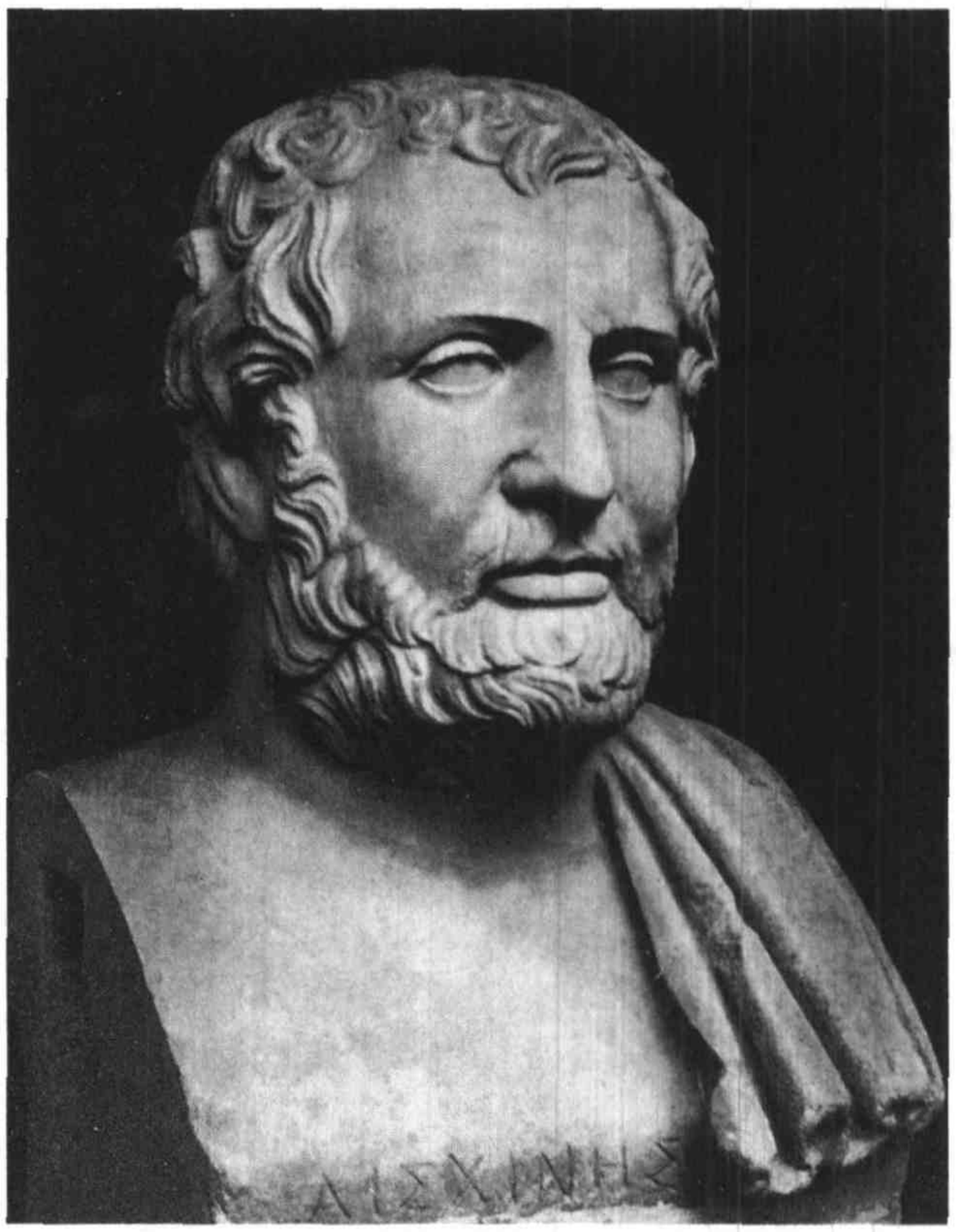
(circa 390 B.C. – circa 320 B.C.)

Edward W. Harris
City University of New York

MAJOR WORKS: *Against Timarchus* (346 B.C.);
On the False Embassy (343 B.C.);
Against Ctesiphon (330 B.C.).

Editio princeps: *Rhetorum Graecorum Orationes,* edited by Aldus Manutius (Venice: Aldus Manutius, 1513).

Standard edition: *The Speeches of Aeschines,* translated by Charles Darwin Adams, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1945).



Bust of Aeschines discovered in 1780 near Tivoli (Sala delle Muse, Vatican, Rome)

Ancient critics consistently included Aeschines in the canon of the ten great Attic orators. Cicero ranked him second only to Demosthenes, Aeschines' political rival; the literary critic Dionysius of Halicarnassus considered him one of the three best orators in Greek literature. Aeschines' fame rests entirely on three long speeches originally delivered at trials in Athenian courts, then later published with probably only minor revisions. These three speeches are *Against Timarchus* (346 B.C.), *On the False Embassy* (343 B.C.), and *Against Ctesiphon* (330 B.C.). Nine letters were attributed to his authorship in antiquity, but modern scholarship has declared all of them forgeries. Aeschines was admired for his natural ability, his stately manner, and his clear exposition. Cicero praised his speeches for their forceful and elevated style.

Aeschines was born about 390 B.C., the son of an Athenian citizen. His father, Atrometus, was a man of modest means. Aeschines claims that his father was once wealthy but lost his property during the Peloponnesian War and was forced to earn money as a mercenary soldier. Atrometus later became a schoolteacher. According to Demosthenes, Aeschines' mother, Glaucothea, had been a prostitute who later served as a priestess in a dissolute religious cult. Demosthenes' hostility to Aeschines makes his testimony suspect, but it is probably safe to conclude that Glaucothea performed some kind of private religious ceremonies. The tombstone of Glaucothea's brother, Cleobulus, has been recovered in a modern excavation and

reveals that Aeschines' uncle was a seer and a soldier who achieved distinction in battle.

After reaching the age of eighteen, Aeschines performed two years of military service as an ephebus and served in several important campaigns. He fought at the battles of Nemea (366 B.C.), Mantinea (362 B.C.), and Tamynae on Euboea (348 B.C.). In this last action he was awarded for his bravery. When Aeschines was not serving in the army, he served as secretary for various magistrates and was eventually elected to the prestigious post of secretary of the council. His prior positions gave him a solid knowledge of Athenian law and constitutional procedure, which he put to good use in his court speeches and in his addresses to the Athenian assembly.

Probably in the 350s B.C. Aeschines joined a troupe of actors that featured the famous Aristodemus. Although Demosthenes ridicules the quality of Aeschines' acting, he does not deny that Aeschines had a strong voice and an effective delivery. Aeschines appears to have received a traditional education in his father's school and was well versed in the masterpieces of Greek literature. In his speeches he quotes liberally from Homer, Hesiod, and Euripides. But he seems not to have pursued the formal study of rhetoric or philosophy with the famous teachers of the time, such as Isocrates or Plato. In fact, Aeschines is the only Attic orator to call Socrates a Sophist and to argue that Socrates' conviction for teaching the tyrant Critias provided a praiseworthy example of Athenian justice. Some ancient critics noted Aeschines' lack of specialized training in rhetoric and attributed his success to a natural talent. Unlike Demosthenes, who read Thucydides with care, Aeschines' knowledge of earlier Athenian history was rudimentary; his account of the fifth-century Athenian Empire toward the end of *On the False Embassy* is marred by embarrassing errors.

Aeschines' political career began in 348, and his oratory was closely tied to his political activity. His first major speech was delivered in the Athenian assembly in support of a motion to send embassies to the other Greek states in the hope of forming a coalition against Philip II, king of Macedon. Aeschines himself was elected to the embassies that negotiated the Peace of Philocrates with Philip, and he spoke reluctantly in favor of the treaty in the assembly. Apparently none of the speeches he delivered abroad or to the Athenian assembly was published. If true, this fact indicates nothing unusual; most speeches of the Attic orators that have been preserved were those delivered in court. The speeches that Demosthenes addressed to the Athenian Assembly are the only exception.

Demosthenes served with Aeschines on two of the embassies sent to Philip in 346. The two men quarreled bitterly over Athenian policy toward Macedon, and Demosthenes joined with the politician Timarchus to prosecute Aeschines for taking bribes from Philip and destroying the allies of Athens. Aeschines struck back in 346 by convicting Timarchus for the crime of addressing the assembly after having been a male prostitute. Aeschines' victory in court deterred Demosthenes from pressing his suit further until 343, when sentiment in Athens had begun to turn against King Philip. Philocrates, the author of the treaty with Philip, was accused of treason and fled before his trial. In prosecuting Aeschines, Demosthenes tried to take advantage of growing Athenian suspicions about Philip's aims and, despite a weak case, lost only by thirty votes out of several hundred ballots cast. Aeschines delivered his speech *On the False Embassy* at this trial; the speech is notable for its lucid narrative of events and its amusing characterization of the vain and arrogant Demosthenes. Aeschines' acquittal was in part because of the support of several prominent politicians and generals who came forward to testify on his behalf.

After his trial in 343, Aeschines found himself on the defensive, reduced to criticizing Demosthenes while having no alternative policy to offer regarding Macedon. By the time war broke out with Philip in 340, Aeschines was completely overshadowed by Demosthenes. In the spring of 339 Aeschines was a member of a sacred embassy to Delphi, where he defended the Athenians against a charge of impiety brought by the Locrians. Demosthenes later accused him of plotting with Philip to stir up a sacred war and provide an opening for the Macedonian king to enter central Greece, a charge accepted by several modern scholars. Like many conspiracy theories, Demosthenes' account of the plot is more intriguing than plausible, and there is little reason to doubt that Aeschines' sole motive in making the speech was to defend Athens against its enemies. Aeschines later helped to negotiate the peace treaty with Philip after the disastrous Greek defeat at Chaeronea in 338, but he was politically inactive in the following years.

In late 336 Aeschines indicted a politician named Ctesiphon for proposing an illegal award of honors for Demosthenes, then waited until 330 to bring his case to court. Although many ancient and modern scholars consider his legal arguments

against Ctesiphon quite strong, a closer examination has revealed that Aeschines based his case on implausible interpretations of the two laws pertaining to Ctesiphon's decree. Most of his speech *Against Ctesiphon* is an indictment of Demosthenes' political career and is aimed at fastening the blame for the defeat of Athens on his political rival. Despite his telling critique of Demosthenes' policy, Aeschines lost the trial by a wide margin. So few votes were cast against Ctesiphon that Aeschines was penalized with loss of the right to bring public charges. The humiliating defeat marked the end of his career as a politician and as an orator.

The three surviving speeches of Aeschines were delivered at the trial of Timarchus in 346, at his own trial in 343, and at the trial of Ctesiphon in 330 Aeschines' speech *Against Timarchus* is distinguished for its effective use of ethos, the portrayal of moral character. Aristotle (in his *Rhetoric* (circa 335 B.C.) stresses that a public speaker should convey the impression of his own goodness and strength as a means of persuading the audience to trust him. Aristotle argues that portraying the ethos of an individual is more important in deliberative oratory; it was, however, also crucial for a litigant who had to convince the court that he was virtuous and honest. In his speech *Against Timarchus* Aeschines portrays himself as an upright citizen sincerely devoted to maintaining public morality and genuinely shocked by his opponent's debauchery.

Aeschines begins his speech with a stern lecture about the role of law in a democracy and reviews the laws protecting children and regulating the people who supervise the youth of Athens. He bases his case against Timarchus on the law that forbids those who have been male prostitutes or who have squandered their patrimony from pursuing a political career. After citing the laws in the prologue, Aeschines departs from the standard precept found in rhetorical handbooks, which recommended that narrative and proofs form two separate parts of a forensic speech. Instead he presents a lengthy narrative of Timarchus's life with the aim of proving that Timarchus has repeatedly violated the law about the private morality of public figures. The narrative is marked by righteous indignation and an almost prudish reluctance to name the depraved acts Timarchus has committed. In several passages he effectively uses *paraleipsis,* the technique of declaring that the speaker will pass over many items, in this case several of Timarchus's indecent acts. The technique gives the impression that the speaker is exercising a degree of restraint, while at the same time implying that there are crimes far worse and more numerous than those he describes.

Statue of Aeschines found at Herculaneum (National Museum, Naples)

Aeschines' main difficulty in the case is his lack of hard evidence for his charges. As a result he has to rely on the court's knowledge of rumors and innuendos about Timarchus's reputation, justifying his appeal to the evidence of gossip with a series of ingenious arguments. He points out that if only those caught red-handed were punished, many wrongdoers would never be brought to justice. He further observes that the court of the Areopagus often draws on its own knowledge of men's character when trying a case.

A large portion of the speech is devoted to anticipating possible objections, in particular the charge that by bringing the case to trial he shows a certain lack of refinement. Aeschines predicts that a general audience will take him to task for disparaging good-looking youths and being insensitive to eros, the desire in this instance for passionate friendships with young men. Aeschines replies by

making a firm distinction between good eros and bad eros and illustrates his point by quoting extensive selections from Greek epic and drama. This section provides some poetic relief after the unrelenting *chronique scandaleuse* of Timarchus's vices; it also contributes to the presentation of his own ethos by showing that, despite his strictures, Aeschines is not unreasonably harsh in his effort to suppress immorality. He also warns the court not to be deceived by Demosthenes' attempts to divert their attention with irrelevant talk about Philip, Alexander, and the recent defeat of Athenian allies. The speech ends with some loosely connected arguments and an exhortation to convict Timarchus as a way of promoting public morality.

In his next speech, *On the False Embassy,* Aeschines defends himself against Demosthenes' charge that he accepted Philip's money in return for deceiving the Athenian people and causing the destruction of the allies of Athens in Phocis. After a brief introduction, where he accuses Demosthenes of hypocrisy and inconsistency in his accusations, Aeschines provides a lengthy narrative that takes up roughly two-thirds of the speech. As in his previous speech, Aeschines combines narrative and proof, recounting events in strict chronological order and pausing only to present evidence or to recall the general situation in Greece at the time. His clear and careful account stands in marked contrast to the method of presentation followed by Demosthenes, who jumps back and forth between events that occurred at different points in time.

Aeschines' detailed narrative serves two main purposes. First, it permits him to place events in their proper context. This helps to show that the setbacks suffered by Athens in 346 were the product of factors beyond his control and thereby helps establish his innocence. Second, it demonstrates that Demosthenes played a major role in negotiating the treaty he now decries as a disaster. This tactic successfully undermines Demosthenes' credibility and casts suspicion on his motives for bringing the case. In general the narrative reveals two of Aeschines' main strengths, his clarity in exposition and his knack for vivid characterization. His portrait of Demosthenes as an arrogant and boastful hypocrite is especially telling. The final part of the speech responds to various charges not covered in the narrative. Aeschines defends his family and his military service against Demosthenes' slanders, denies that he ever struck an Olynthian woman during a drunken banquet in Macedon, and gives a brief sermon on the benefits of peace and the evils of war. He ends with a traditional plea for justice in return for his loyalty to Athens.

Aeschines' final speech, *Against Ctesiphon,* suffers by comparison with Demosthenes' masterful reply, *On the Crown* (330). As he does in his speech *Against Timarchus,* Aeschines begins *Against Ctesiphon* with an analysis of the laws relevant to the case. He discusses at length the interpretation of two laws concerning the award of crowns for public service. Quintilian and several modern scholars think that Aeschines started with this topic and lavished so much attention on it because it provided him with his strongest subject. Despite his elaborate legal arguments, however, Aeschines' interpretation of the relevant laws relies on questionable readings of key phrases, readings easily demolished by Demosthenes in a brief refutation.

The main part of the speech contains a long narrative that covers Demosthenes' career and is divided into four different periods of unequal length. Some of the events recounted in *On the False Embassy* are discussed again, albeit with some new charges added to enliven the otherwise stale material. Aeschines' portrait of Demosthenes is as scathing as the one presented in the earlier speech, but there is more emphasis on Demosthenes' venality than his arrogance. The remainder of the speech is a series of loosely connected reflections about the qualities of a true statesman, the simplicity of the honors awarded to the ancient Athenians, and the points Demosthenes might make in his defense of Ctesiphon.

Aeschines' style differs considerably from that of his rival Demosthenes. Aeschines strives for clarity, but in his effort to make his speeches easy to understand he sometimes becomes verbose and repetitive. At its best his oratory achieves a solemn dignity and rousing eloquence. Some of his sentences imitate the grandeur of Isocrates in their elaborate combinations of participial clauses. To create an effect of solemnity, Aeschines frequently uses oaths and prayers. At its worst his style is pompous and bombastic. His invocation to "Earth and Sun and Excellence and Intelligence and Education" at the end of *Against Ctesiphon* is justly ridiculed by Demosthenes. Aeschines lacks the sharp antitheses, concise vigor, and biting sarcasm of his rival, but he also

avoids the latter's tendency to sound oracular and obscure. As Quintilian puts it in his late-first-century-A.D. *Institutio Oratoria*, Aeschines' oratory has "more flesh, less muscle."

Aeschines' training as an actor probably explains his fondness for tragic diction, but he is sparing in his use of poetic words. When engaging in personal insults, he is more circumspect and less scurrilous in his choice of language than Demosthenes. His attacks on Timarchus are notable for their almost prudish restraint in naming his vices. By contrast, Demosthenes' invective draws on a more colorful and inventive vocabulary. In terms of overall structure, Aeschines attempts to organize his speeches into well-marked units. In places, however, the transitions between sections are weak, and the tendency to digress gives his exposition a slightly rambling quality, especially in the later parts of his speeches. Although Aeschines falls short of Demosthenes in most respects, Cicero judged him to be an admirable example of Attic eloquence, and his place in the canon of the Ten Orators remains secure.

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Aeschylus

(525–524 B.C. – 456–455 B.C.)

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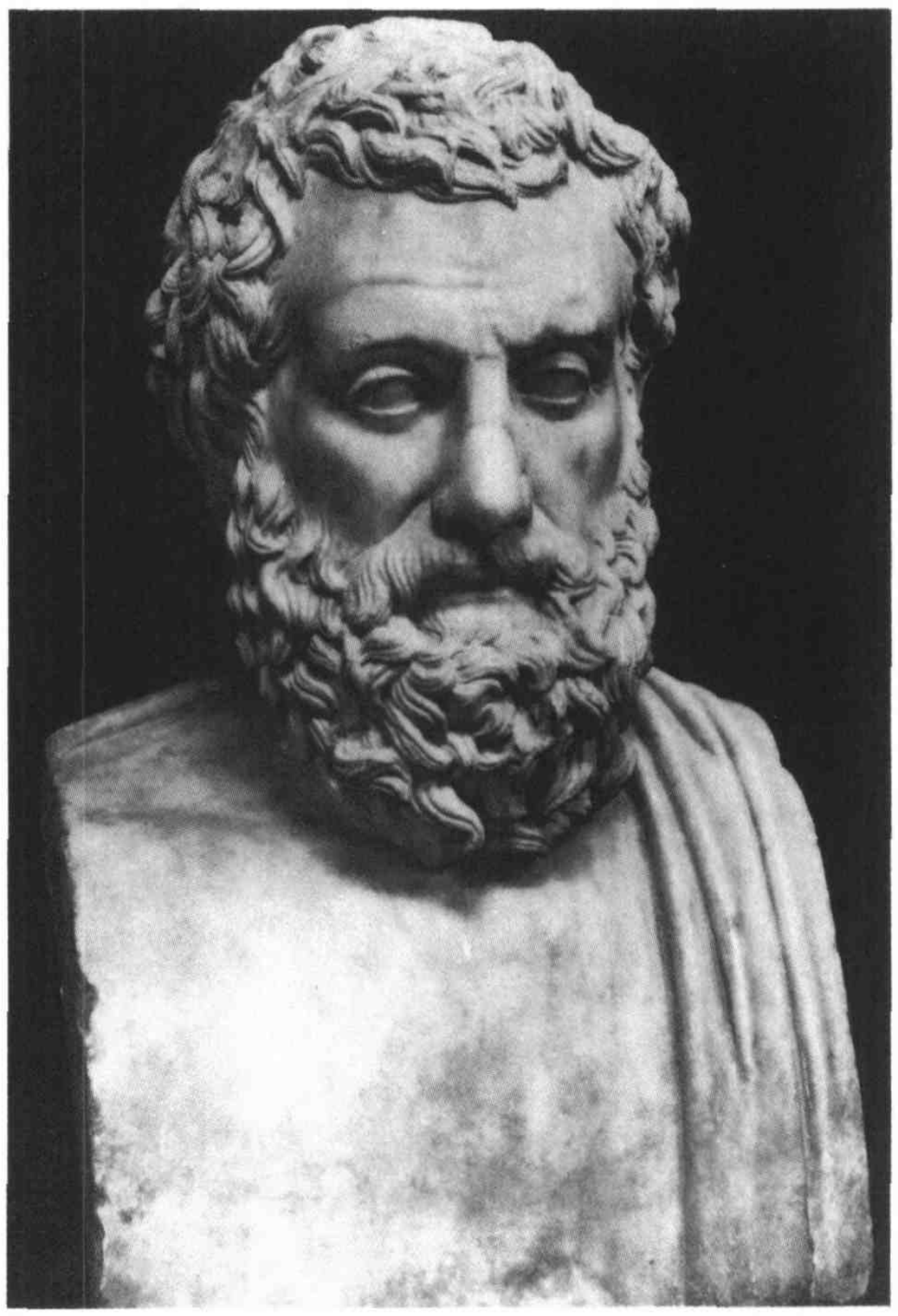
MAJOR WORKS – EXTANT: *Persians* (472 B.C.);
Seven Against Thebes (467 B.C.);
Suppliant Women (463 B.C.);
Oresteia (458 B.C.)–comprises *Agamemnon, Libation Bearers,* and *Eumenides* [*Proteus,* the satyr play, is lost];
Prometheus Bound (date unknown).

MAJOR WORKS – NONEXTANT:
Phineus (472 B.C.);
Glaucus (472 B.C.);
Prometheus [satyr play] (472 B.C.);
Aetnaean Women (470 B.C.);
Laius (467 B.C.);
Oedipus (467 B.C.);
Sphinx [satyr play] (467 B.C.);
Egyptians (463 B.C.);
Danaids (463 B.C.);
Amymone [satyr play] (463 B.C.);
Prometheus Loosed (date unknown);
Semele or the Water Bearers (date unknown);
Nurses of Dionysus (date unknown);
Bacchants (date unknown);
Wool Carders (date unknown);
Pentheus (date unknown).

Tetralogies and trilogies (undated): *Lycurgeia*–comprises *Edonians, Bassarids, Youths,* and *Lycurgus* [satyr play];
Ghost Raisers, Bone Gatherers, Penelope, and *Circe* [satyr play];
Argo, Lemnian Women, Hypsipyle, and *Cabirians* [satyr play];
Myrmidons, Nereids, and *Phrygians* (*Ransoming of Hector*);
Judgment of Arms, Thracian Women, and *Salaminian Women;*
Eleusinians, Argives (*Argive Women*), and *Epigoni.*

Possible dilogies (undated): *Net Fishers* [satyr play], *Daughters of Phorcys,* and *Polydectes;*
Memnon and *The Weighing of the Ghosts;*
Women of Perrhaebia and *Ixion;*
Mysians and *Telephus.*



Aeschylus (Farnese Collection, National Museum, Naples)

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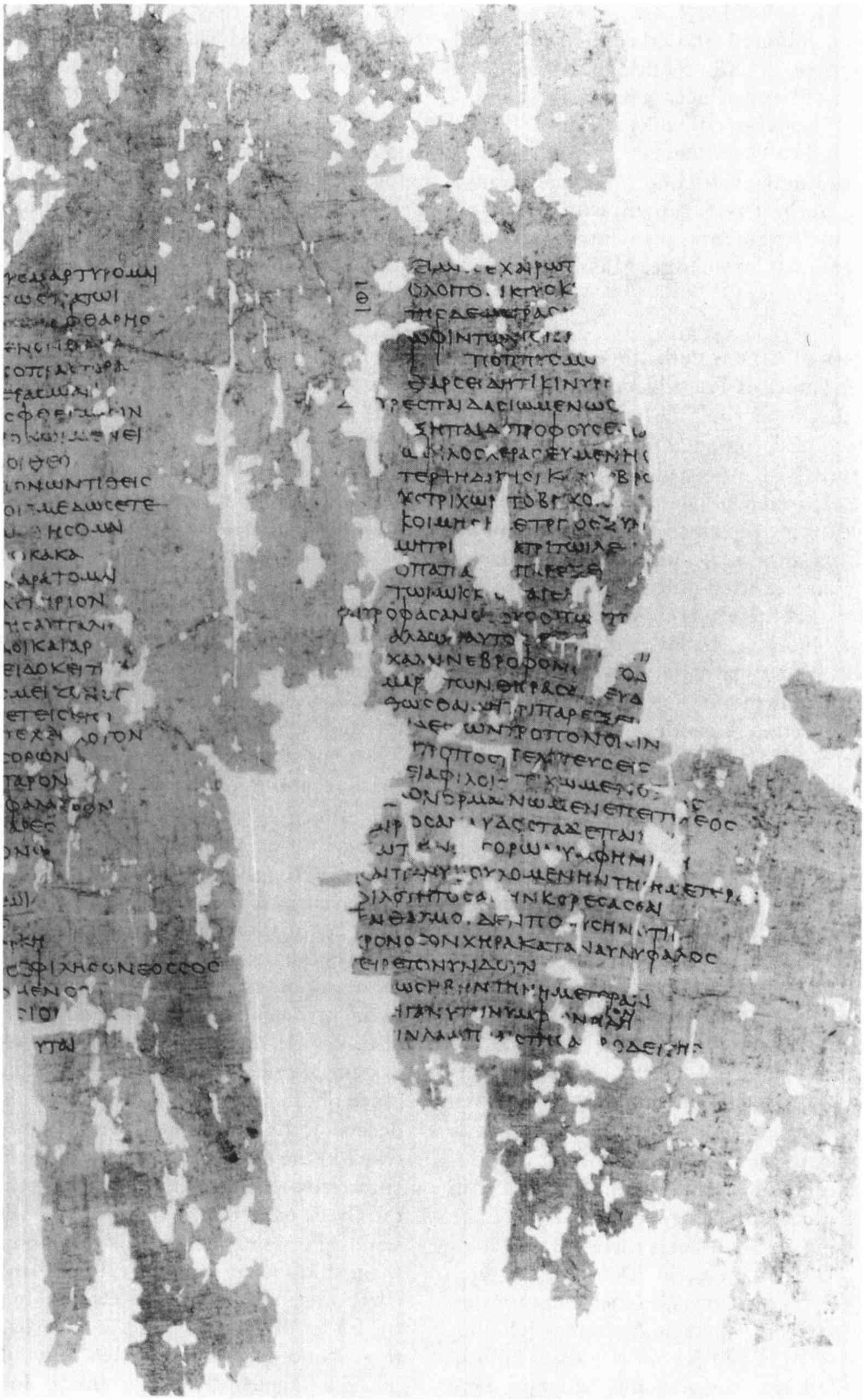
In the city of Athens in the fifth century B.C., Aeschylus, the Father of Tragedy, developed a spectacle in which choral song and dance alternated with solo speeches into one of the major genres of world literature. The ninety plays that Aeschylus wrote were performed frequently after his death, and the tragic drama remained a living tradition in the hands of his successors, Sophocles and Euripides. Tragedy also exerted a decisive influence on the development of literary criticism: Aristophanes' comedy *Frogs* (405 B.C.) is devoted to comparing and contrasting the tragic art of Aeschylus and Euripedes, and both the literary form and specific tragedies were analyzed in Aristotle's profoundly influential treatise, *Poetics* (late fourth century B.C.). Imitations of Greek tragedy written in the first century A.D. by the Roman playwright Seneca later exerted a powerful influence on the development of European theater during the Renaissance. Tragedy's uniting of music and drama became the guiding inspiration in the creation of opera, and Aeschylus's work provided a model for major compositions by Richard Wagner. In the twentieth century Aeschylus's plays, especially his trilogy known as the *Oresteia* (458 B.C.), are widely considered to be masterpieces containing some of the greatest poetry ever composed for the stage. Unfortunately, only seven plays of Aeschylus have survived intact.

Aeschylus, the son of Euphorion, was born in 525–524 B.C., of a noble family with Athenian citizenship in the deme, or village, of Eleusis. Not far from the growing city of Athens, Eleusis was sacred to the two goddesses of grain, Demeter and her daughter, Persephone; it was also the center for the Eleusinian Mysteries, a principal mystery religion in ancient Greece. In 534, about ten years before Aeschylus was born, the Athenian dictator Peisistratus transferred the cult center of Dionysus Eleuthereus ("of Eleutherae," a village on the border of Attica) to downtown Athens, just south of the Acropolis. Here Peisistratus instituted an annual festival, the Great or City Dionysia, which included public performances where songs and dances by a chorus alternated with solo recitations by a poet; in each performance, poet and chorus explored themes from the Greek myths. Before the end of the century the satyr play, a mythological farce, was added to the festival, and tragedians competed for a prize for the best play. Aeschylus began competing in 498, but did not win his first victory at the City Dionysia until 484. The success he enjoyed as a playwright for most of the fifth century was won after years of failure.

Aeschylus married and had two sons, Euphorion and Euaeon, both of whom became tragic poets. Since Euaeon is praised on vases of the period 450–440 as a good-looking young man, he would seem to have been born in the 460s or even early 450s. Euphorion's defeat in 431 of Sophocles and Euripides – including the latter's *Medea* (431) – indicates that Euphorion was born in the first third of the century. He may have been as old as Sophocles, born in 496, or Euripides, born in 484, but his birth might be closer to that of his younger brother. Philocles, the son of Aeschylus's sister, became a tragic poet, doubtless under Aeschylus's tutelage. His plays defeated Sophocles' plays the year the latter staged *Oedipus,* perhaps 433. Philocles began a family of tragic poets that can be traced into the fourth century.

When Aeschylus was fifteen, the Spartan king Cleomenes expelled the sons of Peisistratus from Athens. The internecine party politics that had led to Peisistratus's dictatorship in the middle of the sixth century returned, but, after another Spartan intervention failed, Cleisthenes, of the noble family of the Alcmaeonids, "took the populace into his faction," according to Herodotus's *History of the Persian War.* Cleisthenes' democratic reforms included a system of registration that emphasized the importance of the deme over family tradition. In the last decade of the sixth century Aeschylus's family was living in the deme of Eleusis. Increased self-rule encouraged self-confidence in the citizens, and when the Greek cities on the coast of Asia Minor revolted against Persia in 499, Athens sent troops to support them, and the era of the great Persian Wars began. The Athenians soon withdrew, and in 494 Miletus, the leader of the revolt, fell. Phrynicus, the greatest tragedian of the day, was fined when in 493 he produced a tragedy, *The Sack of Miletus.* In 490 the Persian king Darius sent an army to punish Athens by reintroducing Hippias, son of Peisistratus, as dictator. The Persian force was repelled from its landing at Marathon on the north coast of Attica. Aeschylus's brother, Cynegeirus, became a national



Fragment of a second-century-A.D. papyrus with the text of Aeschylus's Net Fishers *(Egypt Exploration Society, London)*

hero when he was killed trying to draw a retreating Persian ship back to shore. A revolt in Egypt and the death of Darius kept the Persians from returning for ten years.

In 480 the Persian king Xerxes I invaded Greece with large land and naval forces, and northern Greece fell without a struggle. A Spartan army failed to hold the pass at Thermopylae, and the Athenian fleet could not stop the Persian navy at Artemisium, although Spartan bravery and Athenian resourcefulness inflicted heavy losses on the invader. The Greek navy lay in the narrow inlet that separated the island of Salamis from the Attic mainland, which was seized and sacked by the vengeful Persians. Themistocles lured the Persian navy to attack in the straits of Salamis, where their enormous superiority in numbers could not be deployed to full advantage. After a day of savage fighting the Persian navy retreated. In *Persians* (472) Aeschylus described Salamis, providing a rare eyewitness account of an ancient battle. In 479 a Spartan-led Greek army defeated the Persian army at Plataea and drove it from Greece. The Spartans soon withdrew from the leadership of the Greek forces, and Athens with its impressive navy took command of the Delian League; this league pledged to free the Greek cities under Persian rule and punish Persia for the invasion. Athens thereafter dominated the Aegean Sea, and the league developed into the Athenian empire, which flourished during the later years of Aeschylus's life.

The biography of Aeschylus, like that of most ancient authors, is plagued by a lack of documentary evidence and by the tendency of sources to invent plausible details on the basis of general probability and the author's own works. This practice, sometimes called "biographical fiction," can be seen in the reports of the war record of Aeschylus and his family. The heroism of Aeschylus's brother at Marathon is reported by the historian Herodotus (circa 430 B.C.). In the first century B.C. the Roman historian Pompeius Trogus (whose work survives only in Justin's summary) reports that Cynegeirus, after slaying many of the foe, held on to a departing ship with his right hand, as Herodotus reports. But, according to Trogus, when that was cut off, Cynegeirus held on with his left hand, and when that was amputated, he held on to the ship with his teeth. Aeschylus's fighting at Marathon is reported by a Hellenistic epigram that presents itself rather clumsily as his epitaph, found in the ancient and anonymous *Life of Aeschylus,* which may date back to the first century A.D. In the second century A.D. Athenaeus and Pausanias assert that the epitaph was composed by Aeschylus himself, although the *Life* says that the epitaph was inscribed by the people of Gela, where Aeschylus died. Ion of Chios, a fifth-century tragedian and anecdotalist who knew Aeschylus, records that Aeschylus fought at Salamis. Later sources such as Pausanias and an ancient *Life of Aeschylus* have him fighting at Artemisium and Plataea. As late as 1934 Wilhelm Schmid conjectured in his *Geschichte der griechischen Literatur* that Aeschylus fought at Mycale. Clearly the tendency to invent plausible details ("biographical fiction") is not restricted to ancient sources.

The *Life of Aeschylus* tells of an epitaph in elegiac verse that Aeschylus wrote to honor those who fell at Marathon, an epitaph passed over in favor of one by the distinguished older poet Simonides of Ceos. The *Life* remarks that Aeschylus's poem lacked "the delicacy which arouses sympathy." The *Palatine Anthology* includes an epitaph, attributed to Aeschylus, on the men who died fighting near Mount Ossa in Thessaly: "Dark Fate killed those men, too, who did not flee before the spear, while they were protecting their country rich in flocks, the glory of the dead is living, the dead who once, unflinching, clothed their limbs in Ossa's dust." Though not subtle, the epitaph is simple and effective. That it is not associated with a well-known engagement may count in favor of its authenticity.

Aeschylus's plays, often noted for their religious and theological themes, concentrate on the great Panhellenic gods, with Zeus as ruler over Hermes, Apollo, Aphrodite, and Athena. Ancient authors thought it significant that Eleusis, where Aeschylus was born, was the religious center for the Eleusinian Mysteries, a mystery religion of great importance in ancient Greece. This religion was one that prohibited its followers from revealing its teachings and its rituals. Aristophanes in his play *Frogs* has Aeschylus proclaim his devotion to Demeter, who nourished him, and ancient scholars searched the works of Aeschylus for comments on the Eleusinian Mysteries. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* (after 335 B.C.) Aristotle relates that Aeschylus was impeached for revealing the secrets of the Mysteries but pleaded ignorance. The third-century Christian writer Clement of Alexandria interpreted Aristotle's point to mean that, despite his Eleusinian origins, Aeschylus was never initiated into the Mysteries. His plays confirm the idea that his religious commitments were Olympian and Hellenic, not local and chthonic.

Biographical fiction made much of the prosecution of Aeschylus. According to Heracleides of Pontus, a pupil of Aristotle, the audience of the offending play (about the title of which there was no agreement) tried to stone Aeschylus, and the playwright

took refuge at the altar in the orchestra of the Theater of Dionysus. Aeschylus was later acquitted, supposedly by a jury whose sympathies were stirred by the wounds that Aeschylus and his brother Cynegeirus suffered at Marathon. According to the second-century A.D. author Aelian, Aeschylus was acquitted when his younger brother, Ameinias, uncovered to the jury the stump of the hand that Ameinias lost at Salamis, where he was voted bravest warrior. In fact, Cynegeirus lost his hand (and died) at Marathon, and the award for bravery at Salamis went to Ameinias of Pallene, not Aeschylus's brother from Eleusis.

Some personal reminiscences of Aeschylus have survived. Ion of Chios, a younger tragedian, recorded in his *Visits* that he watched a boxing match at the Isthmian Games with Aeschylus, and that one boxer received a terrible blow that made the crowd roar. "You see the importance of practice," said Aeschylus, nudging him. "The one who was hit is silent, but the spectators cry out." Ion is the one contemporary witness for Aeschylus's war record, reporting that he fought at Salamis. He may also be the source for Aeschylus's comment that his plays were "slices of fish from Homer's great feasts." Aristotle's pupil Chamaeleon reports a story that Sophocles told Aeschylus, "even if you write what is appropriate, you do not know what you are doing when you compose." The second century A.D. author Athenaeus connected this remark with the story that Aeschylus composed while drunk, a story that sounds as if it might be "biographical fiction," based in this case on a famous drunk scene in the satyr play, *Cabirians,* from the Argo tetralogy–a scene mentioned by Athenaeus in the same passage.

The early phase of Aeschylus's playwriting career extended from his first production in 499 to his earliest extant play, *Persians,* produced in 472. The only other certain date in this period of the playwright's career is that of his first victory in the festival competition in 484 B.C. Reasonable deductions about this period and, indeed, the full scope of Aeschylus's work can be made, however. The medieval encyclopedia *Suda* states that Aeschylus wrote ninety plays. The oldest medieval manuscript that contains plays by Aeschylus is the Mediceus manuscript in Florence. This manuscript contains the text for the seven surviving plays of Aeschylus. The manuscript also has a catalogue of seventy-three titles, one of which is spurious. Other sources contain the names of about ten other plays, of which several are dubious. If it is assumed that Aeschylus regularly composed for the City Dionysia three tragedies and one satyr play, one can reasonably suppose that the playwright composed at least twenty tetralogies during the four decades from his first production in 498 to the *Oresteia* of 458. The ancient *Life* reports thirteen first-place showings in his career. If Aeschylus staged plays every other year, he would have lost the first seven times and won in every competition from 484 to 458. Naturally this is speculative. Perhaps fewer than four plays were performed each year in the early fifth century. Aeschylus may have produced at different rates during his life, and he may have left unproduced plays at his death. What is certain is that there is strong evidence for the playwright's steady production and regular success after his early failure.

Of Aeschylus's seven extant plays, the earliest, *Persians,* was one of four unrelated plays. The other datable extant plays, produced from 467 to 458, form parts of sets of tetralogies, the name given to a sequence of four plays on a connected theme. The number of certain or probable tetralogies is too many for the Theban plays of 467 to have been the first; it is therefore plausible to assume that Aeschylus developed the tetralogy form, of which he was the master, in the 470s. The *Danaid* tetralogy (463) and *Oresteia* used traditional myth to make significant statements about human responsibility and contemporary democracy. The earlier tetralogies seem rather to be attempts to transfer traditional epics to the tragic stage. Tetralogies such as the one on the voyage of the *Argo* (which includes the play titled *Argo*) and the tetralogy known as *Little Iliad* (which includes the play *Judgment of Arms*) substantiate Aeschylus's often quoted statement that his plays were "slices of fish from Homer's great feasts." The creation of the tetralogy form allowed Aeschylus to import the breadth and range of Greek epic onto the tragic stage. It was distinctive of his theatrical vision. Later dramatists did not continue to write consistently in connected tetralogies.

The best remembered of the lost tetralogies was based on Homer's *Iliad* and included *Myrmidons, Nereids,* and *Phrygians* (also known as *Ransoming of Hector*). In *Myrmidons,* based on books 9 and 16 of the *Iliad,* Achilles sits in silent indignation over his humiliation at Agamemnon's hands for most of the play. Envoys from the Greek army attempt to reconcile him to Agamemnon, but he yields only to his friend and lover Patroclus, who then battles the Trojans in Achilles' armor. The bravery and death of Patroclus are reported in a messenger's speech, which is followed by mourning. In *Nereids* (based on

books 18, 19, and 22 of the *Iliad*), the Daughters of Nereus, the sea god, lament Patroclus's death. In this play a messenger tells how Achilles, perhaps reconciled to Agamemon and the Greeks, slew Hector. In *Phrygians* Achilles sits in silent mourning over Patroclus, after a brief discussion with Hermes. Hermes then brings in King Priam of Troy, who wins over Achilles and ransoms his son's body in a spectacular coup de théâtre. An enormous scale is brought on stage. Hector's body is placed in one scale and gold in the other. The dynamic dancing of the chorus of Phrygians (Trojans) when they enter with Priam is reported by Aristophanes.

Besides the plays of 472, Aeschylus wrote other singletons such as *Aetnaean Women* (470) and *Niobe*. In *Niobe* the heroine's children have been slain by Apollo and Artemis because Niobe had boasted that she had more children than their mother, Leto. Niobe sits in silent mourning on stage during most of the play ("until the third scene," according to the *Life*, 6), as Achilles did in *Myrmidons* and *Phrygians*. In the *Republic,* Plato denounces as immoral the line in *Niobe,* "God plants a fault in mortals when he wills to destroy a house utterly."

It is unlikely that Aeschylus moved from single, narrowly focused tragedies to the long vision of the tetralogy form without experimentation on an intermediate scale. There are several Aeschylean titles that make sense as dilogies (two connected tragedies, in one case with a satyr play as third play). These are sets of plays about an enemy of the gods (Ixion) who is finally punished for his disloyalty and lust; two opponents of Achilles, one of whom (*Telephus*) is finally healed of his terrible wound and another (Memnon) who is slain but achieves divine status through Zeus's intervention. In the second Memnon play, *Weighing of the Ghosts,* a large scale is brought onstage to weigh the "souls," or fates, of Achilles and Memnon, while their divine mothers plead for their sons in a scene reminiscent of the weighing of Hector's body in *Phrygians*. Perseus's slaying of Medusa and rescuing of his mother, Danae, is also the subject of a dilogy. A papyrus provides about fifty lines of the satyr play *Net Fishers,* which preceded the two tragedies and dramatizes the rescue of Danae and her baby, Perseus, first from the sea and then from a chorus of satyrs and their lustful leader Silenus. Its lively action and humorous dialogue show why Aeschylus was considered the best writer of satyr plays. If one supposes a period in the middle of Aeschylus's career when his style was simpler and he wrote contrasting plays, *Prometheus Bound* and *Prometheus Loosed* might fit here as a dilogy. The supposition of such tragic dilogies allows one to picture Aeschylus as gradually achieving his final mastery of the tetralogy form through the earlier composition of briefer and less complex contrasting plays.

The murder of Aegisthus by Orestes, from Aeschylus's Libation Bearers; *Attic krater, circa 460 B.C. (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston)*

In 476, with Themistocles as his sponsor, the playwright Phrynichus staged another tragedy based on recent history, *Phoenissian Women,* about the events surrounding the battle of Salamis. By 470 Themistocles had been ostracized from Athens. In 472 Aeschylus staged four plays, paid for by Pericles, then a rising politician with Alcmaeonid connections. Along with plays on mythological themes was Aeschylus's historical tragedy, *Persians,* the earliest extant Aeschylean play.

Phrynichus's *Phoenissian Women* had begun with a eunuch telling, while arranging the seats of the Persian council, about the defeat of the Persian fleet at Salamis. Aeschylus's play starts with the impressive entry of the Persian advisers brooding over the fate of the great expedition Xerxes has led to Greece. The Persian Queen Mother enters, bothered by an ill-omened dream. The forebodings are confirmed by a messenger who gives a stirring account of the battle of Salamis, emphasizing the courage of the Athenian navy and the fatal trickery of Themistocles, who is unnamed and presented as "a spirit of revenge or an evil daemon." Chorus and Queen Mother now approach the tomb of her hus-

band, Darius, whose ghost predicts the Persian army's defeat at Plataea. Persia was doomed to fall eventually, but this catastrophe was hastened by Xerxes' overweening pride (hubris). Xerxes did not stop at human limits, but violated nature by bridging the sea at the Hellespont and burning the temples of the gods. ("When a man is in a hurry, God lends a hand," *Persians,* 714). Finally, Xerxes himself enters in rags, and the play ends with a scene of lamentation.

Persians does not require any set other than a mound for the tomb of Darius and a dancing area for the chorus. Aeschylus uses in this play, although not for the first time, two actors in addition to the chorus and its leader. The original addition of a second actor in the Greek theater was attributed to Aeschylus by Aristotle, who had made a survey of early drama for his *Poetics.* The second actor, by increasing opportunities for contrast and conflict, was essential for the development from choral performance to drama. The costuming ranged from impressive outfits for the chorus, Queen Mother, and Darius to Xerxes' torn rags. The play builds from suspense to resolution. The emotions range from fear to pity. Greek literary critics from Gorgias to Aristotle saw this range of emotions as typical of tragedy. A modern reader is impressed by the picture of Xerxes as a noble hero led by his power and ambition to aim beyond the limits imposed by the gods on human accomplishment. It is clear from the lyric poems of Aeschylus's contemporary, Pindar of Thebes, that such a temptation was believed to be typical of great heroes. Xerxes is not a criminal, but a great man who was led astray by trickery, both human and divine. The Greek victory at Salamis was not a fluke, but the rational consequence of divine justice and human responsibility.

The success of *Persians* led Hieron, dictator of Gela and leader of the Greeks in Sicily, to invite Aeschylus to stage the play in Gela. Hieron also commissioned Aeschylus to write *Aetnean Women* to celebrate the refounding of the city of Etna. (The play was good enough to inspire an imitation.) Etna was founded in 476–475, and some scholars place Aeschylus's first visit to Sicily at that time; but its founding is celebrated as late as Pindar's First "Pythian Ode" of 470 B.C. In 470 Hieron had himself proclaimed to be "Aetnaean" at the Pythian Games and crowned his young son Deinomenes as king of Etna. It was a propitious time for Aeschylus to produce *Persians* again, along with the new *Aetnean Women.* Hieron and his older brother, Gelon of Syracuse, had defeated the Carthaginians at Himera in a great battle in 480, the date of Salamis. Pindar's first "Pythian Ode" draws an explicit parallel between the defeat of the Persian navy by the Athenians at Salamis, the defeat of the Persian army by the Spartans at Plataea, and the Western Greeks' defeat of the Carthaginians at Himera. *Persians,* like *Phoenissian Women,* glorifies the victory over the barbarian, while *Aetnaean Women* celebrates Hieron, the savior of Hellenism in the West, for his founding of a new city (perhaps in contrast to the betrayal of Miletus in Phrynichus's *Sack of Miletus*).

In 468 Sophocles competed in the City Dionysia for the first time. It is recorded that the eponymous Archon, to honor Cimon, the commander of the Athenian fleet who was fresh from a major victory over the Persians, set aside the usual rules for choosing the judges for the tragic competition and appointed, instead, the elected board of ten generals. Sophocles' plays possessed technical flair and originality. By introducing a third actor, Sophocles created the last major innovation in the structure of Greek tragedy. He was voted the first prize in 468 (according to the second century A.D. author Plutarch) and thereby defeated Aeschylus, who would then have competed two years in a row. The next year Aeschylus staged a tetralogy in which all four plays, including the satyr play, were episodes of a coherent narrative; these plays were *Laius, Sphinx* (the satyr play), *Oedipus,* and *Seven against Thebes.*

Key passages in the extant tragedy *Seven against Thebes,* the last play in the trilogy, allow one to form a coherent notion of Aeschylus's complete tetralogy. After Laius, king of Thebes, angers Apollo by an immoral action, Apollo announces that Thebes will be saved from destruction only if Laius dies childless. When a son is born to Laius and his wife, Jocasta, the infant is left to die on nearby Mount Cithaeron (a legal act, under Greek law). Although the parents assume the child is dead, the child is actually rescued by a shepherd. At the beginning of *Laius,* Laius appears briefly and then leaves Thebes. At a crossroads in the countryside he is attacked and slain by a stranger who, it is later disclosed, is actually the king's son, Oedipus, now grown to manhood. Then, in *Sphinx,* the satyr play, Oedipus finds Thebes terrified by the Sphinx, who demands human sacrifice and slays all who cannot answer a riddle the strange creature poses. When Oedipus answers the riddle, he is chosen king of Thebes and marries Queen Jocasta. In *Oedipus* the secret of Oedipus's origins are revealed. Because

of his violation of the two key taboos of human society, murder and incest, Oedipus is judged to be polluting the city, and his two sons make the harsh choice to save Thebes by expelling their father, who then curses his sons with the prediction that they will one day kill each other. The sons then prepare to divide their legacy by fighting. When Eteocles is chosen as the new king, his brother Polyneices goes to the city of Argos, marries the king's daughter, and leads an army of heroes to conquer his homeland.

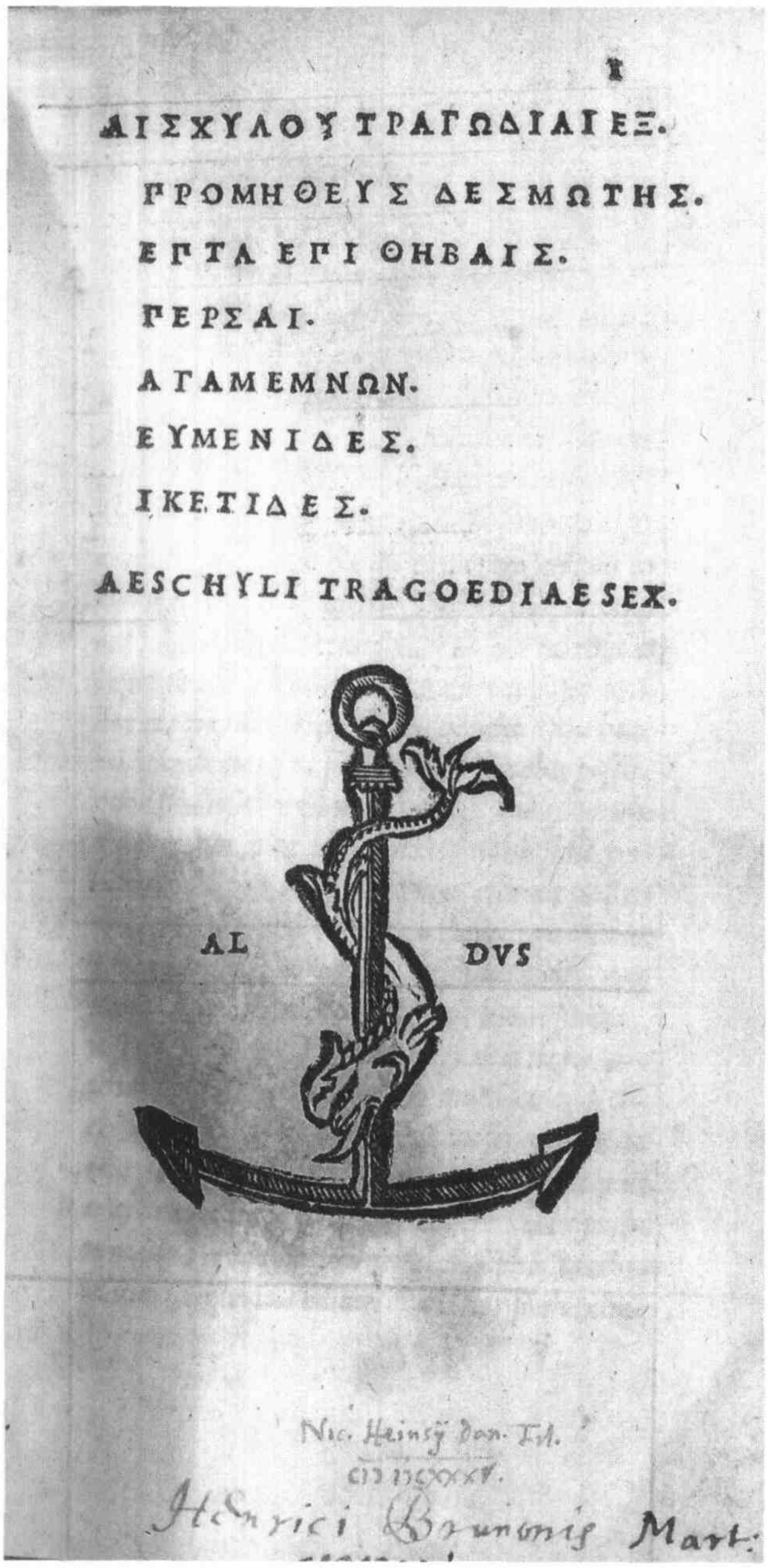
In *Seven against Thebes* the wise and determined Eteocles appears, trying to calm the hysterical chorus of Theban women. After a messenger tells him that, at each of Thebes's mythical seven gates, a great hero stands, Eteocles calmly chooses the appropriate champions in his forces to face the Argive warriors. At the seventh gate, he is told, stands his brother Polyneices. Eteocles now realizes that he is doomed to fulfill his father's curse, which predicted that the two brothers would murder each other. Eteocles accepts his fate to save the city of Thebes, and both he and Polyneices die in the fighting that follows. Although the line of Laius and Oedipus has been eradicated, the sins of the fathers having descended upon descendants guilty and innocent, the city has been saved by the heroism of Eteocles. In the play as it now exists, Antigone enters at the end to proclaim her decision to bury her brother, Polyneices, despite the will of the city that he remain unburied as punishment for his treason. This scene, announcing themes that appear in Sophocles' *Antigone* (circa 442 B.C.), is considered by most scholars, on thematic and linguistic grounds, to be an addition made in a production after Aeschylus's death.

By the evidence of a papyrus fragment, Aeschylus's *Suppliant Women* tetralogy was produced after Sophocles' career began; that is, later than 468, and probably (if the name of the Archon is correctly restored) in 463. In this play the daughters of Danaus arrive in Argos while in flight from marriage to their cousins, the sons of Aegyptus. They appeal for refugee status to the king of Argos, Pelasgus, who acts after consultation with his people. The Aegyptiads arrive and threaten Argos, but the city chooses to protect the women. In *Egyptians* the sons of Aegyptus defeat the Argives, slaying Pelasgus, and claim the women as their prize. In *Daughters of Danaus* (*Danaids*), the final play of the tetralogy, the women follow their father's plan and slay their husbands on their wedding night. Only one daughter, Hypermnestra, refuses to obey her father. At this point a trial is held, and Aphrodite herself testifies in favor of marriage and fertility. In the end peace and order in family relations and the state are restored under Zeus.

In *Amymone,* the tetralogy's satyr play, the title character is almost raped by a satyr, but she is rescued by the sea god Poseidon, who then makes her the mother of a hero. The chorus, more central to the themes of this tetralogy than it is in earlier plays, emphasizes the tension created by conflicting wills of the characters. Democracy on the political level and marriage on the family level are important themes, as they are in the *Oresteia*. The will of Zeus is proclaimed by an important goddess as it is in *Eumenides*. The natural assumption that the fifty daughters of Danaus and the fifty sons of Aegyptus were represented by two choruses of fifty each caused scholars to date the tetralogy to the first decade of the fifth century, when tragedy still preserved the size of lyric choruses. Many peculiarities of language seemed to support this hypothesis. Now that the date of the play is known, these problems can be related to the play's survival in only one manuscript, one copied from an original that seems to have been hard to decipher and full of mistakes. Themes shared with the *Oresteia* (458) are now easier to interpret as concerns of Aeschylus's last years, as Aeschylus sought a divinely sanctioned way out of the tragic dead ends of his earlier plays.

In the mid 460s the island of Thásos revolted from the Delian League and had to be compelled to return. Thásos had counted on Spartan aid, but a terrible earthquake decimated Spartan manpower and led to a revolt by Sparta's serfs, the Helots. Cimon persuaded the Athenians to send him with an army to support Sparta. The Spartans did not trust the democratic Athenians and sent them home in disgrace. Meanwhile, in 463–462 Cimon's enemy, the democrat Ephialtes, persuaded the assembly to strip the Areopagus of all powers of supervision of domestic and foreign affairs, leaving it a court for murder and other religious crimes. On Cimon's return in 461, he was ostracized. The alliance with Sparta was repudiated, and a treaty was signed with Sparta's enemy, democratic Argos. Although Ephialtes was murdered, his work was carried on by the young Pericles who had paid for *Persians* in 472. From now on the Athenian assembly was the chief authority in state and empire.

In 458 Aeschylus produced the *Oresteia,* which is the only surviving Greek trilogy and probably the playwright's last work. *Oresteia* includes the plays *Agamemnon, Libation Bearers,* and *Eumenides,* and the lost satyr play *Proteus*. As both poetry and drama,



Title page for the editio princeps (1518) of the works of Aeschylus (courtesy of the Lilly Library, Indiana University)

the *Oresteia* is generally held to be Aeschylus's masterpiece, one of the greatest works of world literature. Its themes are those of the *Suppliant Women* tetralogy, but presented with a power of poetry and a theatrical verve and creativity that are unprecedented. The chorus of the Furies in *Eumenides* was remembered for generations. The third actor, introduced by Sophocles, and a new stage set are used with startling originality and impact to underline the plays' themes. These four plays of Aeschylus are the first plays that were written for the set on which tragedy was performed for the rest of the fifth century.

That set may be described in the following terms. The audience sits on the south slope of the acropolis. Before them is a circular dancing area for the chorus, an area called the orchestra. Facing the audience, just beyond the orchestra, is the two-story backdrop, painted to look majestic, like a temple or a palace. In the middle of the stage is a large central door; indoor scenes are indicated by pushing a platform through the door, the *eccyclema*. There is a ledge on the second story of the backdrop where an actor may stand. Plays are performed in full daylight, and the actors, no more than three, wear distinctive masks and costumes (and probably high boots called buskins), so they may be clearly seen. The interaction of chorus and actors shows that there was no raised stage in the fifth-century theater. (Many contemporary scholars believe in a low raised stage.) There is every reason to give Aeschylus the credit for creating this new set for his tetralogy form. Although later tragedians rarely employed the tetralogy, they continued to use the theater created for it. As the ancient *Life* says of Aeschylus, "He organized the stage area."

The first play in the *Oresteia, Agamemnon,* begins with a figure on the second-story ledge of the backdrop. This figure is not a god, as he commonly was in later Greek tragedy. He is a watchman, lying on his stomach, with his hands folded in front of him and his chin resting on his hands, "like a dog." (Because of the difficulty in seeing the action in a theater without spotlights and makeup, ancient drama typically puts stage directions into the words of the actors.) He has been put there by Clytemnestra to watch for a signal fire that will announce the fall of Troy. (In Homer's *Odyssey* Aegisthus places a spy to announce the return of Agamemnon.) The watchman sees the signal over the audience's heads and leaps for joy at his master's return, but his speech also mentions worries that he is afraid to put into words. He exits by a ladder behind the backdrop, out of the audience's sight.

The audience is then distracted by the entrance of the chorus of Argive elders, who are about to begin the longest and most complex choral interlude in Greek drama, the *parodos,* or choral entrance song, of the *Agamemnon*. This ode is complex in meter and rhythm – the lost music was probably equally complex – and presents crucial background information. For clarity of exposition, this background information is usually given in spoken words in the play's first section, or prologue. In *Agamemnon* the spoken scenes, written in iambic trimeter – a meter that, accord-

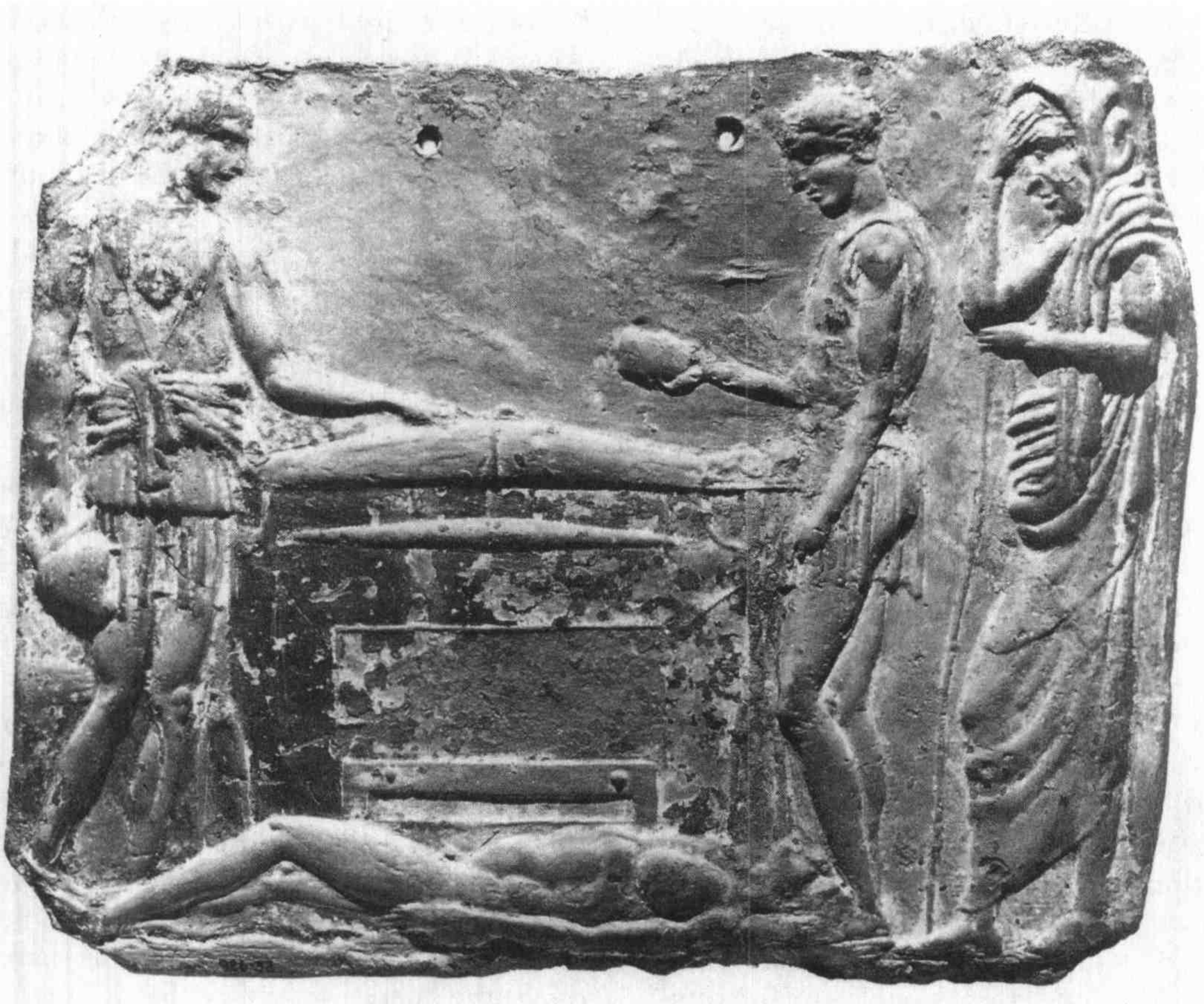
ing to Aristotle, is close to ordinary speech – are used to present emotional reactions to the background story and also a sense of foreboding. Only at the end of the play does Clytemnestra herself speak clearly. Meanwhile, as the play progresses, the chorus reveals additional background narrative in a series of choral odes that culminate in a final scene where the chorus sings, dances, and speaks with the seer Cassandra. As the play moves forward from the announcement of the fall of Troy to the arrival of Agamemnon, his assassination, and the coup d'état of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus, the choral odes proceed by moving backward in time, from the sacrifice of Iphigenia to the seduction of Helen to the Feast of Thyestes.

These odes present in counterpoint to the plot the hidden roots of the actions the audience is watching unfold; they describe a world in which every moral action has its equal and opposite reaction. This reaction may strike the guilty, their children, even the innocent. In Solon's "Prayer to the Muses," the great sixth-century Athenian politician, the Father of Athenian Democracy, declares that evildoers are punished by the gods, sometimes immediately, sometimes later; sometimes the punishment falls on the children of the evildoer. Neither Solon nor Aeschylus is a conventional moralist of his period. Many of their contemporaries believed that any human accomplishment above the normal range provoked divine envy. Aeschylus denies this view. Only the evil deed is punished, but that punishment is certain and inevitable. It will fall on family and city – not only, or especially, on the individual. Can anything or anyone make sense out of this situation? In a famous section of the parodos, the chorus answers affirmatively. Zeus himself, by whatever name he chooses to be called, being the product of a violent war among the generations of the gods, "set mortals on the road to knowledge, laid down the valid law that learning comes through suffering [*pathei mathos*] . . . and even though they do not want it, self-control comes to them, a kind of violent gift from the spirits who rule the world."

Any summary of *Agamemnon* dilutes the complexity, ambiguity, darkness, and confusion of the play, as well as its power and beauty. It is useful to note, however, that the chorus of Argive elders makes it clear that Zeus himself commanded the two sons of Atreus, Agamemnon and Menelaus, kings of Argos, to avenge the seduction of Helen, Menelaus's wife, and her being carried off to Troy. (In Homer, Menelaus is king of Athens's new enemy, Sparta, while Agamemnon is king of Mycenae, a city destroyed by Athens's new ally, Argos.) When the army gathers at Aulis on Euboea in a great fleet of ships to sail to Troy, contrary winds impede its departure. Artemis, the virgin goddess of the hunt, is angry at the death of the innocent that war will inevitably entail. Or is she angry at the death of the young of the pregnant hare killed by the twin eagles in the omen that foretells the Greek victory? Whatever the case, she commands that Iphigenia, daughter of Agamemnon, be sacrificed before the winds will become favorable for the fleet's departure.

Agamemnon, trapped between two divine commands, chooses the sacrifice of his daughter. "Once he put on the yoke of necessity, his mind changed," and he, like Eteocles in *Seven against Thebes,* willed the evil that he had been forced to choose. Clytemnestra now explains to the confused chorus that she has ordered a celebration for the victory at Troy, relating in a speech full of figurative language and geographical detail the journey of the fire signals. The chorus, impressed, sings of the seduction of Helen by Paris and the inevitable punishment that follows all crime. It is sin, not wealth, that the gods punish. But the chorus then begins to doubt the queen, observing that women often mistake their desires for fact. Now the messenger enters to confirm Clytemnestra's assertions. The king will arrive soon, but a terrible storm following the bloody sack of Troy has destroyed his fleet, except for his own ship. Soon Agamemnon enters in a chariot with his prize, Cassandra, who is not only a seer but also the daughter of Priam, king of Troy. Clytemnestra spreads at the king's feet, from his chariot to the central door in the backdrop, expensive curtains dyed in royal purple. Agamemnon hesitates to draw down divine wrath by treading on tapestries that should be the ornaments of a temple, but he finds Clytemnestra's persuasion irresistible and enters the palace, walking on the treasures.

Clytemnestra now orders Cassandra into the palace, but for the first time the queen's persuasion fails. After Clytemnestra leaves in frustration Cassandra, in a highly charged mixture of song, dance, and speech, tells the chorus the story of the House of Atreus from Atreus's killing of his brother Thyestes' children and serving them to their father, to the murder of Atreus's son (and herself) that will take place in a few moments. She then voluntarily enters the palace to meet her death. Suddenly the chorus hears Agamemnon's cries. They debate among themselves – each of the twelve speaking in a couplet – and then determine to rush inside. By the convention of the eccyclema, a panel slides out



The ransom of Hector, from Aeschylus's Phrygians, *terra-cotta relief (circa 440 B.C.) from Melos (Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto)*

of the central door, revealing Clytemnestra standing over a tub in which the bodies of Agamemnon and Cassandra are wrapped in a bloody cloak. "I stand where I slew them," she proclaims, reminding the audience that they are now inside the palace. Her attempts to place the blame for the killing on the family curse are rejected by the chorus. There is a curse, but she is still to blame. As tensions rise, her lover, Aegisthus, sole surviving son of Thyestes, enters with a bodyguard, a traditional sign of a dictator. The two quell the rebellious chorus's threats, and Clytemnestra promises her lover that all will be well. The satyr play *Proteus* probably followed at this point, affording comic relief, while Proteus, the Old Man of the Sea, predicts the happy fate of Menelaus and Helen.

Libation Bearers, the second play of the trilogy, begins with Orestes and his friend Pylades sacrificing at the tomb of Agamemnon. They draw aside as the chorus of Trojan captive women enter with his sister, Electra, sent to perform a sacrifice by Clytemnestra that will pacify the spirit of Agamemnon, who has sent a frightening dream to his wife. The middle part of the play is a long *kommos,* a series of choral and solo singing and dancing, which is intended to rouse Agamemnon to help his children take revenge. Orestes reveals that he is driven to slay the rulers of Argos, not only by his obligations to father and native land and by his own desire to rule, but by Apollo's clear commands. If Orestes disobeys, Apollo will curse him with horrible plagues. Orestes and Pylades now proceed to the palace, where they claim to be bringing the body of Orestes.

Clytemnestra, feigning grief, welcomes them inside. At the same time, she sends an old family retainer to summon Aegisthus with armed troops. The retainer, formerly Orestes' nanny, denounces Clytemnestra's hypocrisy and reminisces about her troubles in bringing Orestes up when he was a baby (with humorous scatological details). She is advised by the chorus not to mention the need of armed guards in her report to Aegisthus. So Aegisthus returns, enters the palace unarmed, and is slain within. Clytemnestra enters to hear a servant's confused report, which she immediately understands. Before she can act, Orestes and Pylades are upon her. She confronts Orestes with the full significance of his mission

to slay his own mother by turning her back to the audience and baring her breasts to him. Orestes falters, but Pylades speaks, reminding Orestes to "make all men your enemies before the gods." It is a powerful use of Sophocles' innovation, the third actor. Clytemnestra is forced into the palace and slain. The eccyclema is pushed out of the central door to reveal the internal scene, as in *Agamemnon.* Orestes stands over the bodies of his mother and her lover. He has little time to proclaim the justice of his action. Seeing his mother's Furies enter, he immediately flees them, while the chorus hopes, uncertainly, for an end to the seemingly endless chain of crime and punishment.

The final play in the *Oresteia,* the *Eumenides,* begins in Delphi as Apollo's priestess and seer, the Pythia, proclaims (contradicting other accounts) the peaceful origins of the oracle. She enters the backdrop, which represents Apollo's temple in Delphi, and emerges immediately on her hands and knees, screaming with fear. Inside sits a man in suppliant garb surrounded by hideous monsters. As the Pythia scrambles down one of the side exits, the eccyclema is pushed out to reveal Orestes seated next to the *omphalos* with Apollo by his side. Several figures in black are sleeping on the platform, their faces covered. Orestes begs help from Apollo, who reassures him but sends Orestes to take refuge with his sister, Pallas Athena, in Athens. Orestes exits down one side, and Apollo exits through the backdrop. Now Clytemnestra's ghost appears and calls the Furies to wake up and take revenge on Orestes. The Furies on the platform lift their heads, and one by one the chorus enter from within, dressed in black and with terrifying masks. The sensation created in the theater was long remembered; stories were handed down that children fainted and pregnant women had miscarriages. Clearly the moment was an extraordinary coup de théâtre. The Furies then argue with Apollo and leave for Athens, bloodthirsty vampires out to suck Orestes' blood and drag him down to Hades. The eccyclema is withdrawn and then pushed out again, this time with an imitation of the rough wooden statue of Athena in the old *hecatompedon,* or "hundred foot" temple of Athena, on the acropolis.

At this point Orestes enters and takes refuge at the statue. The Furies enter and sing the famous binding song to entrap him. Athena enters and decides to settle the matter with the first jury trial. The chorus changes from bloodthirsty vampires into sensible conservative statesmen who remind Athena of the necessity of fear for a just government. The eccyclema is withdrawn, and the scene moves to the nearby Hill of Ares, where Athena formally inaugurates the Areopagus, the Athenian senate and homicide court. She echoes the chorus's reflections on the need for fear in a just state. The basic dramatic elements that still make trials so effective on stage and screen are present in this scene, which takes full advantage of the Sophoclean third actor and fills the orchestra with the chorus of twelve Furies, the jury of twelve Athenian citizens (the first meeting of the Areopagus), and the three actors playing Orestes, Apollo, and Athena. Orestes admits that he killed his mother by slitting her throat. But he then calls upon Apollo, who asserts that he, Apollo, ordered Orestes to kill his mother at the command of Zeus. In any case Orestes' killing of his mother did not involve the shedding of kindred blood, because, according to the contemporary speculations of pre-Socratic scientific thought, a child develops completely from the father's seed. The mother is only an incubator.

Athena announces that she, a loyal daughter of Zeus, born from Zeus's forehead without the need of a mother, will vote in favor of Orestes. Science and religion harmonize. The jury votes amid threats from both the Furies and Apollo. The result is a tie, and by Athenian law the defendant is freed by the so-called Vote of Athena. Apollo and Orestes leave in triumph, the latter pledging the eternal friendship of Argos to Athens. The Furies threaten to bring destruction upon the land of Attica, but in the final and greatest of the persuasion scenes of the *Oresteia,* Athena, in a mixture of threats, promises, and rational explanations, wins the Furies over to the new jury system, which they will continue to support in their new role as *Eumenides,* or "The Friendly Ones." (The word is not used in the play, only as its title.) Athena then leads off jurors and chorus in a triumphal torchlit march. Gods, men, and monsters are united in the cause of justice and democracy, singing of a world where Zeus's will and Fate are no longer at cross purposes.

The *Oresteia* represents a brilliant uniting of poetry, song, dance, and drama. It moves from brooding obscurity to thrilling clarity; it also depicts the development of human society from the remorseless and inescapable *lex talionis* (the law of "an eye for an eye") to the democratic jury system. The courts were seen as especially typical of Athenian democracy. The imagery from courts and visions of Furies in the first play develops into a literal appearance of jury and Furies on the stage in the last play. Even Athens's recent break with Sparta and new alliance with Argos is worked into the plays. Most impressive, the recent political battle that had led to denying the powers of the Areopagus in running

foreign policy and limiting its jurisdiction to internal affairs, especially murder trials, is reflected and approved in the final play. The trilogy ends on a strongly democratic note, but when Athena inaugurates the Areopagus, she warns the audience to keep fear as an element in a healthy state and not to muddy the clear waters of the Athenian constitution with dangerous changes. Aeschylus appears to condemn further change even while approving reforms that return the Areopagus to its original mission.

Most scholars agree that Aeschylus was a committed democrat. His views on the increasingly radical Periclean democracy and its aggressive imperialism are less clear. It was noted by people in antiquity that Aeschylus left Athens and went back to Sicily, where he died in 456–455 in the city of Gela. Hieron the dictator had died in 466, and the Greek cities of Sicily were now democracies. A story was told that an eagle, looking for rocks on which to drop a tortoise and break its shell, mistook Aeschylus's bald head for a rock and killed him with the falling tortoise. Whether true or not, the story does not resemble other examples of biographical fiction. Aeschylus was honored as a hero in Gela with sacrifices and dramatic performances.

About Aeschylus's *Prometheus Bound,* there has been a consensus among scholars, somewhat shaken in recent years, that the tragedy is part of a tetralogy of three tragedies and a satyr play, all called *Prometheus;* the tetralogy is supposed to have been composed by Aeschylus near the end of his life, perhaps in Sicily. No other tetralogy exists consisting of plays that all share the same name. No scholarly consensus is shared as to the structure of the tetralogy, and the one satyr play that is known and called *Prometheus* is securely attested to as one of the plays presented with the *Persians* in 472. Whatever the facts, the Aeschylean tragedy titled *Prometheus Bound* presents a harsh picture of Zeus that is utterly unlike what is found elsewhere in Aeschylus. In this play Zeus is accused of lust and disloyalty to subordinates, traits of the typical tyrant, as is seen in Herodotus's "Debate on the Constitutions." The staging of the tragedy lacks the powerful simplicity of other Aeschylean plays. Indeed, there is no consensus about the play's staging. It has been suggested that this tragedy was written for the book trade of late-fifth-century Athens. The style is obviously Aeschylean on a superficial level, but there are many diversions from Aeschylean usage, and the play is much easier to read than the plays from the last decade of Aeschylus's life. Although static as drama, *Prometheus Bound* has been a popular and influential play that has won audiences by the power of the poetry, the characters, and the play's central situation. The play was part of the standard school curriculum of the Byzantine Middle Ages and was the favorite tragedy of Percy Bysshe Shelley, Karl Marx, and Richard Wagner.

Prometheus Bound is a simple and powerful dramatic poem. At the beginning of the play Hephaestus, the god of fire and metalworking, with the help of Zeus's agents, Power and Violence, fastens Prometheus to a peak in the Caucasus Mountains. When left alone, Prometheus laments Zeus's treacherous treatment of him, protesting that he was a loyal servant who helped Zeus defeat the other Titans, but is now being punished for trying to save from destruction his favorites, the people of the human race. A chorus of Oceanids enters and sympathizes with Prometheus. Their father, Ocean, enters and offers sympathy but no help. Io, whom Zeus seduced in the form of a bull and is now driven in pain across the world by a vindictive Hera, enters and tells her tale. Prometheus prophesies that Io's distant descendant, Hercules, will one day free him. Moreover, Prometheus knows the secret of Zeus's power; Zeus will permit his liberation because Prometheus knows which of Zeus's many love affairs will produce a son who will overthrow Zeus as Zeus overthrew his father, Cronus. Hermes attempts to bully the secret from Prometheus, and when he fails, Prometheus and the Oceanids are cast into an underground cave.

In *Prometheus Unbound* Prometheus has been sent back up into the light, but every other day a vulture comes and eats his liver, which grows back during the night. Zeus has released from their torture a chorus of Titans, Prometheus's old compatriots, in the hope that they will persuade Prometheus to reveal his secret. Hercules, Zeus's son by a mortal woman, slays the vulture and reconciles Prometheus and Zeus. The reconciliation of gods, men, and Titans (like the Furies, an earlier generation of gods than the Olympians) is reminiscent of the choral finale of *Eumenides.*

After Aeschylus's death in 456, the Athenian people honored the tragedian with the special honor of allowing his plays to be produced posthumously. Those plays may have won prizes another fifteen times at the City Dionysia. The tenth-century encyclopedia *Suda* relates that Aeschylus's son, Euphorion, won four times with plays of his father's that had not been produced before. Some have suggested that "four times" (*tetrakis*) is a misprint for "with a tetralogy" and that the peculiarities of *Prometheus* are because of rewriting by Euphorion. In his comedy *Acharnians* (425) Aristophanes has his

central character tell about his disappointment when he hears that there will no play by Aeschylus that year. In *Clouds* (423) Aristophanes makes Aeschylus the favorite playwright of the older generation, whose sons prefer Euripides.

Aeschylus (in Hades) is an important character in Aristophanes' *Frogs* (405). Actual memories probably formed part of the mix out of which Aristophanes created his character. Irascible, pious, moralistic, and patriotic, this Aeschylus wrote his plays to encourage bravery and patriotism and never, as some other playwrights were charged, encouraged sexual immorality. Individual quotations are accurate, although some interpretations of the dialogue are dubious. The Sophist Gorgias had called *Seven against Thebes* a "play full of Ares," and the phrase is quoted in *Frogs* to show that the play encouraged bravery in war, which is far from the play's themes. The two most dramatically striking parts of *Persians,* the lamentations at the end and Darius's ghostly speech, are mentioned in *Frogs* in slightly confused fashion. Aristophanes can expect his audience to recognize references to *Niobe,* the *Oresteia,* and the *Iliad* tetralogy.

By the end of the fifth century B.C. Aeschylus's work dominated Athenian dramatic literature. Sophocles and Euripides returned to themes treated by Aeschylus again and again; note, for example, the *Electra* of both playwrights, and the *Orestes* and *Iphigenia* of Euripides. The *Bacchae* of Euripides and *Philoctetes* by Sophocles are other likely examples of Aeschylus's influence on his successors. In the fourth century the situation changed. From 386 any older play could be produced at the City Dionysia, and Sophocles and especially Euripides tended to be preferred to Aeschylus. The status of Aeschylus as one of the three canonical tragedians, however, was secure. In time a statue of the playwright was erected in the Theater of Dionysus. During the period of Lycurgus's political predominance (335–324 B.C.), the plays of Aeschylus were edited for the official performances; the plays also seem to have suffered somewhat from fifth-century productions, as the spurious ending of the *Seven against Thebes* indicates. (Most scholars believe that the current ending of the *Seven against Thebes* is a later addition, influenced by Sophocles' *Antigone.*) The series of tragic playwrights in Aeschylus's sister's family may have helped preserve copies of his plays relatively uncorrupted and with their original music.

In the third century B.C. the official Athenian texts of the Greek plays were edited in Alexandria, Egypt. Although the Alexandrians did not preserve the music, the words of the choral odes were divided

Bronze bust of Aeschylus found in the sea off Livorno, Italy (Museo Archeologico, Florence)

into short metrical units, *cola,* that indicated the rhythm and meter. (The Alexandrian division into cola survived until it was modified by the Byzantine scholar Demetrius Triclinius in the fourteenth century and then later by nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholars.) Fewer and fewer Aeschylean plays were read in schools as time passed. The oldest medieval manuscript of Aeschylus, the Mediceus in Florence (tenth century A.D.) contains seven plays, and these are the seven plays that have survived. *Persians, Seven against Thebes,* and *Prometheus* were all read and studied in schools throughout the Byzantine Middle Ages. *Agamemnon* and *Eumenides* were less read, and *Suppliant Women* and *Libation Bearers* barely survived in a text that is full of misprints and difficult to read. By 1518 when the *editio princeps* of Aeschylus was printed by the Venetian Aldine Press, important work in elucidating and correcting the text of Aeschylus was already in progress.

By the nineteenth century the work of centuries of scholarly labor came to fruition, and Aeschylus again became one of the most popular tragedians. In 1820 Shelley wrote his own version of *Prometheus Unbound.* Later in the century Marx wrote his dissertation on *Prometheus*. Wagner took the Aeschylean tetralogy as his model for his operatic cycle, *Ring of the Niebelungen* (1853–1874). Friedrich Nietzsche wrote his first major book, *The Birth of Tragedy from the Spirit of Music* (1872), to defend Wagner as a true reviver of Greek tragedy. In the twentieth century Aeschylus's plays have attracted many performances, translations, and critical studies. Gilbert Murray in *Aeschylus: Creator of Tragedy* (1940) calls Aeschylus the "creator of tragedy," and his *Oresteia* trilogy is generally regarded as one of the greatest monuments of dramatic poetry. Poetic and dramatic versions of the *Oresteia* have appeared from contemporary poets such as Robert Lowell, Robert Fagles, and Tony Harrison, and the trilogy from Aeschylus's last years continues to challenge and provoke poetry and criticism.

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Alcaeus

(born circa 620 B.C.)

Botham Stone

MAJOR WORKS: Lyric poetry (early sixth century B.C.)

Editio princeps: *Carminum poetarum novem . . . fragmenta* (N.p.: Printed by Henri Estienne, 1560).

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Alcaeus; second-century A.D. Roman bronze coin from Mytilene (cabinet des Médailles, Paris)

Alcaeus is the premier poet of politics and the symposium, or drinking party. Like Sappho, he wrote poems intended to be sung by one person to the accompaniment of a lyre (see Horace, *Odes* 2.13, 4.9); and the surviving representations of him, like those of Sappho and Anacreon, show him with the stringed instrument. His songs seem to be intended primarily for the symposium (fragment 70.3–4) and either the political discussion or the frolicking that occurs there (fragments 373, 374) among a closely knit circle of friends (fragment 71). Alcaeus wrote in the Aeolic dialect in simple meters and in stanza form, in contrast to the choral odes by Pindar or Bacchylides, for example, that employ the Doric element of Homer, with complex meters and alternating strophes and antistrophes. Even Alcaeus's hymns, while drawing on Homer's portrayals of the gods, show these simpler lyric characteristics rather than the epic meter and language of his model.

Although most of the poetry of Alcaeus has been lost, some idea of his poetry can be gained from the accounts of others and from Alcaeus's Roman imitator, Horace. Alcaeus's poems were regularly edited in antiquity, chiefly in the Hellenistic period by the scholar Aristophanes of Byzantium around 200 B.C. and fifty years later by Aristarchus. Only a few indications of the size and number of the poet's books remain; a papyrus of fragment 120 indicates that one book had one thousand lines, while elsewhere there are references to ten books of his poetry. It is impossible to determine more definitively the extent of his complete work.

Sources with accurate information about the life of Alcaeus are scattered and few: his own poems

and various ancient commentaries on them, the generally unreliable thirteenth-century encyclopedia called the *Suda,* and fragments of papyri found at Oxyrhyncus, Egypt *(Oxyrhynchus Papyrus* 2307 and 2506). Alcaeus often writes about the subjects that were the interests of his class: drinking, love both of males and females, politics, and the full enjoyment of life. One learns from the ancient commentator Porphyry that Alcaeus was born into the proud, horse-breeding aristocracy in Mytilene on Lesbos about 620 B.C., or possibly 630 B.C. His "noble parents" (fragment 72.13) were leading citizens of an old family of wealth that "my father and my father's father have grown old possessing" (fragment 130B); the family was deeply involved in the political and military turmoil of the time and place.

At the time of the poet's birth Lesbos was ruled by the Penthilids, descendants of a son of Orestes named Penthilus, who first colonized Lesbos. After the overthrow of the Penthilids, the noble families vied with one another for rule. It is not surprising that much of the poetry of this milieu should be political. Apparently Alcaeus was a young man when his brothers joined Pittacus in ousting the tyrant Melanchrus in 612–609 B.C.; this assumption is made on the basis of fragment 75, in which the poet says, "I do not remember, but while a child I sat upon[.] . . ." Alcaeus fought against the Athenians for Sigeum at the mouth of the Hellespont sometime between 607 B.C. and 603 B.C. (this is the date given by Eusebius; if the *Suda* can be judged reliable, Alcaeus's birth date must be 630 B.C.). In this battle he threw away his armor (fragment 428), which was later donated to the Temple of Athena at Sigeum as spoils of the battle. Alcaeus seems unashamed to boast that at least he left the battle alive. Pittacus fared better, killing the Athenian general Phrynon. Eusebius dates the battle at 607–606 B.C., but it was not until two years later that Periander, the tyrant of Corinth, was called in to act as mediator between the two sides, and by agreement Sigeum stayed with the Athenians.

In fragment 350 Alcaeus welcomes his brother Antimenidas home from his tour with the Babylonian army, presumably indicating that Alcaeus was back in Mytilene by that time. In fragment 48 he describes the destruction of Ascalon in 604. Following this settlement of the hostilities between Athens and Lesbos, the aristocrats had no enemies but each other. The tyrant Myrsilus took over Mytilene, and Alcaeus joined Pittacus in opposing him, though the extent of his involvement may well have been exaggerated by ancient commentators and historians. Alcaeus and his allies planned an attack on Myrsilus but had to flee to the Lesbian village of Pyrrha (scholia to fragment 114). During this exile (Sappho was also exiled in Sicily from 604 to 596), Alcaeus's brother was serving with the Babylonian army. It seems from fragment 129 (the longest of the fragments) that Pittacus at first allied himself with Alcaeus's party, then changed his loyalty to Myrsilus, with whom he shared the rule ("he trampled the oaths underfoot and devoured our city"). The value of integrity, particularly with regard to oaths (fragments 67, 129, 306) and duplicity (fragments 68, 69) is characteristic of the need for trustworthiness in the intensely political atmosphere of Lesbos. Fragment 70 says "Pittacus will devour the city as he did together with Myrsilus." Fragment 129 (known only since the publication in 1941 of *Oxyrhyncus Papyri*) invokes Zeus, Hera, and Dionysus, praying "Come with a helpful spirit and hear my prayer, deliver me from the miseries of exile." The Furies may pursue Pittacus, called "Potbelly," who had pledged to Alcaeus but had treacherously changed to the other side and become the slayer of his city. The fragment ends with the word *Myrsilus.*

Eusebius relates that by 600–599 Sappho and Alcaeus were already "famous," yet Alcaeus complains of exile in fragment 130: away from the daily life of his native city, he lives like a peasant or even an animal, calling himself a "lonely wolf-man" and plotting his revenge. He misses the assembly and the council back in Mytilene, where his father and grandfather had passed their lives among those who did evil to each other. Now he lives at a faraway shrine to Zeus, Hera, and Dionysus and admires the beautiful girls who participate in the annual beauty contest as part of a rite dedicated to Hera. He concludes with "when will the Olympians [release me] from my many [misfortunes]?" The poems clearly show that although Alcaeus recognizes the undesirable side of the political life, he still longs for it.

The death of Myrsilus in 590 or 589 is greeted with joy in fragment 332: "Now one must drink and drink with all one's strength, since Myrsilus is dead." But Pittacus was given power (technically he was *aesymnetes,* an elected dictator) and ordered to "deal with the exiles," much as Solon was obliged to reconcile the factions at Athens. Alcaeus continued to oppose him, but Pittacus effected a reconciliation between the feuding aristocrats. He held power for a peaceable ten years before stepping down in 580, and he later became known as one of the Seven Wise Men of Antiquity. To this period may belong

Alcaeus and Sappho; vase from Agrigentum, circa 480–470 B.C. (Staatliche Museen, Munich)

Alcaeus's poem about the ambitious man who destroys the decayed city and attacks Pittacus (fragment 141), despite the fact that Pittacus was the unanimous choice to be the leader (fragment 348). When Pittacus, generally understood to have risen from the ordinary class of citizens, marries a member of the Penthilid family, Alcaeus says: "Let him who married a daughter descended from the Atridae, destroy the city as he did with Myrsilus, until Ares agrees to compel us to arms." The marriage, said to have ended unhappily, became proverbial for the evils of marrying outside one's class. It is typical of Alcaeus's unforgiving personality that he attempts no rapprochement with Pittacus but merely states his desire to wait until the political climate improves. Alcaeus is said by Strabo (1.37) to have toured Egypt (like Sappho's brother), and references to Boeotia and Thrace may indicate further travels. Whether these were connected with his "second exile" and "third return" mentioned in a commentary is not known.

Alcaeus may have complained further about Pittacus, but it is related by Diogenes Laertius (1.76) that Pittacus ultimately pardoned Alcaeus as part of a general program of forgiveness characteristic of the generosity of spirit for which Pittacus became famous. Nevertheless fragment 350 tells of greeting his brother Antimenidas on his return home from a tour with the Babylonian army. For Alcaeus to greet him back in Mytilene indicates that his period of exile was over and that Alcaeus grew old (judging by the "gray chest" of fragment 50) in his native city. The date of his death is unknown, and the claim that he died at "the fighting at the bridge" in a battle during the war between the Medes and Lydians in 585 is speculation.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus said that if one took the meter out of some of Alcaeus's poems, one would be left with a political speech (*On Imitation* 2.2.8). Alcaeus's enduring image is political, that of the Ship of State tossed on the sea of political strife, one emulated by Aeschylus (*Seven against Thebes*), Sophocles (*Antigone*), Horace (*Odes* 1.14), Henry Wadsworth Longfellow ("The Building of the Ship"), and Jean Anouilh (*Antigone*). The figure may first have appeared in Archilochus (fragments 56 and 56a). (Alcaeus uses the figure at least twice, not to describe a polity, as did those who followed him, but rather to describe the maintenance of his party in times of political strife.) Both of Alcaeus's poems are preserved in a commentary on Homer by one Heraclitus (not the philosopher) to illustrate the technique of allegory. Heraclitus assures his reader that both references are to Myrsilus. In fragment 6 waves pour over the ship and threaten to overwhelm it. The poet urges the sailors to buttress the sides of the ship and make for a safe port. He encourages them to avoid fear and think of the miseries they have already survived, not betray their families by cowardly behavior. In fragment 326, he says:

> One wave sweeps in on this side, another on that side
> We in the middle are borne on with our black ship
> greatly pressed in this huge storm.
> Water from the bilge covers the foot of the mast
> The whole sail lets in light now; it has great holes
> The anchors are pulling free.

Another political poem (fragment 298) treats the myth of Locrian Ajax, whose story is also told in the *Iliou persis* (The Fall of Troy), a poem of uncertain authorship about events not covered by the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey,* written in Homeric epic style but not attributed to Homer. When the Greeks finally capture Troy, Ajax rapes Cassandra, the daughter of Priam, who is endowed with the gift of prophecy but who is cursed never to be believed. She had

Fragment of a seccond-century A.D. papyrus manuscript of the poems of Alcaeus (Bodleian Library, Oxford University)

sought sanctuary at the Temple of Athena, but Ajax drags her away by force, tearing away with her the image of Athena. The Greeks become so angry that they threaten to stone Ajax, but he escapes by seeking refuge at the altar of Athena from which he had dragged Cassandra. Because of this desecration, Athena determines to destroy the Greeks on their return home. Alcaeus relates that just as the Greeks should have executed Ajax, so the Lesbians should throw a noose around the neck of their public enemies and stone them. At the end Alcaeus mentions Pittacus (pointedly calling him "son of Hyrrhas," reminding his audience that Pittacus's father was a heavy drinker and from Thrace); and the implication may be that Pittacus should be stoned for sacrilegiously breaking his oath and committing crimes against the people of Mytilene. Homeric myth is employed on other occasions, particularly in fragment 283, which details the consequences of Helen's affair with Paris; fragment 42 compares Helen and Thetis and fragment 44 treats Thetis's aid to her son Achilles.

In addition to his political poems, Alcaeus wrote several poems centering on the symposium, or drinking-party, poems mostly saved by Athenaeus (flourished circa A.D. 200) in his collection *Deipnosophistai* (The Learned Banquet). "Wine is the spy-hole into a man," says Alcaeus (fragment 333), and Athenaeus says that Alcaeus drinks, no matter what the season of the year (10.430), in spring (fragment 367), summer (347), and winter (338). This latter poem by Alcaeus, which influenced Horace in *Odes* 1.9, is about driving away the winter's chill with wine. One may get an idea of the range of the full poem and its meter from the following translation of Horace's poem:

See how the deep snow lies bright on Soracte
Branches snow-bent let their wintry load fall
    And bitter frost has frozen the river;
    Paralyzed now it is solid.
Dispel the cold! Pile logs on the fireplace
Freely and you my dear friend Thaliarchus
    Bring wine in the Sabine jars mellowed
    At least four years and be generous.
Leave the rest to the gods relaxed from the strife

Of winds wildly storming on turbulent seas
    Old ash-trees can safe be and cypresses stand
    In peace untouched by the storm.
Don't seek the future but set down as gain
Whatever days give you, son, never flee love
    Nor dances as long as the dull old men
    Are absent from your heart's sweet pleasures.
Now is the time for soft whispers at midnight
Repeated in the fields and the city parks
    At the right moment low laughter betrays
    The lurking maidens playing love-games in hiding
Off from a finger poorly resisting
Or down from an arm he pulls coaxingly off
    A ring from the girl taken late in the night;
    The girl laughs freely in the secret corner.

Horace attempts to capture the vitality of the images of the poem, the immediacy and clarity of Alcaeus's response to the events of the world, the spontaneity of his verse; the Roman poet is far more controlled and reflective than the Greek.

Drinking poems traditionally have as a principal theme the shortness of life, and indeed, most often the drinking is an excuse to celebrate political triumphs or drown political losses and get on with living. The first words of fragment 346, "Let's drink," are echoed in the opening of Horace's *Ode* 1.37, the famous ode on the defeat of Cleopatra (*Nunc est bibendum*):

Friends, it's time to drink
And pound the earth barefoot,
Now let's deck the temples
With Salian flowers.

The brevity of life is the theme of fragment 38A, in which Alcaeus asks Melanippus to get drunk with him:

Drink and get drunk with me, Melanippus.
Why do you think that when you have crossed eddying
    Acheron
you will see the pure light of the sun again?
Come now, do not try for great things. Even Sisyphus
son of Aeolus, the wisest of men, claimed that he had
fled from death, but in spite of all his cleverness
he twice crossed the swirling river Acheron at fate's decree.
And the king, the son of Cronos, came up with a task for him
under the black earth. Come now, do not hope for such
    things.
Now is the time, if ever, while we are young, to endure
whatever the gods give us.

Though this is ostensibly a poem about drinking as a means of confronting the shortness of life, its real theme, at least in the fragment that exists, is the endurance of whatever toils the gods set down for the individual (see Horace, *Odes* 1.4). One cannot trick death as Sisyphus did. When Sisyphus was about to die, he chained up Death, with the result that no one was able to die; when Ares released the bonds of Death, Sisyphus was taken away but was released. Sisyphus then lived many more years; but when he finally died a second time, he was condemned to the eternal punishment of rolling a rock up to the crest of a hill, only to have the rock roll back down again. Alcaeus encourages his reader to make the most of each minute of life.

Songs involving wine often involve love ("If I am to enjoy the symposium you must invite Menon" in fragment 368), or at least passion, and Alcaeus was known in antiquity for his erotic verse (Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 4.1; *On the Nature of the Gods,* 1.79; Quintilian 10.1.63). Love for Alcaeus is generally homosexual. Indeed, he is one of the first poets to sing of homosexual love, the kind Horace attributes to him in *Odes* 1.32.9–12. Typical is fragment 71:

I order someone to call the charming Menon,
if I want to have pleasure in drinking with him.

But Alcaeus also speaks of a girl in love: "Poor me, I who share in all ills," elucidated by Horace, whose *Odes* 3.12 gives the direction in which the poem likely moved to describe the throes of love. The poem, the only one in which Alcaeus is not the speaker, goes on puzzlingly to describe placing a bell upon the neck of a stag. How the two parts fit has so far defied interpretation.

Because Alcaeus was consumed by reflections on the shortness of life and the gods' role in human destiny, it is not surprising that he should turn, in his fashion, to the composition of hymns. His hymns, most of which are lost, were in some respects in the tradition of the Homeric hymns, poems celebrating the legend of a particular god, intended for a secular audience rather than performance at a religious rite. Some late Homeric hymns date from Alcaeus's time, but they are written in dactylic hexameter, using Homeric language and style and running to considerable length. Alcaeus's hymns employed his lyric meters and his particular dialect, and they were usually short.

His hymn to Apollo was the first poem in his collection, as edited in the Hellenistic period. Only one line survives (fragment 307): "Lord Apollo, son of great Zeus." The Sophist Himerius in his *Orations* summarizes the poem: Zeus gave Apollo a golden headband, a lyre, and a chariot drawn by swans and sent him to the spring of Castalia at Delphi to de-

clare justice for the Greeks. But Apollo instead takes the chariot to the land of the Hyperboreans, where he remains for a year giving the populace laws, despite the prayers of the Delphians that he come to them. He finally visits Delphi in the middle of the summer. The songs of birds and cicadas greet his arrival; nightingales sing for him "the kind of song that one might imagine birds in Alcaeus to sing." The Castalian fountain flows with waters of silver, and the river Cephisus rises in a wave to indicate the presence of Apollo.

According to Porphyry, Alcaeus's *Hymn to Hermes* (fragment 308a) describes the birth of Hermes, his delivery aided by the Graces, and his nursing by the Horae. Only the opening line survives: "Greetings, Ruler of Cyrene." The Homeric hymn to Hermes (which may be earlier or later than Alcaeus's poem) begins similarly:

> Muse, sing of Hermes, the son of Zeus and Maia,
> Lord of Cyllene and Arcadia, rich in flocks,
> The luck-bringing messenger of the immortals, whom
> Maia bore, the rich-tressed nymph,
> When she was in love with Zeus.

Pausanias relates that the poem treats the theft of Apollo's cattle by Hermes, and Porphyry says that Alcaeus gave Horace the idea that Hermes stole Apollo's quiver, making Apollo laugh at the end. By looking at Horace's hymn to Hermes (*Odes* 1.10) one may get an idea of what may have been in Alcaeus's hymn:

> Mercury, eloquent grandson of Atlas
> Who skillfully civilized the savage manners
> Of early man with the gift of language
> And by the institution of graceful Palaestra,
> I will sing of you, ambassador of great Jove
> And of the gods, and the parent of the curved lyre,
> Skillful in concealing by sportive theft
> Whatever has pleased you. While Apollo
> Frightened you, a boy, once with threatening voice
> Unless you restored the cattle removed by stealth,
> He laughed when deprived of his quiver.
> No, with you as leader, even wealthy Priam
> Having left Ilium behind went unnoticed by the Atriades,
> The Thessalian watchfires and the camp hostile to Troy.
> You place the spirits of the good in the happy regions.
> You bound the airy crowd with your golden wand,
> A favorite with the gods above and the gods below.

Fragments have been also identified of a *Hymn to the Dioscuri* and a *Hymn to Artemis,* upon which Callimachus's hymn to the same deity may throw light.

The poetry of Alcaeus had enormous influence in antiquity; its loss deprives the modern world of the works of a formidable poet and of a valuable source of knowledge about the political situation on Lesbos. A man who wrote about events that were essentially short-lived (drinking bouts, love affairs, and political conflict) tells in what remains of his work relatively little about himself and his peers. The poet avoids moralizing except on the subject of honesty toward friends; he spares his reader his opinions on nearly everything except the Lesbian leaders; and he writes in a style that is simple and graceful. What remains appealing in his writing is not the ephemeral events that animate his poetry, but rather the lyrical spirit with which the poet expresses his responses to these events, the enthusiastic description of the things of this world, like the singing of birds and cicadas or the sword his brother brings back from Babylon. In the sweet flowing meters of his verse the charms of lyric poetry are embodied in this most lyric of poets.

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Apollonius Rhodius

(third century B.C.)

Charles Rowan Beye
City University of New York

MAJOR WORK: *Argonautica* (third century B.C.).

Editio princeps: *Apollonius Argonautica,* edited by Lorenzo de Alopa (Florence: Printed by Lorenzo de Alopa, 1496).

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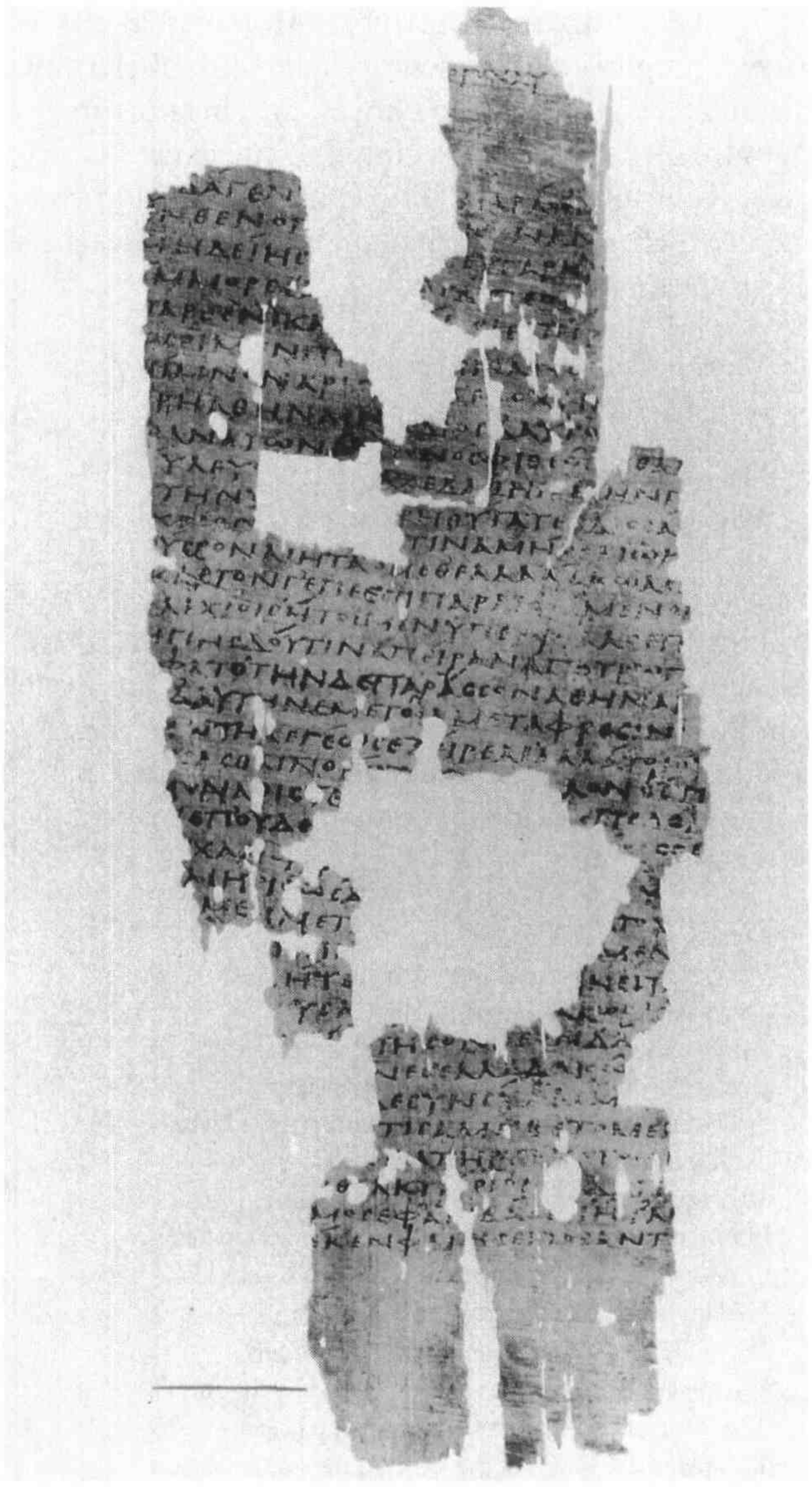


Fragment of a third-century A.D. papyrus manuscript of Apollonius Rhodius's Argonautica *(Egypt Exploration Society, London)*

Few facts can be securely established about the life of Apollonius Rhodius. He was born sometime in the early part of the third century B.C., perhaps at Alexandria in Egypt. He studied with the poet-scholar Callimachus. According to one tradition, the two quarreled about literary aims and values, but since Apollonius's *Argonautica* seems to conform to Callimachus's advertised claims for poetry, the quarrel probably never happened. There is also a tradition that Apollonius's career started badly but that later his poetry received a more favorable reception. He was probably the director of the great library that Ptolemy II Philadephus (308–246 B.C.) built and stocked in Alexandria. Because the director was generally a tutor to the heir to the throne, Apollonius likely filled that role as well. He was called "the Rhodian" to distinguish him from other figures in history who bore the same name; the only basis for associating him with Rhodes is a feeble tradition that he either went to Rhodes for a stay when his career was floundering or retired there.

Like many poets of his day, Apollonius composed hexameter poems on the founding of cities – Alexandria and Rhodes, for instance; he also wrote epigrams. These short works survive only in a few fragments. The major work that survives and on which Appolonius's fame rests is the *Argonautica* (third century B.C.). This epic poem relates the story of Jason and his voyage in quest of the Golden Fleece; divided into four books, it contains 5,834 hexameter lines. While little about the life of Apollonius can be determined, the text of his poem, when associated with known social and literary

facts of the period, reveals much about what was available to a highly educated man who wished to amuse and instruct his audience.

Ptolemy II was the son of one of Alexander's Greek-speaking Macedonian generals who was satrap in Egypt when his leader died in 323 B.C. This general, whose family name had been Ptolemeius, consolidated his power in Egypt, declared himself king in 304 B.C., and styled himself Ptolemy I Soter (savior). He assumed the power and style of the pharaohs, which caused Greeks the philosophical problem of how to consider someone who was human a manifestation of the divine – a dilemma from which eventually the doctrine of the divine right of kings grew. Ptolemy I also instituted the worship of the god Sarapis, who, with a mixture of Hellenic and Egyptian features, was a god of the sky and the underworld and also a miracle worker. Ptolemy I also improved upon the Pharaonic control of Egypt so that the country's economy was tightly and efficiently run by a vast state bureaucracy, giving the society something not unlike modern state socialism. The city that Alexander had founded and named after himself grew in this time into far more than a city-state. Indeed, Alexandria developed into a vast urban area with a polyglot population living in various ghettos; over this population presided a colonial Greek population, one still looking back to the Athens of two centuries earlier for its inspiration and the justification of its role. But third-century Alexandria was far removed in ideology, style, and attitude from the mixture of democracy and aristocracy that marked the small city that was fifth-century Athens.

Ptolemy II initiated other changes and improvements in Egypt, notably the library and its companion institution, the museum ("the house of the Muses"). These two institutions together constituted a kind of think tank for the poets and scholars of the era. Eventually the Alexandrian Library contained seven hundred thousand rolls of papyrus, the largest collection of writing in the ancient world. During the early years a major industry in Alexandria centered on preparing papyrus rolls and collecting, collating, and cataloguing them for the library. Because Homer was the most popular Greek author in earlier times, many copies of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* existed. A considerable subindustry grew up around the task of preparing definitive editions of these two poems from the many variant versions available. Scholars who engaged in this preparation had to decide whether certain lines were "genuine," that is, appeared to be legitimately Homeric; as with other texts they had to decide whether they could legitimately be catalogued as epic. From this inquiry came the questions: what is authentic Homer and what is generically epic? Issues of genre and authenticity loomed large in Alexandrian thinking, and these preoccupations are often reflected in the writing of the period.

Building the Alexandrian Library and filling it with texts of the major Greek authors suggests that Ptolemy was determined to maintain the legacy of Hellenism in this new city and ensure that the competing cultures, particularly that of the Egyptian peasantry, would not overwhelm and obliterate the Greek presence. At the same time the literary production of Athens in the preceding centuries had been so prodigious that the writers of Alexandria were in danger of being submerged in a nostalgic reverence for the colossal culture of their past. They were saved from this fate by the leadership of the poet and savant Callimachus, whose poetry strove to impose a revolutionary ideal of literary criticism upon his contemporaries. Recognizing that the masterpieces of the past could hardly be emulated, Callimachus encouraged his generation to explore new directions. Where the Homeric epic had stressed stories of adventure, Callimachus called for poems of fact. The hallmark of classical literature was its obedience to convention; Callimachus made poems that were off-color and about outré subjects. In his call for newness, preciosity, and wit, he was a kind of third-century-B.C. cross between Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot. Like Antonin Artaud, who cried out, "No more masterpieces!" Callimachus inveighed against long epic poems, claiming that "a big book is a big evil." He was determined to reconstitute the major writing styles of the previous centuries. From his hand survives a group of hymns to various Olympian gods that, although the hymns mimic the style of other hymns from the archaic period of Greek literary history (seventh to sixth century B.C.), they have a stamp that clearly marks them as Alexandrian.

Although Virgil's *Aeneid* (30–19 B.C.) clearly reflects the high value the Roman author placed on his Alexandrian predecessor, Apollonius's *Argonautica* was not highly regarded in the later centuries of European criticism, largely because it was read as an inferior poet's attempt to imitate Homer. To many, Apollonius's hero Jason seemed ineffectual and unsubstantial compared to an Achilles or Odysseus. Then, too, heroic epic is par excellence the poetry of masculine endeavor and striving; the *Argonautica* is a narrative in which the forceful maiden Medea becomes a main character as important as Jason is. Where Nausikaa of the *Odyssey*, an-

Ptolemy II Philadelphus and Arsinoë II, under whom Apollonius served as finance minister (British Museum)

other precocious teenage girl with a crush on a visiting stranger, is kept at a distance by Odysseus, Jason is, before he knows it, promising Medea marriage and a trip out of Colchis, where she lives with her brutish father. Once she joins him aboard the *Argo,* the narrator emphatically keeps his focus on Medea. Centuries of male critics, accustomed to praising literature that favored the dominant status of males, were unsure how to interpret this poem. Rather than asking what the poet might be trying to do in terms of exploring new literary territory, they retreated to the unchallenging critical corner of contempt or condescension. The ancient gossip of the quarrel between Callimachus and Apollonius formed the perfect pretext: the *Argonautica,* it could be argued, was just another of those dull, long-winded epics that Callimachus despised. Such an objection reveals a critic who has not read Apollonius's poem carefully, has not noticed that whereas the *Odyssey* is more than twelve thousand lines long and the *Iliad* more than fifteen thousand lines long, the *Argonautica* is more or less a half of the one and a third of the other. Moreover, in the century before Callimachus, Aristotle had also declared in *Poetics* that the new-style epic poem must be far shorter than the archaic epic poems; indeed, more precisely, Aristotle decreed that the new epic should equal "the size of tragedies performed for one hearing." That would most likely mean the three tragic dramas and the satyr play usually performed together at the Festival of Dionysus – more or less the same length of the four books of Apollonius's poem.

As was common in the literature of antiquity, the story in Apollonius's poem is based on a myth. Because the myths on which stories were based were usually well known to the readers of the time, the poet often alludes to these myths only sketchily. Moderns readers who read such a poem as the *Argonautica* are well advised to study the foundational myth beforehand, to appreciate more fully the texture and nuances of the story. In Apollonius's poem the story revolves around the young Jason, whose wicked uncle Pelias, hoping to rid himself forever of the youth, directs him to the faraway town of Colchis. There Jason is to obtain the fleece of a ram upon which their relative, Phrixus, had once ridden through the sky to safety in Colchis, where he sacrificed the ram and hung the fleece in a sacred grove. The fleece is guarded by a serpent. After receiving his uncle's instructions Jason assembles a group of young men to sail with him on the *Argo.* He directs them to elect a leader, and with one voice they shout "Heracles." This turn of events (amusing to the reader? discomfiting to Jason?) is corrected when Heracles orders the crew to select Jason as their leader.

In book 1 the *Argo* sails and stops first at Lemnos, where the women who have previously killed all their menfolk both disguise this fact and welcome the heroes to their beds in hopes of producing a future generation. The princess Hypsipyle is Jason's hostess, bashfully casting her eyes down in modesty while simultaneously manipulating the attractive young man into bed. The hero Heracles and his retinue abstain from the women, staying down by the ship, indignant at the delay and diversion. Subsequently the crew is befriended by a young prince Cyzikos, who is later, in a misguided night raid, killed by them. The first book ends with Heracles racing out of the narrative in a desperate search for the young boy whom he has taken from his father and brought on the trip (and with whom he is no doubt sleeping with in a mentor/protégé relationship typical of the conservative manly attitudes of the classical Greek period) and whose beauty has caused a nymph to carry him off for her own pleasures.

Book 2 of the *Argonautica* recounts a series of adventures and obstacles past which the young men proceed with a variety of stratagems and struggles. At this time a prophet foretells that they will only win their goal through the help of

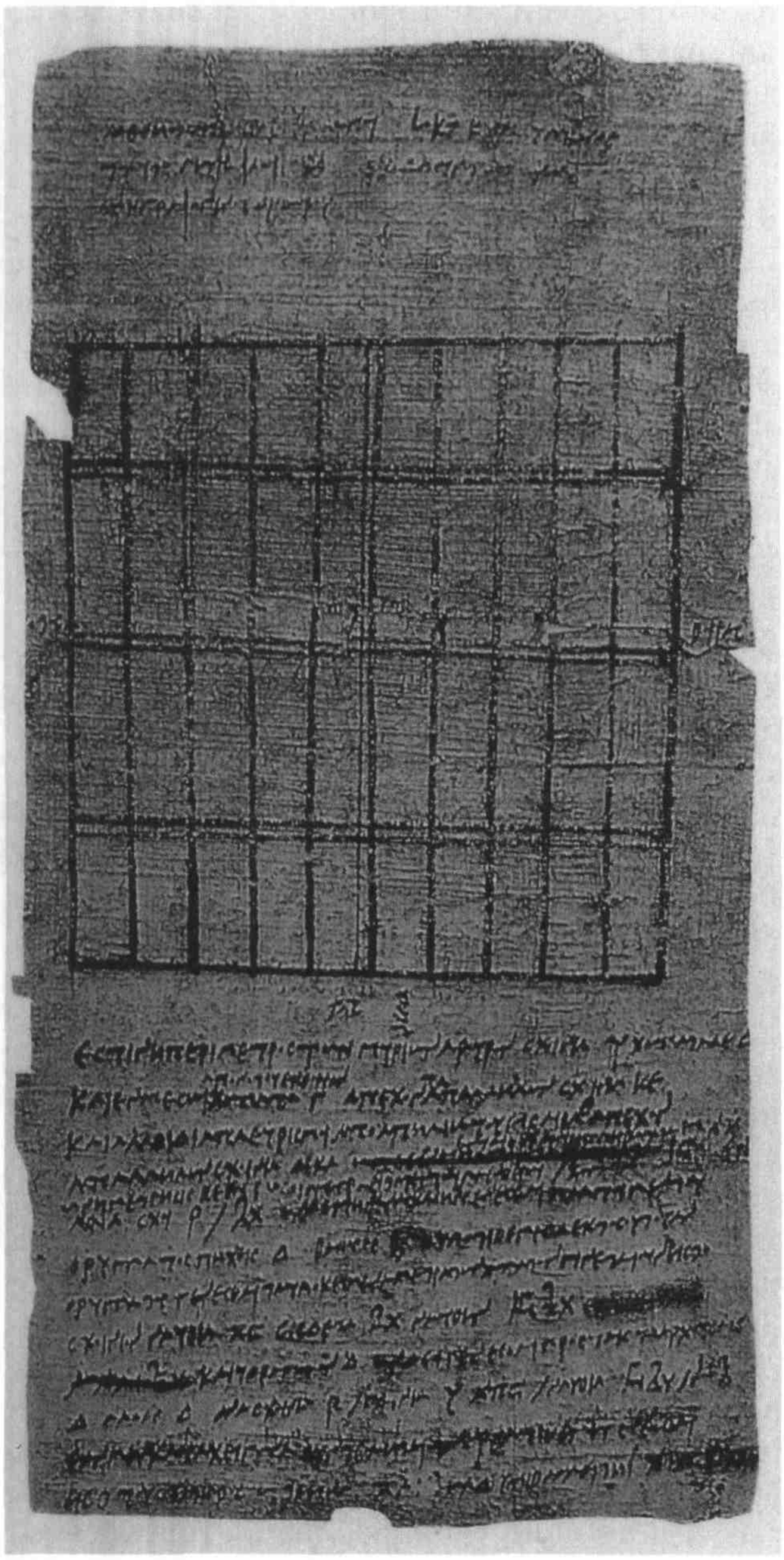
Aphrodite. The third book is a story of love in which Eros shoots Medea with his arrow and she desperately desires the young Jason, who, after asking for the fleece from her father, King Æetes, is told he must first perform extraordinary feats of valor. In three famous monologues Medea debates with herself the wisdom or folly of helping the young Jason. Finally she decides to do so and thus betrays her father. The story continues in the fourth book, after Jason has triumphed, King Æetes is in a rage, and Medea flees the palace. She seeks out the *Argo* and its crew and promises them further aid in subduing the serpent that guards the fleece. Medea and the crew set sail in the *Argo* with the Colchians in pursuit. When Jason and his crew are trapped and Jason appears willing to turn Medea over to her brother Apsyrtus, captain of the pursuing Colchians, Medea sternly talks Jason into killing him. After the murder she and Jason are purified by her aunt, the witch Circe, and later given a haven by Alcinous and Arete, in whose land they marry. Thereafter, in a voyage that recapitulates the second book, although even more gloomy and desperate in tone, they arrive back in Iolcus.

Apollonius plays off the Homeric poems so frequently (notice that Circe, Alcinous, and Arete all reappear from the *Odyssey*), and often so subtly, that the reader will want to have his or her *Iliad* and *Odyssey* at hand. In ancient times, when almost all narratives derived from well-known myths, when public recitations were commonplace, and when the paucity of literary production meant that certain works were constantly in circulation, Apollonius could expect the audience for his poem to summon up in its memory the story's central myth, the Homeric epics, and the legacy of Athenian tragedy – and thereby to supply for itself an immediate intertextual context. But the *Argonautica* is not an oral poem; its language is complicated and the allusions are so constant that only a close reader can be imagined as the poet's intended audience. Indeed, the intricate web of connection between this poem and elements of the Alexandrian Greeks' cultural heritage make it clear that the *Argonautica,* in requiring that particular knowledge, is in a sense a coded text, incomprehensible to non-Greeks. One could argue that the elitist nature of so much Alexandrian literature serves as a powerful defense against the non-Greek population of Alexandria, which might aspire to an intellectual parity with the Greeks.

One feature distinctly Alexandrian in Apollonius's poem is the abundance of geographical references. Place-names and routes hitherto unknown to the Greek world fill the story. There are also many references, anthropological in character, to unusual customs of peoples encountered on the voyage. All this is Callimachean, but Apollonius gives his factual material his own touch. The poet creates a keenly ironic juxtaposition of people and places that actually exist and hence are "true" and "realistic," although bizarre enough to suggest the fabulous. These in turn are set beside heroes who, although from the world of myth and fable, behave so conventionally and realistically as to constitute a reality more "real" than that in the anthropological anecdotes.

It has been argued – with little evidence – that Apollonius's position at the court of the Ptolemies required him to write poetry that reflected his royal patronage. According to this argument his poem's emphasis upon geography, upon travels among barbarians – along with the sense that Jason and his crew, as Greeks, hail from a more civilized culture – serves the Ptolemaic propaganda regarding Alexandria and the Ptolemaic dynasty as a kind of cultural bulwark of the higher Greek culture in opposition to the non-Greek lands to the East.

The story narrated in the *Argonautica* is highly episodic and, indeed, essentially lopsided. It alternates between a succession of events that have no more logical continuity than the stops along the *Argo*'s voyage (books 1, 2, and the latter half of 4) and, on the other hand, events that constitute a tightly knit, fast-paced drama of love and daring (book 3 and the first part of 4). Most scholars assume that the Homeric poems were a continuous narrative created over time in a period of oral performance and that their division into twenty-four books (from the ancient Greek word for papyrus roll; the divisions would be roughly equivalent to the modern "chapter") is the work of the librarians of Alexandria, since there are no essential breaks in the narrative. Similarly, it is assumed that the peculiarity of book construction that marks the *Argonautica* reflects the Alexandrian penchant for playing with the implications of a new aesthetic occasioned by the division of the Homeric poems into books. Where, for instance, the older poems would be divided at the onset of night, the obvious – to librarians – end of an episode, Apollonius describes daybreak at the close of a book. When at the beginning of books 1, 3, and 4 the poet calls upon Apollo, the Muse Erato, and finally, simply, the Muse, successively, he plays upon the reader's conventional expectation of symmetry with a book 2 that simply begins with *there,* a kind of acknowledgment that there is no real division between the first two books.



Papyrus with the plan and estimated costs for building an irrigation system on the estate of Apollonius (from Jaromir Malek, ed., Cradles of Civilization: Egypt, *1993)*

What is perhaps more obvious to the reader is the way in which the poet continuously recasts the story line. For instance, he makes the love story fit into the third book with a beginning (a prologue, as it were, with a meeting of Athena, Hera, and Aphrodite), a middle (Jason's persuasion of Medea and her initial resistance and agonized indecision), and an end (Jason triumphs in the contest with the bulls). Suddenly the story becomes something more than the young prince, the ogre king, and the contest. It spills into the fourth book as Medea flees her father's palace to cast her lot with Jason and his crew until finally the two are married, a moment that harks back into the third book, when Jason swore that he would marry her. Their subsequent voyage of despair and confusion then picks up the voyage of the second book, suddenly widening again the perspective of the plot, like ripples in a pond, only to encompass the whole story, when, at the end of the poem, Jason and Medea return to Colchis, whence they initially departed.

The experienced Alexandrian reader will read Jason against the heroism of Achilles and Odysseus and find him unsettling. Partially this response happens because the narrator betrays Jason as Homer never does his heroes. Jason is upstaged when, just as he is about to greet the assembled crew, two latecomers arrive, and Jason is made to appear somewhat of a fool when he calls for the election of the leader and everyone votes for Heracles. After meeting and bonding with young Prince Cyzikos, Jason sails away and is blown back at night, and a fight ensues, each side believing in the dark that the other is an enemy. In the battle Jason kills Cyzikos, an instance of betrayal again as the young man fails signally at a warrior's task. On the island of Lemnos, Jason, who is often described as young and beautiful, is portrayed in a kind of triumphal procession to the palace and into the bedroom of the Princess Hypsipyle.

When one contrasts the Homeric heroes, men of brawn, of a certain age, whose processions lead them onto the battlefield, it is clear that Jason is of another mold. He has been called a "love hero," referring to the fact that in the Hellenistic period women seem to have achieved sufficient autonomy and parity with males that for the first time they became objects of genuine respect and desire. Jason thus engages in a heterosexual peer relation, whereas the Homeric hero was defined largely by his male friendships. Classical Greece, especially intellectual Athens and warlike Sparta, encouraged its young men to find physical and psychic solace and pleasure in another young man. Such a political and cultural stance is found in this poem in the old-fashioned hero of muscle and brawn, the manly Heracles, who, true to that style of masculinity, has a young boy in his entourage. The poet is making a contrast between two entirely different political and spiritual states of mind. Heracles' erotic interest in a young man, besides recalling old-style heroism, reflects the values of democracy and small-town living. Jason's

diplomatic, seductive, gentle, heterosexual approaches, first to Hypsipyle, then to Medea, represent another and new form of male/female relationships.

In the expanded world horizon of Alexandrian Egypt, where the vast bureaucratic web of state made individuals hard to see or place, where a great city and a remote Ptolemy made political relationships disappear, the life of the individual tended to become more of a private event; at the same time, there were new avenues open to self-realization. Kings and princes, emblems of the community, the kind of figures who dominate archaic epic and fifth-century tragedy, give way to persons like Jason and Medea, who live a private life and enact a private love affair. These two murder her brother at night, on an island, where they have lured him, and there is no public outcry afterward. No other fact exemplifies their privacy more dramatically and contrasts them more starkly with the hero figures of previous literature. Nothing is finally more individualistic than one's own sense of erotic excitement and fulfillment.

Most significant is the portrayal of Medea. Ancient epic poetry generally has a dominant male figure and his slightly inferior male companion (for example, Achilles and Patroclus, Gilgamesh and Enkidu), a twosome that has survived into the present in the form of Mark Twain's Huck and Jim or the comic-book characters of Batman and Robin. The *Argonautica* is unique in the repertory of surviving epic poems in having a woman so powerful; at first she starts to share power with the male hero equally, then seems to dominate him – if not in status or physical power, certainly in spirit. It is Medea who charms the serpent so that Jason can take the fleece; Medea who gives him directions about the subsequent sailing; Medea who counsels him to kill her brother when they are cornered. At the end of the poem, when the narrator has shown Jason to be particularly downcast, Medea challenges and destroys the monster creature Talos, as if to remind the reader of her great role in this poem, now diminished once she and Jason are wedded, as was typical for women of this period.

But perhaps most important of all, when Medea is shown debating with herself whether or not to help the stranger Jason and thus betray her father, she is revealed as a person making a moral and ethical choice, in a kind of recapitulation of that moment when any young bride in ancient Greece had to become the property of her husband, rather than her father, and learn a new allegiance. There is a sense of free will in Medea's actions in the third book that is quite unusual for the literature of antiquity, which, more often than not, shows persons acting out the dictates of fate. That Medea has been manipulated into loving Jason by the goddess of love and her son Eros does not alter the way in which the narrator presents her character. The reader feels Medea's moral travail and tends to forget that she is a marionette on a god's stage. There is no question that Medea is presented in a sympathetic fashion as the young, naive, virgin girl who has much to lose in allying herself with the stranger. But the poet plays with the tradition of her magical powers to present a young girl whose gifts in that direction give her a kind of baleful, threatening quality. This portrayal is certainly in keeping with the age-old, Greek male misogyny.

Indeed, throughout the second book, as the voyage takes him closer and closer to Colchis and farther from home, Jason's dread and nervousness mount. He is voyaging out, one might say, to meet the Other, that is, a woman, who, in classical Greek literature and culture, is rarely a person of any great importance to males but who is now more the male's equal in the Alexandrian world. For men acculturated to wielding absolute control (and the Homeric poems focus on excercising control in a variety of situations), this confrontation of Jason's with a woman – a girl, no less – who has magical and possibly infernal powers, is constantly unsettling and threatening.

Much scholarly energy has been expended in debates about the nature of the audience for which the *Argonautica* was intended. Is it, for example, primarily a woman's poem? Medea is presented as critically important to the story, and certainly, from time to time, she seems a finer person than Jason. In this connection it is probably important to remember that the male Ptolemies shared the rule of Alexandrian Egypt with their wives (Ptolemy II was the son of the legendary Berenice and husband to the equally formidable Arsinoë) so that the spirit of the court must have encouraged a parity between genders. Yet Medea is also frightening to Jason, and one senses that the narrator agrees with Jason's reaction. Thus, it is difficult to believe that Apollonius had a female audience in mind. On the other hand, the poem so deconstructs traditional male epic attitudes that one cannot imagine that the so-called typical male, whoever he might have been, would relish the story. Certainly the coterie at the Alexandrian Library and Museum would be fascinated by the spectacle of Apollonius's wittily playing his work against Homer's. Probably the educated class,

now a growing body of readers who wanted stories, would find the issue of a male and female meeting together in the same poem, on terms hitherto reserved for males, titillating and amusing.

One might note that it is in this period of history that there arose a new literary invention, the prose romance (our surviving examples come from a later date). In this new genre star-crossed lovers, a virgin girl and a young man, separated by accidents of fate, typically struggle to overcome the obstacles that divide them, until at the story's end they are reunited. Some aspects and attitudes of the romance narrative are hinted at in the *Argonautica.* Moreover, the narrator describes in great detail the psychological and physical consequences of strong erotic attraction between a naive young man and woman. The poem may be said to dramatize the world's first great love story, one that is still fascinating. That it ends all too soon in flight, fatigue, despair, and murder is probably all too true to the facts of intense romantic and erotic love. In that sense the *Argonautica* is a cautionary tale for those lovers who would forget the consequences of acting upon their emotions.

The Homeric poems showed deities who were greatly concerned for the fate of their human favorites and who upon occasion stepped out of their divine invisibility to talk with them. An important attribute of an Achilles or an Odysseus is that each is confident that he has the protection and love of at least one deity and the respect of most of the gods, even the ones who might hate them. Athena is constantly at the side of Odysseus in the *Odyssey,* and throughout the *Iliad* one deity or another comes to Achilles' side, most notably his goddess mother Thetis. The *Argonautica* does not reveal the same intensity of caring from the Olympians. Historically their cults were still a fact of political and social life, but in the everyday religious experience of the people of Alexandria, it is fair to say that newer and more-potent deities had supplanted them. This seems reflected in the poem where Hera is the goddess most concerned to see that Jason returns home safely (because he had once been kind to her) and that Medea arrive with him to destroy Pelias (because the king had once neglected to offer sacrifice at her altar). But this motive, while acknowledged, is hardly foregrounded, so that one does not have the sense of divine participation. More than once Apollo appears, but the reader's expectations are defeated when the god fails to speak to any of the heroes.

The one scene in which gods are on display for any length of time is at the beginning of the third book, when Athena and Hera go to Aphrodite to seek her help in providing protection for Jason by getting Medea to fall in love with the comely lad. Here the amused tone, the sense that these three women are no better than they ought to be, contrasts greatly with the Homeric depiction of the Olympians, even when he is setting them out as objects of fun. Hellenistic thinking was dominated by a belief in chance, the deified Tyche, and one might assume that the generally random nature of the plot is reflective of this fact: things just seem to happen.

There is a celebrated sculpture surviving from the period during which Apollonius wrote; the sculpture depicts a drunken old woman sitting. The artist has been meticulous in indicating her physical decay as well as her debauched attitude. When set beside the handsome human figures so perfectly idealized in bronze or stone that survive from the classical period, the sculpture of the old woman is a remarkable, unblinking look at what it really is to be human. In much the same way Apollonius has moved beyond the high heroics of the Homeric epics, beyond the transcendent action of tragic drama, to represent characters exhibiting behavior that is selfish, even shabby, complex, and ambiguous. In so doing he moves beyond the Callimachean relish for "fact" to explore a deeper kind of truth.

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Aratus of Soli

(circa 315 B.C. – circa 239 B.C.)

Michele Valerie Ronnick
Wayne State University

MAJOR WORK: *Phaenomena* (circa 240 B.C.).

Editio princeps: *Phaenomena,* edited by Aldus Manutius (Venice: Aldus Manutius, 1499).

Standard edition: *Phaenomena,* edited by Ernest Maass (Berlin, 1893).

Translations in English: *The Phenomena and Diosemia of Aratus,* translated by John Lamb (London: J. W. Parker, 1848); *The Skies and Weather-Forecasts of Aratus,* translated by E. Poste (London: Macmillan, 1880).

Bust in the Villa Albani identified as Aratus of Soli

The poet Aratus was born about 315 B.C. in Soli, a small city near Tarsus on the southeastern coast of Asia Minor in the district known as Cilicia. Because of his birth in Soli, Aratus is sometimes identified as Aratus Solensis or Soleus. When these modifiers are missing, he is occasionally confused with his contemporary, the anti-Macedonian statesman Aratus of Sicyon (271–213 B.C.), who brought his hometown Sicyon, in the northern Peloponnese, into the Achaean Confederacy and about whom Plutarch wrote. Unattributed references to Aratus over the years by various writers have perplexed readers in several fields, including, for example, modern scholars of Herman Melville, who wrote the name "Aratus" in the margin of his copy of the New Testament at Acts 17:28. Confusion has sometimes arisen, too, between Aratus's hometown of Soli in Cilicia and the seaport of the same name on the northern coast of Cyprus.

According to the ancient authorities, the medieval encyclopedias known as the Sudas, and four other writers whose biographies of Aratus were appended to various editions of his work, Aratus left his parents, Athenodorus and Letophila, around 291. He then traveled to Athens to study with Zeno, the founder of Stoicism. Chrysippus, who moved to Athens about thirty years later and rose to become the third head of the Stoic school (232–206 B.C.), also came from Cilician Soli. About 277 Aratus was invited by Zeno's admirer, King Antigonos Gonatos, to leave Athens and join the Macedonian court at Pella. Soon after his arrival in Pella, Aratus wrote "The Hymn to Pan," a poem celebrating the king's marriage.

An additional request from King Antigonos Gonatos resulted in Aratus's work, the *Phaenomena* (Appearances, circa 240 B.C.). This didactic poem about astronomy and meteorology, based upon a prose treatise by Eudoxus of Cnidus, constitutes Aratus's major extant work. Most of his other work has been lost and is known only by various titles. Among these lost works are a critical edi-

tion of Homer's *Odyssey; Catalepton,* which was the title for a miscellany of his poems written in various verse forms and was later applied to work ascribed to the Roman poet Virgil; and scientific treatises in verse, such as *Iatrica* (On Medicine), *Astrica* (On Stars), and the *Canon* (Table), which was about the harmony of the spheres. After several years at the court in Pella, Aratus moved to the court of Antiochus I in Syria. He later returned to Pella, where he died about 239. A monument in his honor was erected at Soli, and coins were struck with the image of his profile. A reproduction of one of these coins can be seen in the works of the sixteenth-century Italian antiquary Fulvius Ursinus.

Some critics, ancient and modern, have faulted the *Phaenomena* for its inadequate understanding of astronomy and its uneven versification; other critics have been perplexed by their inability to find a satisfactory explanation for its popularity. But the poem enjoyed an immediate success in its time, heralded by the praise of men such as the Alexandrian poet Callimachus and the Egyptian ruler Ptolemy Euergetes. The Hellenistic mind, enthralled by learned, scientific expositions, was readily drawn to works such as the *Phaenomena,* which translated abstruse learning into accessible verse. Readers were no doubt charmed by the playful attitude that Aratus sometimes took toward his poetry. He enlivened his *Phaenomena* at least once with the use of puns and has been credited with creating the first acrostic at line 783.

Aratus was neither the first nor the last poet to explore the subject of astronomy in a work in verse, but the popularity of his *Phaenomena* overshadowed all later efforts. It also stimulated the production of a sizable amount of exegetical commentary in both Latin and Greek, commentary that still survives, some of which is important in its own right. The only extant work of the renowned astronomer and mathematician Hipparchus (circa 190–post 126 B.C.), for example, is his *Commentary on the Phaenomena of Eudoxus and Aratus.*

The 1,154 hexameter lines of Aratus's *Phaenomena* provide a guide to the heavens, in diction that is patterned upon that of Homer and Hesiod. Lines 1–18, forming the *proemium,* or proem, reveal elements of Aratus's training in Stoicism. Its invocation to Zeus invites comparison with the famous "Hymn to Zeus" by Cleanthes. Both poems locate the structure of the world and its inhabitants in Zeus. Aratus's statement at line 5 that "we are all the offspring of Zeus" is found in the speech the apostle Paul gave on the Areopagus in his effort to convert philosophers and skeptics to Christianity. Acts 17:28 alludes to Aratus's expression when Paul reminds his audience that his contention is not unlike the contention of one of their own: "as certain also of your own poets have said, for we are also his [God's] offspring." This constitutes one of the few clear allusions to Greek literature in the New Testament and provides some indication of the attitude the early church fathers had toward Aratus and Stoic ideas. In the Bavarian town of Regensburg is a romanesque statue of Dionysius the Areopagite, known as the *Astrolabium* of Saint Emmeram (circa A.D. 1070). Included in its design are Paul's words, "for we are also his offspring," and a figure of Aratus with a quotation from his work (in Latin), *motus sidereos radio percurrit* (he briefly examines the movements of the heavens with his measuring staff).

The second section of the *Phaenomena* (lines 19–732) describes the design of the constellations, the movement of the planets, and the signs of the zodiac. He describes the Pleiades thus:

> They are clustered together, but the area that holds them is small, and each one emits a faint shine. In the poems of men they are seven, although six alone are visible to the eyes. Yet no star I think has disappeared from the sky unnoticed from the start of man's memory, but even so some say that. Those seven are called by name Italcyone, Merope, Celaeno, Electra, Sterope, Taygete, and royal mistress Maia. Tiny and faint they are all the same, but known far and wide, they revolve the heavens in the morning and in the evening by the will of Zeus.

In the later portion (lines 733–1154) the poet describes ways that weather can be forecast by the analysis of celestial phenomena and also by observing the behavior of animals. The style and tone of this particular portion of the *Phaenomena,* which became a model for Virgil's *Georgics* (37–30 B.C.), is thought to be indebted to the lost work on the same subject by Theophrastus. These lines are known collectively as the *Diosemia* (On Weather Signs), a title given the work by certain grammarians. The work occasionally appears with the Latin title *Prognostica.* The problem of dual titling, however, suggests to some scholars that this section is actually a fragment of an entirely separate work.

In Rome Aratus's *Phaenomena* inspired several writers, before and after Virgil, to attempt its translation and/or imitation. These efforts are commonly referred to as the *Aratea.* While the work on this subject by Varro is wholly lost,

Aratus and a muse, Urania; third century A.D. mosaic by Monnus (Trier Museum)

about 480 hexameter lines of a verse translation by Cicero, which he wrote as a young man, survive. John Quincy Adams's estimation of Cicero's work, one avoids the stinging criticism found in some modern assessments, remains valid. Cicero's versification, Adams wrote, "was not to be compared with that of Virgil or of Ovid, perhaps not even with that of Lucretius. There was a secret harmony in Latin verse which Cicero, though a perfect master of all the possibilities of harmony in Latin prose, did not discover."

Ovid's *Phaenomena,* a poem about meteorology thought to be indebted to Aratus's poem, has vanished. What does remain is Ovid's comment in *Ars Amatoria* (The Art of Love) that "with the moon and sun Aratus will forever remain." About 725 hexameter lines of another *Phaenomena,* along with some 200 lines of another *Prognostica,* remain from a translation written in the early empire. In this poem errors made by Aratus concerning astronomy have been corrected and the invocation to Zeus has been changed into an invocation to the *princeps,* or leader. Most scholars attribute authorship of this translation to Germanicus Caesar (15 B.C.–A.D. 19); some, however, believe that Tiberius (42 B.C.–A.D. 37) could have been its author.

Around A.D. 390 a descendant of the Stoic philosopher Musonius Rufus, Rufus Festus Avienus, wrote a 1,878-line verse translation, one 724 lines longer than the original. Avienus found much of his additional material in various scholia and commentaries. Several centuries afterward, during the seventh century, came one final effort at translation. This is the work of a shadowy figure whose name faute de mieux is Aratus Latinus. His poem bears what Walter Berschin, in *Greek Letters and the Latin Middle Ages* (1988), rightly calls the "barbarous title," *Arati ea quae videntur* (the things of Aratus which are seen).

Lasting interest in Aratus gave rise to a small industry that produced a variety of secondary material. Still extant are illustrated manuscripts, some of which date to Carolingian times, as well as evidence for "Aratus globes," three-dimensional star charts

constructed as late as the Byzantine Middle Ages. A compendium of astronomy called the *Liber Introductorius* was compiled early in the thirteenth century for the Emperor Frederick II of Sicily. The work was carried out by the so-called magician Michael Scot, a man whom Dante placed in his *Inferno* (circa 1315).

By the early Middle Ages Aratus's poem was used as a school text wherever astronomy was taught. An autograph copy that still exists in Edinburgh, Scotland, reveals that late in the thirteenth century the Byzantine scholar and schoolmaster Maximus Paludes had a manuscript copy of the *Phaenomena* that he "edited" by replacing entire passages with his own words. Vittorino da Feltre included the title in the inventory of books that he sent from Mantua to his pupil Gian Pietro da Lucca in Verona in A.D. 1445. In the sixteenth century Jan Kochanowski, one of the leading lights of the Polish renaissance, published a reconstruction of Cicero's *Phaenomena,* the second edition of which (1612) is important because it contains the earliest known biography of Kochanowski. In stark contrast to the past centuries, however, the modern age has shown little interest in Aratus or any of his translators and imitators.

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Archilochus

(mid seventh century B.C.E.)

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MAJOR WORK: Short poems in various meters

Editio princeps: *Archilochon mela kai Iambeia,* edited by Jacques Lect, in *Poetae Graeci veteres,* volume 3 (Geneva: Petrus La Rovière, 1616), pp. 131–134.

Standard Editions: *Archiloque: Fragments,* edited by F. Lasserre and A. Bonnard (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1958); *Archilochus. Fragmenta,* edited by G. Tarditi (Rome: Athenaei, 1968); *Iambi et elegi graeci ante Alexandrum cantati,* 2 volumes, edited by M. L. West (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971; second edition, 1989).

Translations in English: *Greek Lyrics,* translated by Richmond Lattimore (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949; second edition, revised and enlarged, 1960); *Archilochos, Sappho, Alkman,* translated by G. Davenport (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980); *Greek Lyric,* translated by Andrew M. Miller (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1996).

Inscription from a shrine to Archilocus on Paros, built by Mnesiepes, circa 250 B.C.

Archilochus (in a more exact transliteration, Arkhilokhos) lived during the mid seventh century B.C.E. (Before the Common Era) and is one of the earliest notable Greek poets after Homer. He composed mainly short poems in various meters, and, although his poetry survives only in fragmentary form, it nonetheless affords one a sense of the freshness and power he must have achieved as an artist. Moreover, as an innovator, he occupies an important position in the history of ancient Greek verse.

It is difficult to arrive at secure dates for the birth and death of Archilochus because internal and external evidence surrounding his poetry is lacking. Well into the present century it was fashionable for scholars to try to reconstruct an ancient poet's life from information contained in his verse. This practice is now more or less considered taboo in scholarly circles, and even the ancient testimonials are now regarded with suspicion, as Mary R. Lefkowitz notes in *The Lives of the Greek Poets* (1981). But such attempts at biographical reconstruction may have been especially tempting in the case of Archilochus because, as Lefkowitz writes in *The Lives of the Greek Poets:* "The characteristic passion with which he describes feelings, with emphatic repetition and vivid metaphors, gives the impression that he is personally involved in the events he describes in his poems."

There are certain items in the verse of Archilochus, however, that are susceptible to correlation to history, of which four particular items may be considered: first, the poet's phrase "Gyges and his glut of gold." The person of Gyges is referred to in fragment 19. (All fragments of Archilochus refer to *Iambi et elegi graeci ante Alexandrum cantati,* edited by M. L. West, 1971; except where noted, English citations are taken or adapted from *Greek Lyrics,* translated by Richmond Lattimore, 1949). Gyges

was the king of Lydia from about 687 to 652; he is mentioned in Herodotus. If Archilochus is coeval with Gyges, this fact would mean that Archilochus flourished in the mid seventh century. In any case Gyges serves as a terminus ad quem; the question is how quickly the king could have become proverbial for vast wealth.

The second item in the verse of Archilochus that can be correlated to historical fact is the phrase the "woes of the Magnesians" in fragment 20. According to Anthony J. Podlecki in *The Early Greek Poets and Their Times* (1984), the Magnesians were "proverbial in later antiquity, and perhaps had already become so by Archilochus' time." If, as Strabo thought, Archilochus was referring here to the utter devastation of the Magnesians by the Trierians, the poem in which the phrase occurs may have been composed in the mid seventh century. Alternately, this phrase might possibly refer to an invasion by Gyges or his predecessor, Candaules.

The third item that provides historical clues is the solar eclipse mentioned in fragment 122. Various dates have been proposed for the particular eclipse to which Archilochus is referring: the likeliest is that of 6 April 648; less likely is that of 27 June 660 or that of 14 March 711.

The fourth subject that helps in the dating of the poetry is found in the references to the island of Thásos in such fragments as 20, 89, 91, 93a, and 102. Ancient *testimonia* relate that Archilochus was involved in the colonization of Thásos, far to the north near Thrace, probably about 655. His father and grandfather seem also to have been involved in earlier stages of colonization in the late eighth and early seventh centuries.

There is one ancient *testimonium* that describes a remarkable meeting between Archilochus and a group of women who turned out to be the Muses and who gave him a lyre in honor of his poetic gift. This story parallels Hesiod's account of his own unction by the Muses at the beginning of the *Theogony* (circa 650) and offers some impression of the awe in which the ancients held Archilochus as a poet.

No account of ancient Greek poetry can avoid mentioning the importance of the oral-formulaic epic, in which were created the earliest extant works of Western literature. In a rough taxonomy this genre may be classified under two major heads: first, long narratives of the heroic-mythic type; and second, personal-didactic verse. The first category is dominated by Homer, to whom the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* are traditionally attributed. These works had such a profound influence on Greek letters and culture that the fifth-century playwright Aeschylus is said to have remarked that his own dramas were merely "scraps from the banquet of Homer." In the second category of Greek poetry Hesiod rules the field. Both subgenres share, however, certain formal attributes, particularly in their metrical composition: both are produced in stichic verse, where each line is in dactylic hexameter – six metrical feet, each consisting of a dactyl or its time-equivalent, a spondee.

The works attributed to Homer and Hesiod apparently date from the mid to late eighth century. Not long after the composition of these poems, the Greeks were using another metrical schema for verse: that known as *elegeia.* In this schema the basic unit was not the single line of verse but rather the couplet: the first of the two lines was in dactylic hexameter; the second was made up of two parts known as *hemiepes,* each roughly half a hexameter. One tradition ascribes the invention of the elegiac couplet to Archilochus himself; he certainly composed in this meter, as well as in iambic trimeters, trochaic tetrameters, and other meters.

Unfortunately, little of Archilochus's poetry has survived. To read the tattered remains of the poet's oeuvre is to feel the frustration that comes from not having a complete (or even an extensive) corpus to examine. In many cases one is left with no more than a few tantalizing lines, or less; sometimes, even when it seems there is a substantial torso of a poem, the writing surface on which the text is preserved is so damaged that certain words are missing and must be supplied by scholarly conjecture. Notwithstanding all this, enough remains to demonstrate, at least in part, the power and beauty of Archilochus's artistic achievement. Although he addresses a wide variety of topics, even in the extant fragments, some major recurrent themes may be usefully identified.

Perhaps the most accessible theme in the extant fragments is that of the poet as lover, particularly the lover of Neoboule. Ancient tradition (conflating the narrator, as was typically done, with the author) maintains that Neoboule's father, Lycambes, first betrothed her to Archilochus and then forbade them to marry. Archilochus in revenge wrote against the family *iamboi* (satiric verses) of such vitriolic power that they hanged themselves. It is not impossible to hear at least the echo of this power in some extant verses. In fragment 172, translated by G.

Davenport in *Archilochos, Sappho, Alkman* (1980), Archilochus writes:

> Papa Lykambes,
> What's this you've thought up?
> What's distracted the mind
> You once had?
> Mind? You're a laugh.

But his passion for Neoboule has an immediacy and intensity that is matched in antiquity perhaps only in the Roman poet Catullus: "If only it were my fortune just to touch Neoboule's hand" (fragment 118). It is tempting to weave all the extant fragments of love poetry into a single Neoboule cycle, like that of Catullus's cycle about Lesbia, but the evidence to support such an approach is insufficient. Regardless of the identity of the beloved, Archilochus speaks of his desires in memorable and moving terms (fragment 193):

> Here I lie mournful with desire,
> feeble in bitterness of the pain gods inflicted on me,
> stuck through the bones with love.

And in fragment 191 he writes:

> Such is the passion for love that has twisted its way beneath my heartstrings
> and closed deep mist across my eyes
> stealing the soft heart from inside my body[.]

In fragments 30–31 Archilochus describes his beloved:

> Luxurious in a spray of myrtle, she wore too
> the glory of the rose upon her,
> and her hair
> was all a darkness on her shoulders and her back.

In yet another fragment (196, translation based on Davenport) the poet writes:

> O my companion,
> Desire the limb-loosener
> Has beat me down.

Whether or not all such fragments refer to Neoboule, however, the recently discovered Cologne papyrus (fragment 196A) describes the poet's turning from Neoboule to her younger sister.

> But as for that sister of yours,
> someone else can have her. The bloom's gone – she's coarse
> – the charm too (she had it) – now she's on heat
> the whole time, can't keep away from it –
> . . . . . .
> But I'd talked enough. I laid the girl
> down among the flowers. A soft cloak spread,
> my arm around her neck, I comforted
> her fear. The fawn soon ceased to flee.
> Over her breasts my hands moved gently,
> the new-formed girlhood she bared for me,
> over all her body, the young skin bare;
> I spilt my <white> force, just touching her yellow hair.
>
> (translation by Martin Robertson, in *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature,* volume 1, 1985)

Tomb of Glaucus, one of Archiloschus's fellow colonists on Thasos

The graphic nature of this poem makes one wonder how, if it had been known in the nineteenth century by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe or Gotthold Ephraim Lessing or John Keats, it might have induced these writers to revise their impressions of the ancient Greeks. But it testifies yet further to the forceful rhetoric of which Archilochus was capable.

Another theme in Archilochus is that of the poet as soldier. The poet himself seems to have done some sort of military duty (possibly as a mercenary) on Thásos, which would be an important source of poetic inspiration. The poet's soldier persona is no less passionate about his life than the lover is about his; indeed, like Phoenix in book 9 of the *Iliad* – who purports to sum up the heroic ideal in the man who can be both "a speaker of words and a doer of [martial] deeds" – Archilochus's soldier combines, in fragment 1, the life of the warrior with that of the poet: "I am two

things: a fighter who follows the Master of Battles, / and one who understands the lovely gift of the Muses." And in fragment 2 he writes: "By spear is kneaded the bread I eat, by spear my Ismaric / wine is won, which I drink, leaning on my spear." Not for him, however, are the extremes of old-fashioned heroics: in fragment 5 he shows himself a firm believer in the maxim that "He who fights and runs away, / Lives to fight another day":

> Some barbarian is waving my shield, since I was obliged to
> leave that perfectly good piece of equipment behind
> under a bush. But I got away, so what does it matter?
> Let the shield go; I can buy another one equally good.

But he is no coward, and he is able to keep some perspective on the vicissitudes of war (fragment 128):

> Heart, my heart, so battered with misfortune far beyond your
> strength,
> up, and face the men who hate us. Bare your chest to the assault
> of the enemy, and fight them off. Stand fast among the beamlike
> spears.
> Give no ground; and if you beat them, do not brag in open show,
> nor, if they beat you, run home and lie down on your bed and cry.
> Keep some measure in the joy you take in luck, and the degree
> you give way to sorrow. All our life is up-and-down like
> this.

As is seen in fragment 114, Archilochus has a clear idea of what the ideal military leader should be:

> I don't like the towering captain with the spraddly length of leg,
> one who swaggers in his lovelocks and cleanshaves beneath the
> chin.
> Give me a man short and squarely built set upon his legs, a man
> full of heart, not to be shaken from the place he plants his
> feet.

A third important theme in the poetry of Archilochus, one that has contributed heavily to the urge to construct a biography of the poet from his poetry, is that of the colonization of Thásos. To sail to this island off the wild coast of Thrace must have been an adventure even for an inhabitant of Paros, which, although also in the Aegean, is further south and in a cluster of islands that includes Naxos and Delos. No matter how exciting the adventure, it cannot have been entirely attractive; Archilochus has his poetic persona remark in fragment 116, "Say goodbye to Paros, and those figs, and the seafaring life." According to tradition, Archilochus left Paros because of his poverty; and figs were apparently cheap food. Although he describes it in vividly evocative imagery, the poet is no fonder of Thásos than Hesiod was of Askra (fragments 21–22):

> Here the island stands
> stiff with wild timber like a donkey's bristling back.
> This is no place of beauty, not desirable
> nor lovely like the plains where the River Siris stands.

But he is not without compassion for the place and its people, as is clear from fragment 20, translated by Davenport in *Archilochos, Sappho, Alkman:*

> I weep that the people of Thasos
> Are in trouble;
> The Magnesians
> Are not my concern.

Again he writes (fragment 102), "All the griefs of the Hellenes came together in this place." And in fragment 91 he writes, "Let not the stone of Tantalos / overhang this island any longer."

A fourth important theme in the verse of Archilochus is that of death. The poet was close to the harsh realities of death, especially during his career as a soldier, and the subject figures memorably in his verse. The *consolatio* he composed in memory of some friends lost at sea is a sterling example of that rhetorical genre (fragment 13):

> Blaming the bitterness of this sorrow, Perikles, no man
> in all our city can take pleasure in festivities:
> Such were the men the surf of the roaring sea washed under,
> all of us go with hearts aching against our ribs
> for misery. Yet against such grief that is past recovery
> the gods, dear friend, have given us strong endurance to be
> our medicine. Such sorrows are variable. They beat now
> against ourselves, and we take the hurt of the bleeding sore.
> Tomorrow it will be others who grieve, not we. From now on
> act like a man, and put away these feminine tears.

Nor does he harbor any particularly romantic ideas about death (fragment 133):

> No man is respected, no man spoken of, when he is dead
> by his townsmen. All of us, when still alive, will cultivate
> the live man, and thus the dead will always have the worst
> of it.

But he respects the ancient dictum *de mortuis nil nisi bonum* (Of the dead say nothing but good), already attested in the *Odyssey,* which may be Archilochus's inspiration here: "Ignorant and ill bred / mock the dead" (fragment 134, translated by Davenport). And, although it may be spurious, the following elegiac couplet, which may have served as an epitaph, is attributed to Archilochus (fragment 325): "O vast earth, you contain Aristophon and

Megatimos / under your folds, the two tall columns of Naxos sustained."

If more substantial literary remains of Archilochus existed, more would doubtless be known about his skill as a writer of proverbs and fables. Just as Theognis addresses his *parainetic* verse to Cyrnus, so Archilochus from time to time addresses his observations to one Glaucus (fragment 15): "Glaucus, a soldier of fortune's your friend as long as he's fighting." Sometimes, ironically, it is in his proverbs that one senses Archilochus is being most truly autobiographical; one learns much about a person by the aphorisms to which that person subscribes. In fragment 201 the poet observes: "The fox knows many tricks, the hedgehog only one. / One good one." This brings to mind another fragment (126), in a different meter, that might be connected not only to the theme of poet as soldier, but also to the historical tradition about Archilochus's fatal iamboi: "One main thing I understand, / to come back with deadly evil at the man who does me wrong."

Proverbial, or at any rate a recognizable rhetorical topos, is Archilochus's endorsement of the disparate fates of mortals and gods and the often vertiginous relations between them (fragment 130):

> To the gods all things are easy. Many times from circumstance
> of disaster they set upright those who have been sprawled at length
> on the ground, but often again when men stand planted on firm feet,
> these same gods will knock them on their backs, and then the evils come,
> so that a man wanders homeless, destitute, at his wit's end.

Often a proverb serves as the moral of a beast fable, and fragment 201 may have served such a purpose. But the extant fragments show other traces as well of Archilochus's skill as a fabulist: for instance, fragment 172, quoted above, seems to have come from a poem relating the fable of the eagle and its false friendship with the fox (a version of which is included in the Aesopic corpus). Archilochus begins to tell the fable itself (fragment 174):

> This is a certain fable that people tell,
> how the Fox and the Eagle joined
> in partnership[.]

Another fragment (177) may represent the appeal of the fox to divine justice:

Ionic capital, circa 550 B.C., from Paros. The inscription reads, "Archilochus of Paros, the son of Telesicles, rests here."

> O Zeus, our father Zeus, for you control the sky,
> you oversee the works of men,
> the right acts and the wrong they do; so yours to judge
> the crimes and just punishments of beasts.

Archilochus told the fable of the fox and the monkey, as well (preserved in the Aesopic collection); the tantalizing beginning of Archilochus's version still exists (fragment 185):

> Here's a fable, o Kerykides,
> With a cudgel for a moral.
> A monkey was no longer welcome
> In the society of the animals,
> And went away, all alone.
> Whereupon the fox, his mind
> Thick with mischief and plots,
> Began hatching a little scheme[.]
> (translated by Davenport, 1980)

The use of animal imagery is also a notable aspect of Archilochus's assessment of the solar eclipse as an *adunaton* in fragment 122:

> Nothing will surprise me any more, nor be too wonderful
> for belief, now that the lord upon Olympus, father Zeus,
> dimmed the daylight and made darkness come upon us in the noon
> and the sunshine. So limp terror has descended upon mankind.
> After this, men can believe in anything. They can expect
> anything. Be not astonished any more, although you see
> beasts of the dry land exchange with dolphins, and assume their place
> in the watery pastures of the sea, and beasts who loved the hills
> find the ocean's crashing waters sweeter than the bulk of land.

Despite the ravages of time, the fragments of Archilochus's poems continue to be read and ap-

preciated. The scholar and critic Hermann Fränkel proclaims, in *Early Greek Poetry and Philosophy* (1975): "The monumental grandeur of his poetry requires no analysis. Humanity steps forward as it is, in heroic nakedness." Even if it is not quite true in the present era that the poetry of Archilochus "requires no analysis," one can nonetheless agree that, in an attentive and informed reading, the power of this poet's verse lives anew, and Archilochus takes his place among the foundational artists of the Western tradition.

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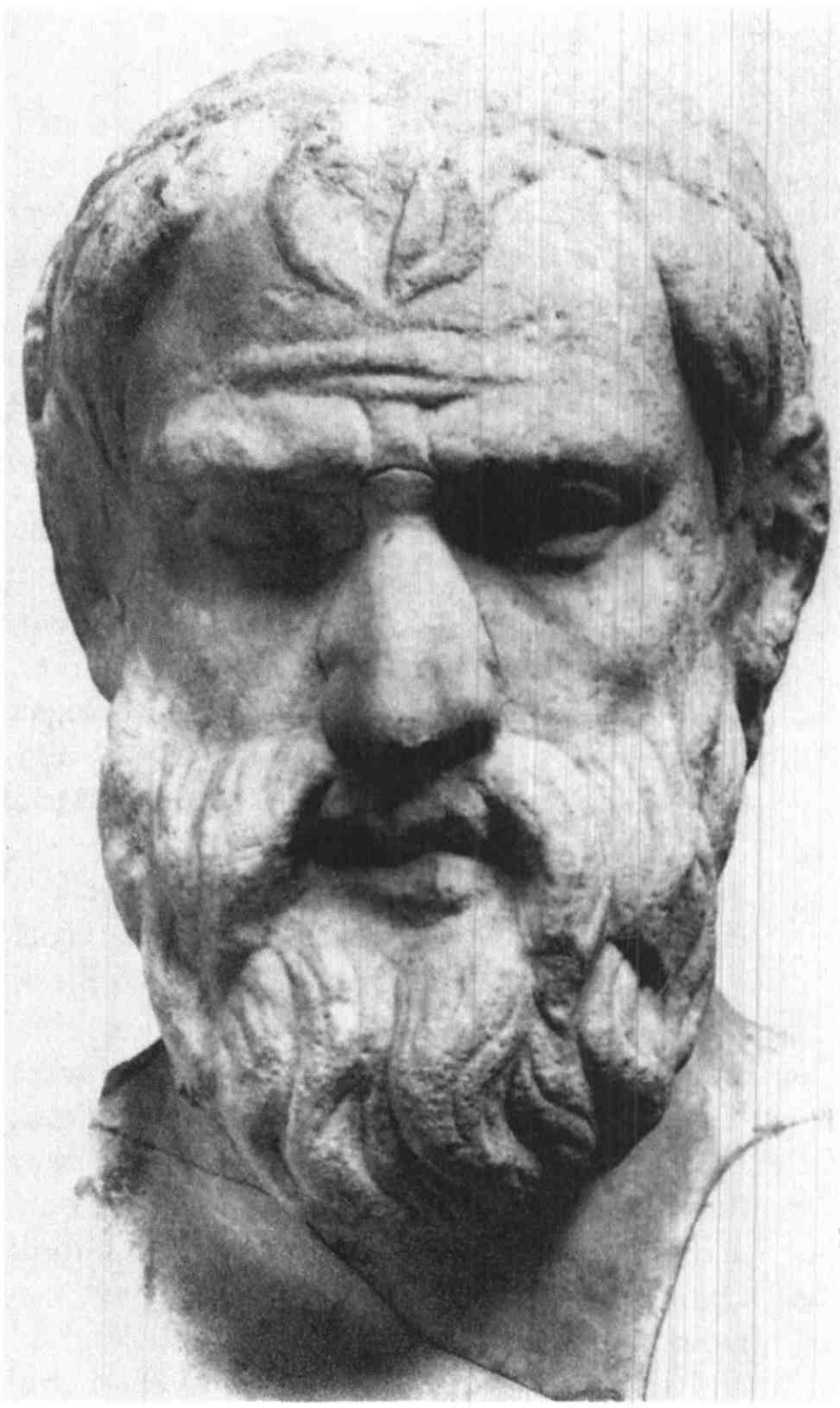
Aristophanes

(circa 446 B.C. – circa 386 B.C.)

Jeffrey Henderson
Boston University

MAJOR WORKS – EXTANT: *Acharnians* (425 B.C.), produced by Kallistratos at the Lenaia;
Knights (424 B.C.), produced by Aristophanes at the Lenaia;
Wasps (422 B.C.), produced (by Philonides?) at the Lenaia;
Peace I (421 B.C.), produced by Aristophanes at the Lenaia;
Clouds II (circa 418 B.C.);
Birds (414 B.C.), produced by Kallistratos at the Dionysia;
Lysistrata (411 B.C.), produced by Kallistratos at the Lenaia;
Thesmophoriazousai I (411 B.C.), produced at the Dionysia;
Frogs (405 B.C.), produced by Philonides at the Lenaia;
Assemblywomen (circa 392 B.C.);
Wealth II (388 B.C.).

MAJOR WORKS – NON-EXTANT: *Banqueters* (427 B.C.), produced by Kallistratos probably at the Lenaia;
Babylonians (426 B.C.), produced by Kallistratos at the Dionysia;
Farmers (circa 424 B.C.–422 B.C.);
Merchant-Ships (probably 423 B.C.), produced probably at the Lenaia;
Clouds I (423 B.C.), produced by Aristophanes at the Dionysia;
Proagon (422 B.C.), produced (by Philonides?) at the Lenaia;
Seasons (circa 421 B.C.–412 B.C.);
Anagyros (circa 419 B.C.–417 B.C.);
Polyidos (after 415 B.C.);
Amphiaraos (414 B.C.), produced by Philonides at the Lenaia;
Heroes (circa 413 B.C.–411 B.C.);
Peace II (after 412 B.C.);
Triphales (circa 410 B.C.);
Women at the Thesmophoria II (circa 410 B.C.);
Lemnian Women (after 410 B.C.);



Bust of Aristophanes found on the site of Tusculum (Akademische Kunstmuseum, Bonn)

Old Age (probably after 409 B.C.);
Phoenician Women (after 409 B.C.);
Wealth I (408 B.C.);
Gerytades (circa 408 B.C.);
Telemessians (circa 402 B.C.);
Storks (circa 398 B.C.–389 B.C.);
Kokalos (387 B.C.), produced by Aristophanes' son Araros at the Dionysia;

Aiolosikon II (after 387 B.C.), produced by Aristophanes' son Araros.
Undatable Plays: *Aiolosikon* I;
Daidalos;
Danaids;
Dionysos Shipwrecked [thought spurious in antiquity];
Dramas or Centaur;
Dramas or Niobos [thought spurious in antiquity];
Fry-Cooks;
Islands [thought spurious in antiquity];
Poesy [thought spurious in antiquity];
Women Claiming Tent-Sites.

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Aristophanes of Athens was judged in antiquity to be the foremost poet of Old Attic Comedy, a theatrical genre of which he was one of the last practitioners and of which his eleven surviving plays are the only complete examples. His plays are valued principally for the exuberance of their wit and fantasy, for the purity and elegance of their language, and for the light they shed on the domestic and political life of Athens in an important era of its history. Legend has it that when the Syracusan leader Dionysius wanted to study "the republic of the Athenians," Plato sent him the plays of Aristophanes.

Little is known about Aristophanes' life apart from his theatrical career. He was born circa 447 B.C. or 446 B.C., the son of one Philippos of the deme of Kydathenaion and the tribe Pandionis; he died probably between 386 B.C. and 380 B.C. By his twenties his hair had thinned or receded enough that his rivals could call him bald. He seems to have had landholdings on, or some other connection with, the island of Aigina, a connection that detractors and enemies exploited early in his career in an attempt to call his Athenian citizenship into question. He was twice prosecuted by a fellow demesman, the popular politician Kleon, for the political impropriety of two of his plays (*Babylonians,* 426, and *Knights,* 424), but he was not convicted. Early in the fourth century B.C. he represented his tribe in the prestigious government position of councillor. Four comic poets of the fourth century–Araros, Philetairos, Philippos, and Nikostratos–are reputed in ancient sources to be his sons.

In the dialogue *Symposion* Plato portrays Aristophanes as being at home among the social and intellectual elite of Athens, and although the historical veracity of Plato's portrayal is uncertain, Aristophanes' plays generally espouse the social, moral, and political sentiments of contemporary upper-class conservatives: nostalgia for the days of the early democracy; dismay at the decadence, corruption, and political divisiveness of the present day; hostility toward the new breed of popular leaders who emerged after the death of the aristocratic Pericles in 429; and impatience with the leadership and slow progress of the Peloponnesian War (431–404). That Aristophanes emerged politically and artistically unscathed from the war, two oligarchic revolutions (411 and 404), and two democratic restorations (411 and 403) suggests, however, that his role in politics was satiric, moralistic, and poetical rather than practical; and the perennial popularity of his plays would seem to indicate that the sentiments they express were broadly shared among the theatrical public.

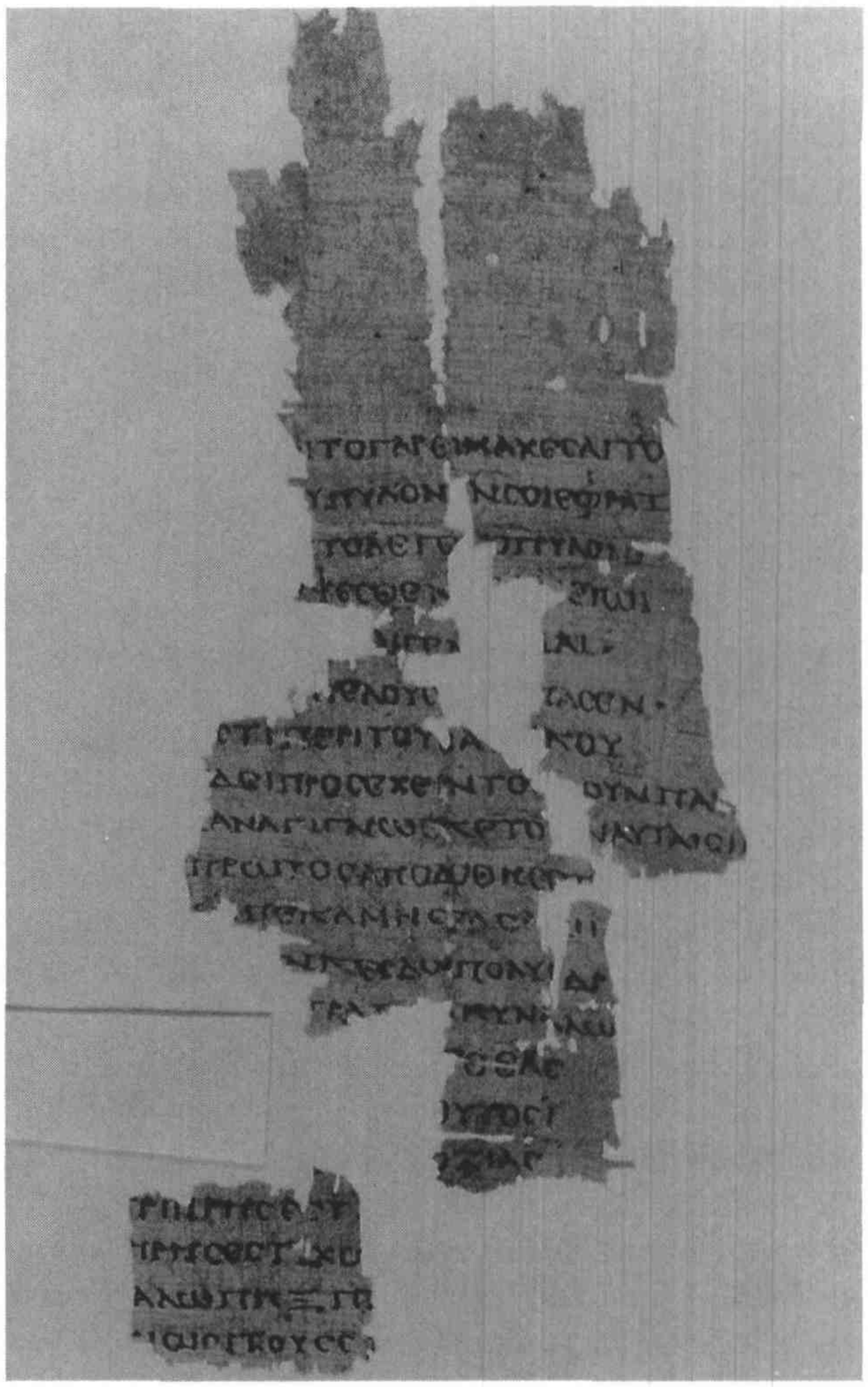
Aristophanes' first comedy was produced in 427 and his last in 386 or soon thereafter. At least once he produced a comedy in the theater at Eleusis. Forty-four comedies ascribed to him were

known to Alexandrian scholars (four of these they thought spurious); from the Alexandrian edition(s) eleven complete comedies and some one thousand brief fragments of the lost comedies survive. In competition Aristophanes won at least six first prizes and four second prizes, and only two last-place finishes are recorded. After his victory with *Frogs* in 405, the people voted to give him an honorific crown of sacred olive for the advice he had given in the parabasis and decreed that the play should have the unique honor of being performed a second time.

The success of Aristophanes' first three plays established him as a major new talent. That Aristophanes entrusted their production to friends instead of producing them himself (a practice that he followed frequently throughout his career) evoked early criticism from rival comic poets. Since Aristophanes was not the only comic poet to do this, his rivals' criticism may have been motivated by envy of the young poet's brilliant start. Nevertheless, in *Knights* and *Wasps* (422) Aristophanes reacted defensively to this criticism, explaining that, as a fledgling comic playwright, he had too much respect for the difficulties of the craft to leap into it unprepared; instead he had learned his craft in a careful apprenticeship, seeking the advice, patronage, and assistance of knowledgeable friends.

Aristophanes' first play, the lost *Banqueters,* produced in 427 B.C., examined the effects of the "new education" on his own generation. A traditional-minded landowner, who joins his friends (the chorus) for a banquet honoring Herakles, has two sons, the Virtuous Boy and the Buggered Boy. The former has had the traditional athletic-musical education, while the latter has dropped out of school to learn the new techniques for success in the assembly and law courts that were being taught by Sophists such as Thrasymachos and used by ambitious young politicians such as Alkibiades. As a result the Buggered Boy has abandoned traditional rural virtues for an urbane life of self-indulgence and troublemaking. The outcome of this allegorical contest of lives is not preserved, but, to judge from the poet's similar treatment of this theme in *Clouds* I (423), the new education was probably depicted as amoral and as a major threat to the social and political well-being of Athens.

Aristophanes' second play, the lost *Babylonians,* produced in 426, criticized the administration of the Athenian empire by Kleon and other officials, the self-interest of their counterparts in the allied cities, and the gullibility of the Athenian Assembly when listening to the reports of allied ambassadors. The



Fragment of a papyrus text (late first century B.C. or early first century A.D.) of Aristophanes' Knights *(Egypt Exploration Society, London)*

chorus, composed of tattooed slaves toiling in a mill, may have represented the beleaguered inhabitants of the allied cities, some of whom must have attended the play, since it was produced at the Dionysia festival. In retaliation Kleon brought Aristophanes before the council, charging him with malicious ridicule of the officials and the people of Athens in the presence of foreigners and evidently also using the young poet's connection with Aigina to cast doubt on the legitimacy of his citizenship. Aristophanes escaped conviction on these charges but was not to forget them. The next year, in the *Acharnians* (425), Aristophanes presented his own side of the case to the people, arguing that Kleon had lied about him and slandered him and that he, Aristophanes, deserved not censure but praise for having exposed the flatteries and chicanery of the ambassadors and the misuses of democracy in the allied cities. As for his ties with Aigina, the Spartans

want it back only to get hold of such a valuable poet. "For in his comedies this poet will say what is right; he promises to give you lots of good instruction, so that you will lead happy lives, and never to deceive you." In *Acharnians* Aristophanes also announced his intention "to cut up Kleon into soles for the Knights' shoes," a reference to his all-out attack in *Knights* the following year.

Acharnians features an ordinary farmer, Dikaiopolis (Just State), who has been evacuated from his land, billeted in the city, and pressed into service as a common soldier. Failing to interest his fellow Athenians even in discussing peace, he arranges a magical private peace for himself and his family. On the way back to the good life in the countryside, he is confronted by the chorus, a crowd of patriotic charcoal burners from the deme Acharnai, who want to stone him as a traitor. In order to gain a hearing, Dikaiopolis stops the action, borrows pathetic rags and forensic eloquence from the tragic poet Euripides, and disguises himself as the mythical hero Telephos, who had pleaded a similar cause in Euripides' *Telephos* (produced in 438). In his speech Dikaiopolis-Telephos urges reconsideration of the reasons for continuing the war, demonstrates his own patriotism, argues for the justice of his actions, and accuses the politicians and generals, especially General Lamachos, of corruption, selfishness, and untruthfulness. References in the speech to Kleon and the trouble related to *Babylonians* make it clear that Aristophanes identifies himself, qua comic poet, with Dikaiopolis-Telephos, and Dikaiopolis's championship of his own freedom of speech is clearly made on behalf of comedy itself. After establishing his own free-trade zone and collecting food for a sumptuous banquet, Dikaiopolis wins the national drinking contest, while Lamachos suffers ignominious wounds in a mid-winter battle.

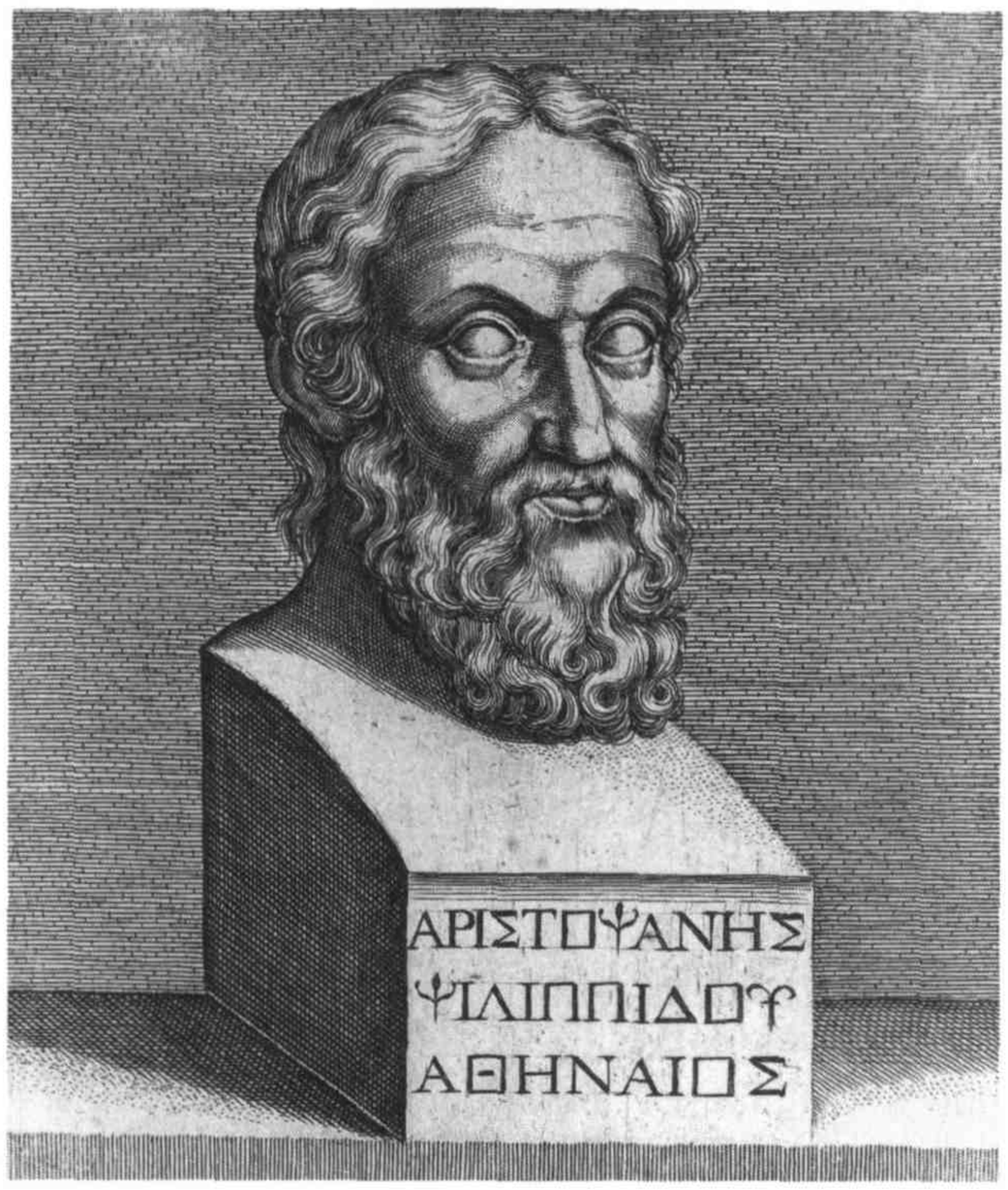
Acharnians is important not only for its political engagement but also for its programmatic features: the ordinary, insignificant, or marginal citizen as hero, the voice of reason and honesty raised against the dishonest powers that be, a savior of the polis; extensive allusion to, and usurpation of, tragedy ("paratragedy"), especially Euripidean tragedy, to enhance a play's range of effects; and a metatheatrical dimension to the action, by which the role of the poet and the theater in communicating and shaping civic discourse can be kept in view.

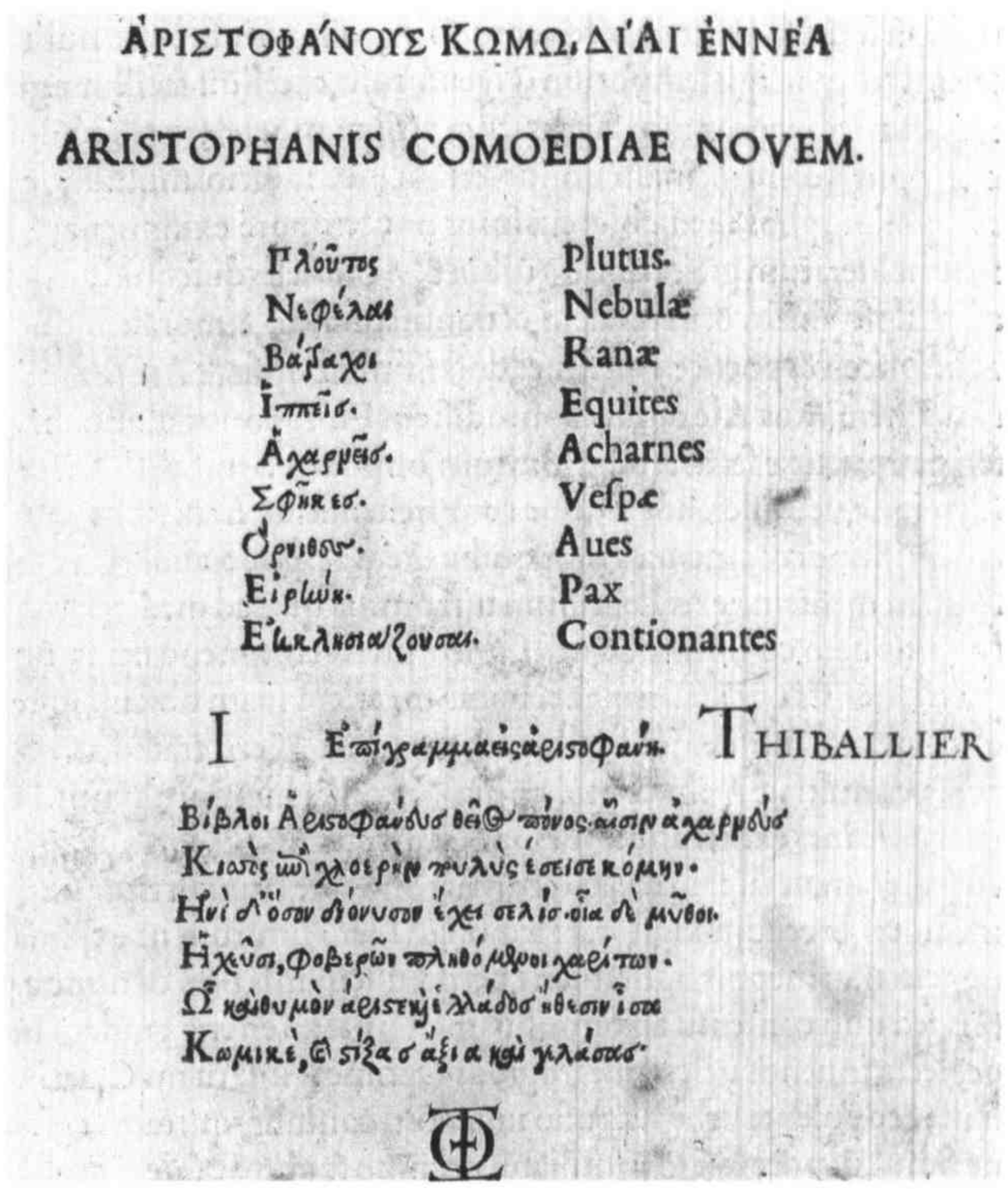
Some six months after the production of *Acharnians* Kleon became even more powerful than before by engineering a bold attack at Pylos that resulted in the capture of three hundred Spartan regulars. He was awarded extraordinary honors – a civic crown, front-row seating at all festivals (including theatrical ones), and free meals in the city hall for life; he also became a candidate for a generalship (an elected office) the following year. Nevertheless, Aristophanes kept his promise to "cut up Kleon" by producing his *Knights,* surely the most vehement attack ever mounted by an artist against a political leader. The play won first prize, and Aristophanes would subsequently refer to it more often and with more pride than any other of his plays, in particular for its originality and political courage. Yet a few weeks later Kleon won his generalship.

Knights is a transparent allegory in which the Athenian democracy is assimilated to a troubled private household. The master of the household is Demos (Sovereign People), once fully in charge but now senile. A newly bought slave, who is supposed to represent Kleon, from Paphlagonia (a wild region on the Black Sea) has gained control of the household by flattering Demos and bullying and blackmailing the other slaves (other Athenian politicians). While pretending to be Demos's loyal steward he loots the household. This allegory calls attention to Kleon's heritage (he was the first major politician not from one of the old landed families, his own family's wealth having been made in the leather business) and novel political style. Claiming to represent ordinary people, Kleon had adopted a blunt, tough manner of speaking; he also fomented class antagonism by harrying people who were well-to-do. To Aristophanes, Kleon was a vulgar, dishonest, and ignorant thug who by foul means had become a dangerous demagogue, lying to the people, terrorizing the honest politicians, and thus exploiting the democracy for his own base ends. Perhaps significantly, none of the characters (including the Paphlagon) is explicitly identified with an actual person either verbally or by portrait-mask.

Driven to the point of suicide, two loyal slaves steal the Paphlagon's oracles and discover that he is fated to be overthrown by a man even more violent and vulgar: a sausage seller. A sausage seller appears, is convinced to challenge the Paphlagon, and is supported by the chorus of Knights, an aristocratic corps of horsemen and old enemies of Kleon. There follows a long contest in which the sausage seller outdoes the Paphlagon in demagogic tactics and so replaces him as Demos's steward. At the end of the play the sausage seller turns out to be honest after all: by magically rejuvenating Demos, he restores the good old days of the democracy, when the people used their power wisely and chose only the best men as leaders.

The success of *Knights* inspired a series of similar "demagogue-comedies" by other poets against other politicians (Kleon was killed in action in 422) and gave rise to a squabble about originality, with





Frontispiece and title page for the editio princeps of Aristophanes' works (courtesy of the Lilly Library, Indiana University)

Aristophanes claiming all the credit and rivals (Eupolis in particular), claiming that Aristophanes had stolen ideas from them. Aristophanes' additional claim, that he had shown exceptional courage in attacking Kleon at the height of his power, would seem justified if *Knights* indeed precipitated Kleon's second prosecution, about which nothing is known except that Aristophanes again escaped judicial penalty.

In 423 Aristophanes returned to the theme of education in *Clouds.* The philosopher Socrates is portrayed as a Sophist who operates an educational cult in his *Phrontisterion* (Thinkery), where young men could pay to learn the latest scientific lore and rhetorical skills in order to achieve fame, power, and wealth. Drawn to the Phrontisterion is a simple old man, Strepsiades, who has incurred debts (from his son Pheidippides' passion for horses) and now seeks to evade them. Unable to learn the new techniques himself, Strepsiades forces his son to enroll. Pheidippides emerges as a skilled Sophist, easily able to evade debts by dishonest arguments. Unfortunately, he has become so arrogant and amoral that he both beats Strepsiades and convinces him that it is just to do so. But when he proposes to beat his mother as well, Strepsiades realizes his mistake and burns down the Phrontisterion.

Clouds was Aristophanes' first failure, coming in third or lower in the competition. Aristophanes subsequently called it his most sophisticated and original comedy and complained that he had overestimated the audience's sophistication. Determined to try again, Aristophanes began to revise the play for a second production but about 418 abandoned the project; the surviving text of the play is the incomplete and never-staged revision.

Clouds has been of perennial interest for its portrait of Socrates, otherwise known only from the adulatory writings of such pupils as Plato and Xenophon. Written from the perspective of a popular satirist of traditional bent, Aristophanes' portrait is often in fascinating disagreement with that of the philosophers, and it proved trenchant enough that Plato, in his *Apology,* has Socrates call it the principal source of those prejudices that led to his condemnation and execution in 399.

In 422 Aristophanes entered two plays in the Lenaia competition, *Wasps* and *Proagon* (Rehearsal), perhaps because after the failure of the previous year, he could not obtain a place in the Dionysia. *Proagon* won first prize and *Wasps* second prize. Like *Knights, Wasps* attacks Kleon, this time satirizing his populist domination of popular juries; and like *Banqueters* and *Clouds, Wasps* treats

the conflict of generations. A wealthy retired man, Philokleon (Kleon-Lover), has become afflicted with a passion for jury service, where he has become the leader of the poor men for whom jury pay provided an income. Philokleon especially enjoys convicting the wealthy men whom Kleon prosecutes. Philokleon's conservative son, Bdelykleon (Kleon-Loather), attempts to cure his father by exposing Kleon's dishonesty and by building a private courtroom at home, where Philokleon can hear domestic cases and where Kleon is caricatured as a watchdog. The cure is effective in that Philokleon renounces Kleon and the courts, but disastrous in that he then goes to the opposite extreme, behaving like the most arrogant aristocrat.

Peace I of 421 is an ebullient fantasia celebrating the prospect of the peace treaty that was soon to be made official and that followed the deaths in battle of Kleon and the Spartan Brasidas, the two main advocates for continued war. In *Peace* the farmer Trygaios, in parody of the mythical hero Bellerophon, flies to heaven and, with the help of fellow Greeks and the gods, rescues the goddess Peace from the clutches of War. In reality, however, the peace that was concluded in 421 proved only an interlude, with hostilities resuming a few years later.

In 415, on the proposal of the brilliant young aristocrat Alkibiades, the Athenians launched their most ambitious project of the war: the conquest of the island of Sicily. Soon after the armada departed, however, Alkibiades was recalled to stand trial on charges brought by his political rivals; he then defected to the enemy. One, Syrakosios, secured passage of a decree forbidding comic poets to mention, by name, Alkibiades or anyone else involved in the political scandal. This decree, which remained in effect until Alkibiades' rehabilitation in 410, seems to have had a chilling effect on the comic poets even beyond its particular provisions; the plays of this period contain much less pointedly personal satire than earlier comedies had.

Birds, produced in 414 and containing Aristophanes' most gorgeous lyric poetry, satirizes the Athenians' vast imperial ambitions. Peisetairos and his friend Euelpides (Optimist) abandon the turmoil of wartime Athens for a quiet place and eventually find themselves among the birds in the countryside. Peisetairos convinces the birds to reclaim their primeval glory by organizing a polis, to be called Nephelokokkygia (Cloudcuckooland), which he would lead and keep free of the sort of nuisances that had spoiled Athens. By dominating the middle ground between humans and gods, such a polis would control the universe. In the end Peisetairos's bold scheme succeeds, and he replaces Zeus as ruler of all creation. *Birds* has been interpreted variously as condemning and as glorifying Athenian imperialism and is indeed complex enough to sustain either response. Peisetairos unmistakably incorporates the character of Alkibiades and his generation, and Cloudcuckooland does mirror contemporary Athens. But there is no sign in the play that Aristophanes or anyone else expected anything but success for the Sicilian expedition, and, barring the sort of thoroughgoing irony that is absent elsewhere in Aristophanes' plays, Peisetairos's achievement is portrayed in a positive light. If anything, the play seems to suggest that the Athenians had erred in driving away their most visionary leader – perhaps rightly, since the Sicilian expedition proved to be a disastrous failure from which the Athenians never fully recovered.

By the winter of 411 the Athenians had managed to rebuild their navy and stave off defeat, but only at the price of drastic fiscal economies and extraordinary curbs on the powers of the democratic assembly; by summer the democracy was itself suspended in an oligarchic coup d'état. In this year Aristophanes produced two plays featuring organized protests by citizen women, one evidently reflecting real female discontent at the loss and absence of their men in the long, now seemingly endless war, and the other questioning the unfavorable portrayal of women in Euripides' tragedies.

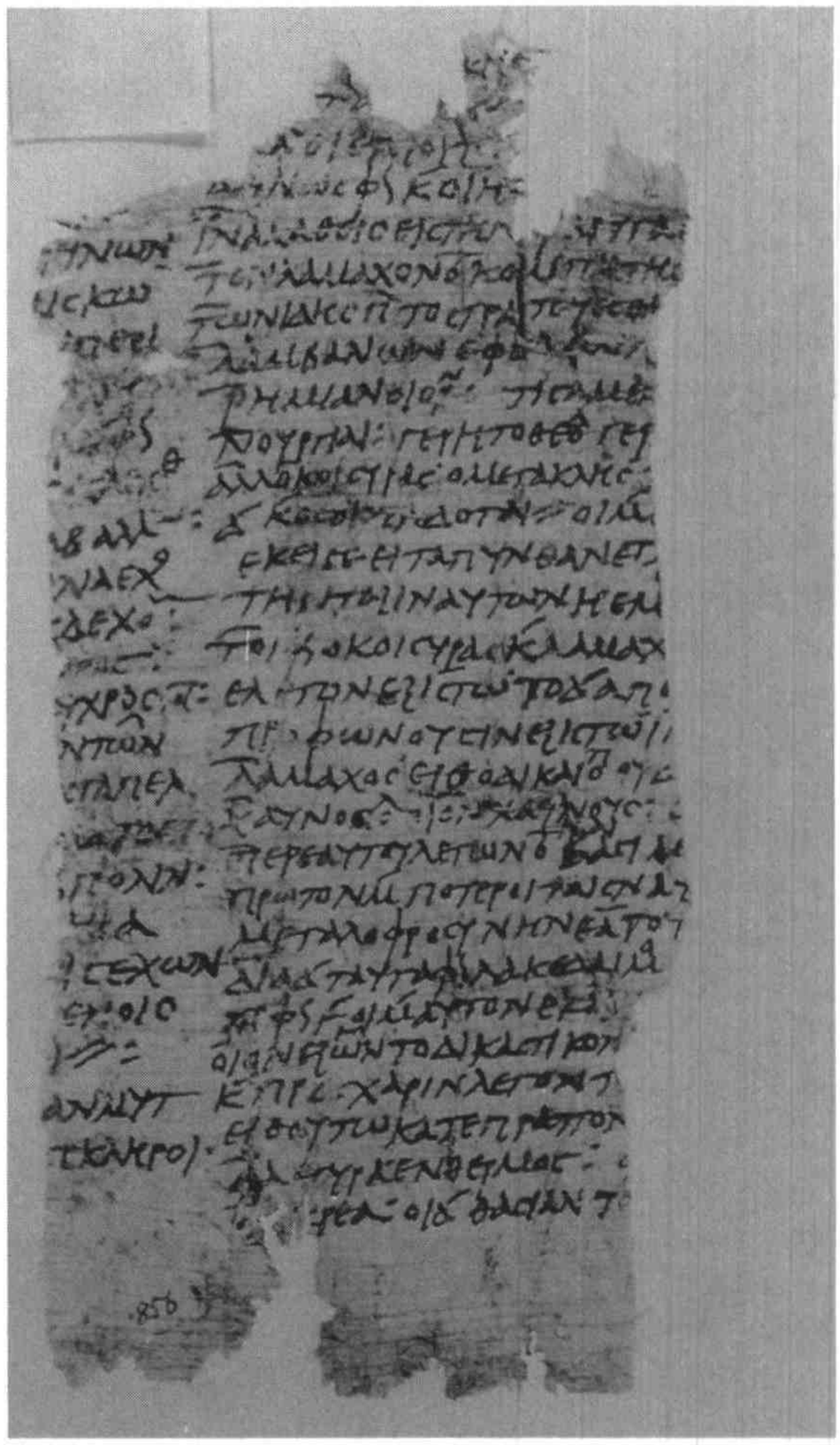
Lysistrata (411), produced at the Lenaia, introduced the first comic heroine, for whom the play is named. Lysistrata is an Athenian woman who succeeds in forcing a negotiated peace by persuading the young wives of the combatant states to abandon their domestic and sexual duties until their warrior husbands stop fighting; meanwhile, the older Athenian women occupy the Akropolis to prevent the warmongering politicians from withdrawing money from its treasuries. By using women, who had no part in political or military life, as his plotters and by eschewing the usual finger-pointing, Aristophanes could attack the war in a nonpartisan way and avoid arousing dangerous passions. *Lysistrata,* with its combination of ribald gaiety and earnest idealism, has in the modern era been Aristophanes' most often produced play.

Thesmophoriazousai I (Women at the Thesmophoria, 411) is almost entirely apolitical, dealing instead with the connections between the sexual genders and the dramatic genres. At the Thesmosphoria, their annual festival for Demeter, the matrons of Athens pass a death sentence on Euripides for having slandered them in his plays, or, more accu-

rately, for having revealed to husbands the secret misdeeds of their wives. Euripides persuades his kinsman (never named) to dress like a woman and attend the festival in order to plead his cause. But the kinsman is exposed and bound for crucifixion. Euripides tries unsuccessfully to rescue him by using several scenes from his recent plays and ends up having to promise the women that he will henceforth keep their secrets. While once again according Euripides the compliment of extensive parody, as he did in *Acharnians,* Aristophanes suggests that Euripides had compromised the integrity of tragedy by making his portrayals too realistic and his plots too sensational, thus trespassing on the territory of comedy even as his kinsman trespasses on the women's secret festival.

In 405 *Frogs,* which was voted the unique honor of a second production and produced a civic crown for Aristophanes, examined once again the connection between tragedy and reality. Dionysos, patron god of theater, descends to the underworld to rescue Euripides, who had died the previous year, only to find a contest under way for the throne of tragedy between Euripides and its incumbent, Aischylos, who had died some fifty years earlier. Euripides represents the modern age and is championed by the masses, while Aischylos represents the elite and the glory days of the past. At issue is not only a tragedian's artistic quality but also his ability to define for Athenian citizens, and evoke in them, moral, political, and martial strength and virtue. After a hard-fought contest, Aischylos is judged the winner and taken back to Athens, there to restore the civic vigor that had made Athens so successful in his own day. The surviving text of *Frogs* contains a few revisions made for its second production; these gratuitously attack the popular politician Kleophon, suggesting that their insertion may have been a concession made to conservatives in order to secure the crown and second production.

Aristophanes' two postwar plays, *Ekklesiazousai* (Assemblywomen) of about 392 and *Wealth* II of 388, while still recognizably Old Comedies, show striking departures from the fifth-century norm. These comedies feature the virtual disappearance of the chorus; less fantasy and lyricism and more naturalism in character, language, and plot; less political topicality; and a more generalized approach to current affairs. Ancient critics relate that in his last two plays, *Aiolosikon* II (after 387) and *Kokalos* (387), Aristophanes went even further, anticipating the direction that comedy would take in its Middle and New periods. It is striking that the aging poet's last two



Fragment of a third-century A.D. papyrus commentary on Aristophanes' Acharnians *(Brussells Mus. Roy. Inv. E. 5972)*

works could be produced by his son to give him a good head start in his own career.

Ekklesiazousai satirizes the idea of communism, which was widely discussed at the time (most notably in Plato's *Republic*) as a result of the Athenians' disillusionment and impoverishment after the war. Under the leadership of the heroine Praxagora (Woman Effective in Public), the women of Athens disguise themselves as men, vote themselves into power, and proceed to abolish private property, thus eliminating such social ills as sex and age discrimination, inequality of wealth, and theft, as well as politics and even the family. Critics have variously interpreted the play as a utopian fantasy, as an ironic condemnation of communism, and as an imaginative but noncommittal way of examining the roots of social discord. *Wealth* similarly examines inequality by asking what would happen if the god Wealth were cured of his blindness and only the deserving were rewarded. A much gentler and more

universal satire than *Ekklesiazousai, Wealth* was the play by Aristophanes that was most widely read in antiquity and the Middle Ages.

Throughout the world the works of Aristophanes continue to be read, performed, and enjoyed, in the original and in translation, for their unique and memorable poetry, style, and fantasy. They also remain highly useful to historians of classical Athens for their power to illuminate the political vitality and intellectual richness of that extraordinary era.

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Aristotle

(384 B.C. – 322 B.C.)

Mark A. Stone
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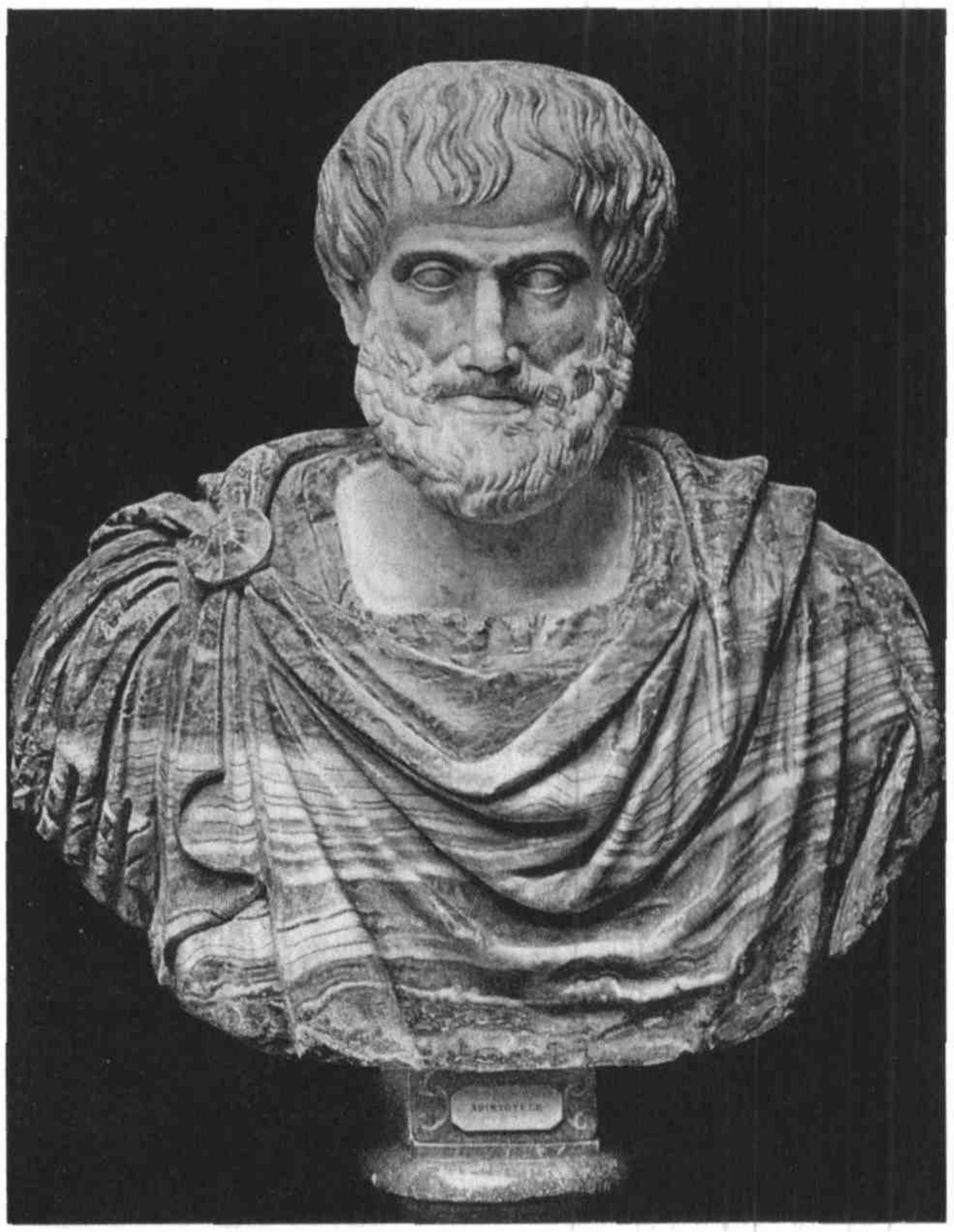
MAJOR WORKS – before 335 B.C.:
Topics;
On Sophistical Refutations;
Physics;
On the Heavens;
On Generation and Corruption;
Meteorology;
History of Animals;
Parts of Animals;
Progression of Animals;
Great Morals;
Eudemean Ethics.

MAJOR WORKS – after 335 B.C.:
Categories;
On Interpretation;
Prior Analytics;
Posterior Analytics;
On the Soul;
Sense and Sensibles;
On Memory;
On Sleep;
On Dreams;
On Divination in Sleep;
On Length and Shortness of Life;
On Youth, Old Age, Life and Death, and Respiration;
Movement of Animals;
Generation of Animals;
Metaphysics;
Nicomachean Ethics;
Politics;
Economics;
Rhetoric;
Poetics;
Constitution of Athens.



Aristotle (National Museum, Rome)

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Aristotle was born in 384 B.C. at Stagira, a small coastal town in northern Greece. His father, Nicomachus, was a physician to the Macedonian ruler Amyntas II. His mother was Phaestis, a descendant of a family from Chalcis who had moved their home to Stagira. Aristotle no doubt inherited

his interest in the study of nature from his father's family, which had traditionally practiced medicine. It is quite probable that, under the influence of his father, Aristotle himself studied medicine. He may even have practiced dissection. Both his parents died while he was young, and Proxenus, one of his relatives, became his guardian.

Two ancient biographical sources, Diogenes Laertius and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, agree about the four major chapters of Aristotle's life: his childhood in Macedonia, his education at Plato's Academy, his travels in Asia Minor and Macedonia, and his return to Athens as head of his own school. The historical accuracy of the events during these different periods is uncertain, because the particulars must be pieced together from various stories that have been passed down through different, and sometimes conflicting, traditions. The "facts" about Aristotle that survive in these traditions are not merely attempts to document historic occurrences. They are illustrations of the different portraits of Aristotle that each tradition finds worth preserving. By following the lines of agreement among the various biographical sources and heeding clues found in his works, one can form a picture of Aristotle's life that is likely to be generally accurate.

In 367 B.C., when he was nearly eighteen, Aristotle went to Athens to continue his education at Plato's Academy; he stayed at the Academy until Plato's death twenty years later. During this time Aristotle studied mathematics and dialectic, a form of argumentative reasoning. He must also have become familar with Plato's thought from the latter's written dialogues and lectures. Aristotle was both a student and a close friend of Plato's, but the strength and independence of his own mind would suggest that he was never a mere follower of his teacher. Plato was nevertheless the dominant influence in Aristotle's intellectual life. But there were other influences. The boast that Thucydides puts into the mouth of Pericles, that Athens was the school of Greece, must also have been true for Aristotle. During his stay at the Academy Aristotle was also a student of the cultural and political life of Athens. When Plato died in 347 B.C., Plato's nephew Speusippus was elected head of the Academy. At this same time Aristotle left Athens and traveled to Assos in Asia Minor.

Why Aristotle left the Academy is a matter for speculation. There are personal, philosophical, and political considerations, some or all of which may have contributed to his decision to leave. First, he was not chosen as Plato's successor at the Academy. Possibly he was overlooked because Speusippus was Plato's relative and was thus in a position to inherit property that belonged to Plato and the Academy, while Aristotle was not even an Athenian citizen. Second, Aristotle may have found the philosophical direction of the Academy increasingly disagreeable. Discussion and argument had inclined more toward the mathematical world of numbers and farther away from the natural world of living beings, a direction that continued under Speusippus's leadership. Finally, just before Plato's death, Philip of Macedonia had destroyed the city-state of Olynthus. Aristotle, a Macedonian, must have felt some of the ill will that the Athenians, if not some members of the Academy, felt toward Philip and his attempts to establish a Macedonian kingdom.

Whatever his reasons, Aristotle accepted the invitation of Hermias, the ruler of Atarneus, to live in Assos. Here Aristotle formed a circle of friends who had been students of Plato. The most notable student in the group was Xenocrates, who had also left the Academy but who was later to succeed Speusippus as its head. Aristotle's close friendship with Hermias may be attested by the fact that upon Hermias's death Aristotle erected a monument in his honor at Delphi and published a poem praising him. Aristotle also married Pythias, Hermias's adopted daughter or niece, and had a daughter by her. Aristotle stayed in Assos for about three years, then moved to the nearby island of Lesbos, the home of his friend Theophrastus. Many of the place names mentioned in his biological works correspond to this area and thus make it probable that he carried on some of his biological studies during this period.

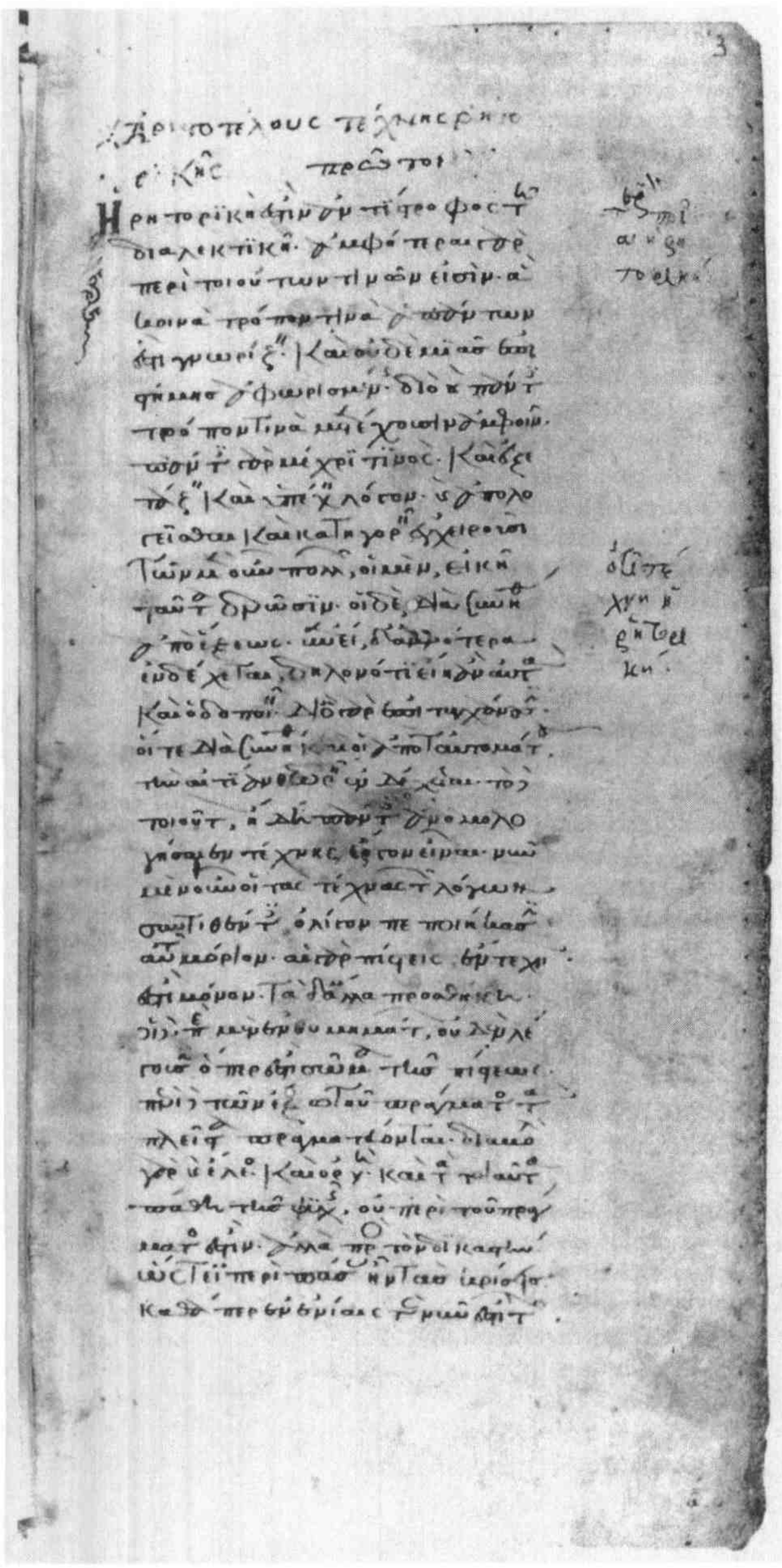
A year later, in 343 B.C., Aristotle returned to Macedonia, accepting an invitation from Philip to tutor his son Alexander, then thirteen years old. One can imagine that Aristotle was delighted at this opportunity to educate a future ruler. When Alexander was fifteen, however, he became regent in the absence of his father. It is thus doubtful that Aristotle exerted a lasting influence upon the young Alexander in political matters, since Alexander was his pupil for only about two years. Moreover, Alexander's policy of expanding his Greek empire to include barbarians directly clashed with Aristotle's views of the city-state as the best form of political community. But Aristotle enjoyed many advantages as an influential person at court. Besides having the leisure to think and write, Aristotle probably taught other students after Alexander became regent. During this period he also seems to have persuaded Philip to rebuild his hometown of Stagira, which had been destroyed about the same time as Olynthus.

When Philip was murdered in 336 B.C., Alexander acceded to the kingship of Macedonia.

Portion of a first-century-A.D. papyrus text of Aristotle's Constitution of Athens *(British Museum, Pap. 131)*

Shortly thereafter Aristotle returned to Athens and founded his own school at the Lyceum, a sacred grove to the north of Athens that had formerly been a favorite place of Socrates. Here he was able to teach and write uninterrupted for about thirteen years. It is likely that Aristotle, in addition to using the public walks at the Lyceum for instruction, rented some buildings where he kept a library and where his students could take meals together. Aristotle typically would discuss the more difficult and abstract parts of his philosophy with his students during walks in the morning and would lecture on popular subjects to the public in the afternoon. Because of this habit of teaching while strolling on the public walks, Aristotle's school was later called the Peripatetic school, an expression derived from the Greek word for the act of walking about, *peripatos*.

When Alexander the Great died in 323 B.C., the stable relations that had existed between Athens and Macedonia disintegrated, and the resentment the Athenians had felt at being brought into the Macedonian kingdom surfaced. Aristotle, who enjoyed the influential friendship of Antipater the regent, had until this time been insulated from the anti-Macedonian sentiments in Athens. At Alexander's death, however, these angry sentiments dominated the political mood. When a group of citizens finally tried to take him to court on a charge of impiety, Aristotle, fearing he would suffer the same fate as Socrates, fled to Chalcis to prevent the Athenians from, in the words of the



Page from the second oldest Greek manuscript (circa twelfth–thirteen century A.D.) of Aristotle's Rhetoric *(Cambrigiensis Ff.5.8, folio 3r, Cambridge University Library)*

Greek commentator Ammonius, "sinning twice againstphilosophy." He died at Chalcis a year later, in 322 B.C., at the age of sixty-two.

Aristotle began writing some of his works while still at Plato's Academy. These were predominantly literary works, most of them dialogues intended for popular publication. Aristotle himself characterizes them as exoteric, in contrast to the works he calls acroatic, that is, those written specifically for his students. Unfortunately, only a few fragments of these popular works survive. The fragments that remain indicate that he, like many other students, began to exercise his own abilities by first imitating his teacher. Many of these works are dialogues whose form and content reflect Plato's influence. The *Eudemus,* for example, is a dialogue on the nature of the soul, death, and immortality, closely modeled after Plato's dialogue, *Phaedo.* In this work Aristotle holds the Platonic view that the soul is separate from the body, in marked contrast to his mature view that they are inseparable. What is known of another work, the *Protrepticus,* indicates that it was notable for both its Platonism and its influence on later authors. This work exhorts its readers to lead a philosophic life of contemplation and resist the distractions of the body and material goods. The asceticism this work advocates differs from Aristotle's later view that material goods are in some measure necessary and thus part of the good life. The fragments from yet another early work, *On Philosophy,* show that the seeds of Aristotle's discontent with Plato's philosophy had already been sown. Aristotle not only expresses his own belief in the eternal as opposed to the created existence of the material world, but he also criticizes the Platonic notion of transcendent Forms, or Ideas, especially the ideas for numbers. Such criticisms were developed in Aristotle's mature works.

Nearly all Aristotle's extant works are treatises that he wrote not for publication but for his circle of followers and students. These treatises are scientific in the sense that they pertain to some clearly defined body of knowledge. Thus, they include works on ethics and politics as well as physics and biology. Unlike his early literary works, in reference to which Cicero praised Aristotle's "golden stream of oration" (*Academica,* book 2), the treatises employ an economical style, spare in literary ornamentation and brief in expression, occasionally to the point of obscurity. Moreover, discussions of the various problems are frequently repetitive and thorough to the point of being tedious. Sometimes while a point is being developed, the argument will abruptly begin anew with little or no acknowledgment of what has just been said. Some works even have different and conflicting treatments of the same subject. The *Nicomachean Ethics,* for example, has two different discussions of pleasure. According to one, pleasure is itself a sort of activity; later, however, Aristotle argues that pleasure is something that accompanies activities. Such discontinuities have occasioned speculation that, although the ideas in the works are predominantly Aristotelian, the works themselves were not written by Aristotle. They are perhaps compilations of stu-

dent notes on his lectures that have been edited, sometimes carefully, sometimes not. According to one such view, the works should be regarded as the product of the school at the Lyceum; Aristotle probably wrote some of them, but not all.

Although one cannot be sure that the foregoing views are false, they are not necessary to explain the discontinuities that exist in the corpus of Aristotelian works. Moreover, the continuities of style and thought throughout his corpus argue more stongly in favor of authorship by a single hand. With the exception of a few works, for which there is strong evidence for spurious authorship, one may safely attribute nearly all the extant works to Aristotle. The discontinuities one finds may be explained by the way in which the works were probably composed and by the manner in which they assumed, in the course of transmission, their present form.

Because none of the surviving works was written for publication, Aristotle was never forced to put them into final form. Some of the works, such as the *Physics,* he began before returning to the Lyceum, which means he may have worked on them intermittently for more than twenty years. As his views changed and matured, he no doubt rewrote portions of various works, made changes to others, and simply added whole sections to others. Some evidence suggests that Aristotle composed discourses on specific topics that were later combined into the single books of the works that still exist. Aristotle's writings thus had no final form until after he died. At this time they were given to Aristotle's successor at the Lyceum, Theophrastus. According to one tradition, these works, after Theophrastus died, remained in a basement for more than a hundred years. Later the works were taken to Rome and given to Andronicus of Rhodes, who edited and published them in the second half of the first century B.C. His edition established the arrangement and content of the extant books of Aristotle. It is interesting to note that the writings Aristotle designates "First Philosophy" are in this collection grouped together and called *Metaphysics* because they come after (*meta*) the work on physics.

The internal coherence of Aristotle's works derives from the hierarchy of the sciences that he himself establishes. A science in Aristotle's sense is any body of knowledge for which essential organizing principles may be discovered. Dramatic tragedy, rhetoric, nature, human happiness, even being itself, are all sciences according to this definition. While there are important differences between these sciences, Aristotle's understanding permits no radical division between the science of nature and the science of literature. Both are integral parts of a hierarchy of knowledge.

The three major classifications in Aristotle's hierarchy are the theoretical sciences, the practical sciences, and the productive sciences. The theoretical branch includes mathematics, theology, metaphysics, and natural science. Ethics and politics form the practical branch. The study of literature, rhetoric, and other arts falls within the category of the productive sciences. Though the immediate result of all of these studies is knowledge, the characteristic activities in each branch of learning differ from one another. The end or object for the student of the theoretical sciences is purely and simply to know. In addition to knowing, the practical sciences of ethics and politics aim at good conduct and good statesmanship. The characteristic activity of the productive sciences is that of making useful and beautiful works of art.

In this hierarchy of knowledge, sciences that are more knowable are superior to those that are less knowable. A science such as mathematics, which studies the principles of numbers and geometric figures, is superior to a science of ethics, which studies the principles of good conduct, because the principles that relate to numbers are more knowable. That is, they are more universal and certain than the principles of ethics. Aristotle distinguishes between that which is more knowable in itself, that is, independently and intrinsically, and that which is more knowable to the one learning. Aristotle argues that the everyday sights and sounds present to the senses are more knowable to the learner, but less knowable in themselves, because they do not upon investigation yield principles that demonstrate the same universality and necessity that the objects of arithmetic and geometry do. Mathematics, which is more knowable in itself, is actually less knowable to the student. But the appropriate intellectual development and education will eventually acquaint one with the initially unfamiliar world of mathematics. Consequently, the sciences that are more knowable in themselves occupy the top rungs of the hierarchy, and those that are more knowable to the student occupy the lower.

The only works that do not fit neatly within this hierarchical scheme are Aristotle's logical works. This omission is significant because Aristotle is thought of as the creator of logic. Although the rhetoricians, the Sophists, and Plato recognized and used various patterns of reasoning and argumentation, Aristotle was the first person not only to give a systematic account of such patterns, but also to evaluate which patterns of argument are logically valid and which are not. For Aristotle, however, such a study is not itself a science. There is not really a separate subject to be examined that is related to logic as animals are related to biology, or good conduct to ethics. Logic is in-

stead a sort of tool that may be used to evaluate the reasoning in any of the sciences. In fact, later philosophers referred to Aristotle's logical works as the *Organon,* or tool.

Aristotle used the word *analytics* to describe the study that was later called logic. The central works in logic are accordingly called the *Prior Analytics* and the *Posterior Analytics.* The first work discusses the valid forms of syllogistic reasoning. Aristotle's aim in it is to investigate the different combinations of propositions that form valid syllogisms. In the *Posterior Analytics* Aristotle examines the patterns of reasoning that are used to establish scientific truths. He consequently introduces the notions of definitions and axioms as the basis of such knowledge. His other significant logical works are the *Categories* and *On Interpretation.* These latter works provide the necessary preparation for a systematic and thorough study of reasoning by discussing its basic elements, terms, and propositions.

Although the *Categories* is separate from the main logical works, its method and content make it a suitable companion volume. In it Aristotle examines the terms that can meaningfully form the propositions of logic. He begins with the most elementary observations about the differences between words and sentences. Words such as *man* and *horse* by themselves can be neither true nor false. Only when words are combined to form sentences can they become true or false. Even then not all sentences have a truth value. Prayers, for example, are not true or false. Logic and the sciences generally are interested only in those sentences that can be true or false. Aristotle calls these propositions.

From this simple beginning Aristotle develops a scheme for classifying the different ways in which terms are used in propositions. The focal point of this scheme is the category of substance (*ousia*). Substance in its primary sense is always the subject of a proposition. According to Aristotle, substance is whatever cannot be asserted of a subject or present in a subject. For example, this particular man Socrates is a substance because he cannot be predicated of anything or be present in anything. If one says that Socrates is knowledgeable, the quality of being knowledgeable cannot be a substance since it can be present in Socrates. To say that knowledge is Socrates is not a meaningful combination of terms.

The remaining nine categories that Aristotle distinguishes include terms that are predicated of substance. They are things that can be asserted about, or that can be present in, a subject but which cannot themselves be the subject of predication. Aristotle does not derive the distinctions among the categories exclusively from language usage. Words in the different categories refer to different kinds of things. Quality refers to those characteristics, such as color, that are continuous and cannot be divided. When one asks of a substance what kind of thing it is, the answer will be drawn from the category of quality. Quantity refers to characteristics, such as measures, that are discrete and countable. The questions how much? or how big? elicit a response from the category of quantity.

Aristotle's systematic and deliberate division of things into separate categories illustrates one of the ways in which he attempts to correct the confusions about the nature of being into which previous thinkers had fallen. The Pythagoreans, for example, believed that all things had a numerical nature. Plato thought that true being resides in transcendent ideas of moral qualities, such as goodness, justice, and piety. Aristotle, however, asserts that substance exemplifies the fundamental nature of being. The being of this particular man is what he typically refers to as substance. Goodness and justice are then subordinate types of being because they can exist only as qualities of some particular person. Number likewise can exist only as a subordinate category of being, quantity.

Since Aristotle's primary purpose in the *Categories,* however, is not to pursue these metaphysical issues, he does not develop this account of substance here. Instead, he discusses the senses in which a substance can be the subject of a proposition. The first sense of substance Aristotle calls primary substance. This is substance that is some particular being, this man or this horse. Substance may also be understood in a secondary sense, which is the species or genus into which primary substances are included. A man, such as Socrates, is a substance in the primary sense. The species man, in which Socrates is included, is substance in a secondary sense. Whereas Socrates is an individual, the species man is common to Socrates and all other men. The species man does not fall into the category of quality because it is the singular characteristic that defines what kind of being Socrates is. Moreover, the term *man* is unlike terms in other categories because it can be the subject of predication. The assertion "Man is a rational animal" is a meaningful combination of terms.

Though discussions in the logical works frequently overlap, Aristotle devotes his attention to the proposition in *On Interpretation.* His examination of the different sorts of propositions is systematic and nearly exhaustive. Aristotle distinguishes propositions in terms of their quantity, quality, and mo-

dality. By quantity he means a proposition may be either universal, particular, or singular. The expression "man is knowledgeable" would yield the universal proposition "Every man is knowledgeable," the particular proposition "Some men are knowledgeable," or the singular proposition "Socrates is knowledgeable." The quality of a proposition is either affirmative or negative. All of the preceding examples are affirmative, but each has a corresponding negative proposition of the same quality. "No men are knowledgeable," for example, is a universal negative proposition. The modality of a proposition refers to whether it is asserted as being either necessary or possible.

Aristotle not only classifies these different sorts of propositions, he also discusses some of the logical relations among them. One important logical distinction he introduces is that between contrary and contradictory propositions. If one proposition is true and the other must be false, or vice versa, the two propositions are contradictory. Contrary propositions, on the other hand, are those that may both be false at the same time but that cannot both be true. "Every man is knowledgeable" and "No man is knowledgeable" are contraries, for if one is true the other must be false, but both may be false. "Every man is knowledgeable" and "Some men are not knowledgeable" are contradictory propositions, because if one is true the other is false and if one is false the other is true.

The *Prior Analytics* shows how different sorts of propositions can be combined into valid syllogistic arguments. This work is remarkable both for its originality and for its influence. Although one may find examples of syllogistic-type arguments in earlier writers, the systematic and formal way in which Aristotle handles this subject is wholly original. His account of the valid modes of syllogisms remained intact in its essentials throughout medieval and modern philosophy and well into the nineteenth century. Until this time the study of logic was largely the study and elaboration of Aristotelian logic.

The topic of analysis in the *Prior Analytics* is the syllogistic argument, whose elements consist of a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion. Aristotle examines what propositions combine to make valid syllogisms, that is, arguments in which the conclusion follows logically from the truth of the premises. In his investigations he pays attention strictly to the form that a proposition has. The following propositions illustrate a valid syllogism:

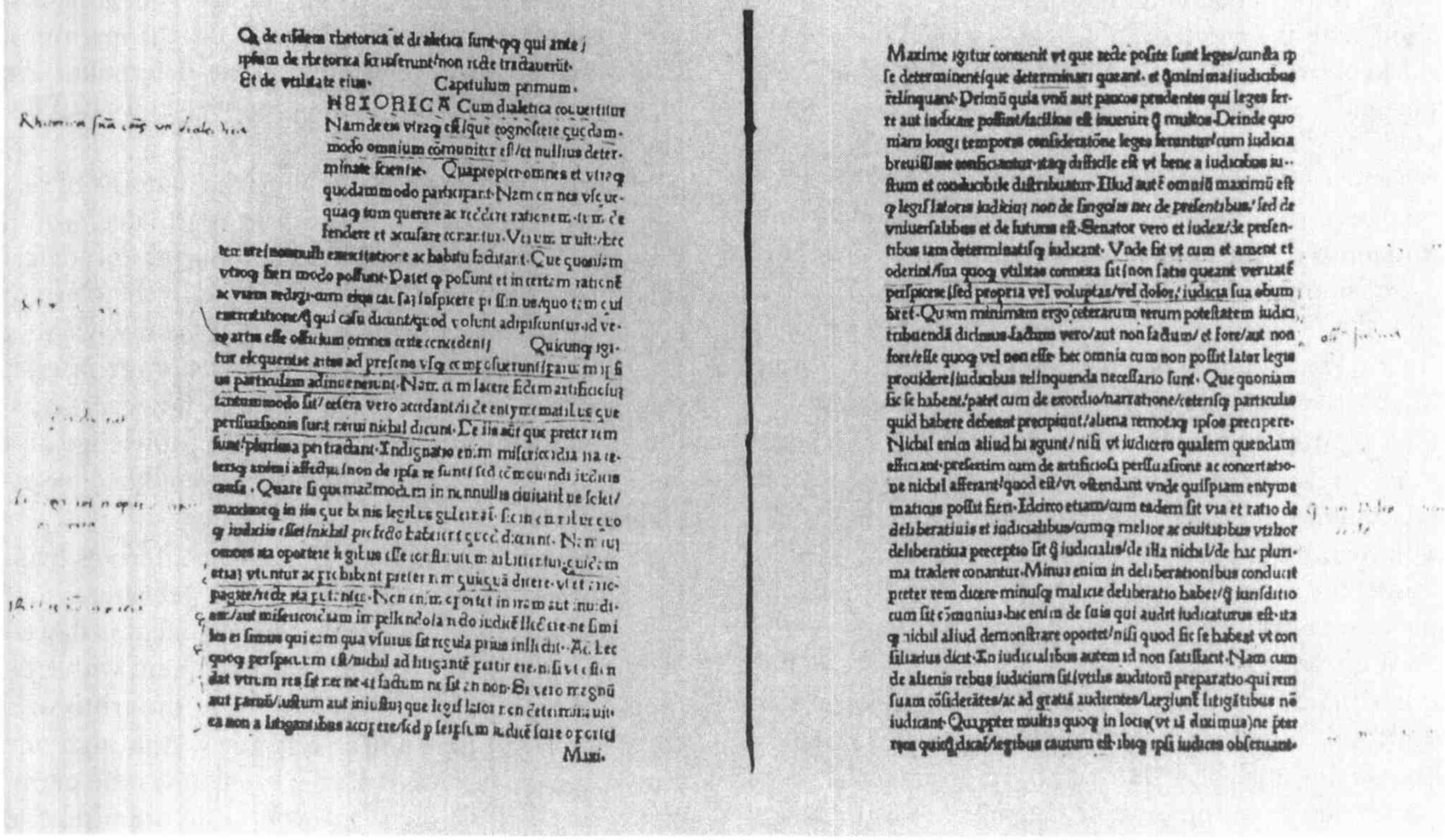
> Every A is B. Every B is C. Therefore, every A is C.

In this syllogism *A* is the major term, *B* is the middle term, and *C* is the minor term. The use of *A, B,* and *C* in the propositions signifies that whatever subjects or predicates one inserts in the place of these letters, the conclusion will still follow from the premises. The form of the propositions alone determines the logical relation between the premises and the conclusion.

Aristotle's analysis of syllogistic patterns of reasoning is concerned almost solely with what would now be called logical inference. The study of logical inference does not directly inquire into the truth of any given premise or conclusion; it asks only whether a conclusion must follow from some set of premises, if they are true. In the *Posterior Analytics,* however, Aristotle turns his attention to scientific knowledge and demonstration and thus to the question of how one establishes the truth of propositions.

The basic argument of this work derives from the nature of argumentation. Aristotle recognizes that demonstration is impossible if the argument is flawed or the premises are false. A valid argument with true premises is the key to demonstrating the truth of a conclusion. But here a problem arises. Although one knows the conclusion is true if one knows the premises are true, how does one know the premises are true? If the answer is through demonstration by means of a syllogistic argument, then the problem resurfaces with respect to the premises of the new argument. Aristotle thus argues that in order for any body of knowledge to be established by demonstration, there must be propositions that are known to be true but that are not themselves the result of demonstrations.

For Aristotle three sorts of propositions can form the starting points of demonstrations: axioms, definitions, and hypotheses. These propositions can be known immediately without demonstration; moreover, they will contain in them the cause or explanation of the conclusions that they demonstrate. Axioms are statements that express truths that are not parts of any particular science but that apply to all knowledge. For example, the statement that all propositions are either true or false would be an axiom. Definitions, however, are related to the particular sciences. They are propositions in which the predicate expresses the essential nature of the subject. In mathematics the statement that all triangles have angles equal to two right angles is a definition. This definition is a cause of one's knowledge of the other properties of triangles, because these properties can be explained by the fact that the triangle has angles equal to two right angles. Hypotheses are propositions that assert the existence of the entities that are the subjects of propositions.



First two pages of the first printed edition (circa 1477) of Aristotle's Rhetoric

One arrives at a knowledge of these starting points of demonstration through a process that Aristotle calls induction. From repeated experience with particular instances of triangles one may grasp the universal characteristics that are true of all triangles. This movement from particular cases to the characteristics common to all such cases is essential for all knowledge, because for Aristotle knowledge is always of some universal characteristic and never of a particular thing as such.

Aristotle understands the concept of induction somewhat differently from the way scientists and philosophers since Francis Bacon have understood it. For Aristotle induction describes the process that leads up to someone's having immediate intuitive knowledge of a proposition that cannot be proved on the basis of other propositions. Modern philosophers and scientists, however, view induction as a type of logical inference in which statements about individual events are used to demonstrate the probable truth of a generalization about these events. Nevertheless, the central idea of the movement from individual cases to a universal assertion provides the link between the two different senses.

The ideal science that Aristotle describes in the *Posterior Analytics* consists of definitions of the main terms, hypotheses about the existence of these terms, and a body of propositions that may be demonstrated on the basis of the definitions and the axioms common to all the sciences. Aristotle's habitual use of mathematical examples throughout the work indicates that he has in mind a science such as geometry. Aristotle recognizes that most knowledge neither achieves the necessity and certainty of mathematics nor allows the same systematic presentation through proofs. But the methods for acquiring and demonstrating knowledge that Aristotle discusses in this work do apply to all branches of knowledge. Each science has terms that must be defined. Although such definitions cannot themselves be proved, they do serve as the starting points for reasoning and investigation. All reasoning and knowledge strive for universal generalizations that explain the behavior and nature of what is being studied.

The particular sciences themselves are distinguished by the nature of what each studies, and the order among the sciences is established by the relative permanence of their objects. This principle complements Aristotle's view of a hierarchy of human knowledge inasmuch as the more permanent something is, the more knowable it is. Theology studies God, who exists apart from the world and is unchanging. Mathematics studies unchanging objects that are abstracted from things in the world but that

do not have a separate existence. Metaphysics studies being that in itself does not change but that is bound up with matter that changes. Physics studies nature, the essential features of which are becoming and change.

Among his other works, Aristotle's *Physics* is not only a study of nature and its fundamental principles and terms; it is also a sort of research program for study in the other natural sciences. In the tradition of the Ionian philosophers Aristotle takes up the theme of the type and number of the principles underlying natural change and movement. As Aristotle understood them, the Ionian philosophers, such as Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes, were looking for the underlying substance that remained throughout the seasonal changes in nature. What is it, they asked, that is present in all living beings, that they acquire at birth and lose at death? The Ionian philosophers posited a single material principle, or *arche,* as the underlying element. Thales thought this single principle was water; Anaximenes believed it to be air; Heracleitus fire. Of these thinkers Heracleitus is the most interesting because in addition to discussing a material element as the fundamental principle of nature, he maintained that change was the predominant force in the world. His enigmatic statement that into the same river different waters flow seems to indicate that permanence in nature is possible only by a dynamic harmony produced by change. Heracleitus's view stands in stark opposition to Parmenides' denial that change exists. Parmenides asserts that being is and nonbeing is not. In nature there is no real generation or destruction or movement; all such change is illusion.

In the opening of the *Physics* Aristotle simply asserts in opposition to Parmenides that one cannot study nature if one denies all change. Aristotle, like Plato, recognizes with Heracleitus the omnipresence of change in the natural world. But Aristotle does agree with both Parmenides and Plato that what is permanent and unchanging is somehow more real than what changes. Plato separates what is permanent from the changing world of nature. In his work the *Timeaeus,* in which he discusses the creation of the world, Plato argues that there is a realm of unchanging ideal forms that exist apart from the natural world. Plato's god, the Demiurge, uses these forms as a sort of blueprint for creating the world. Aristotle in the *Physics* unites the permanent world of being with the changing world of nature. He asserts as a hypothesis that change exists in nature and argues that, in order for there to be change, there must be permanent principles present in what is changing.

Aristotle's definition of nature shows clearly the inseparability of nature and change or movement. Some things, he says, exist by nature, and some exist by other causes. Plants, animals, and the simple elements, such as earth, air, fire, and water, exist by nature. Artifacts, such as buildings, hats, coats, and beds, are produced by men from things that exist by nature. The things that exist by nature differ from artifacts by having within themselves a source of movement and change. They are born; they grow; they move about from place to place. Artifacts, by contrast, are moved; they are created and shaped and built. What is common and essential to these things insofar as they all exist by nature? Aristotle answers that they are all sources of change and they can all undergo changes. He thus defines nature as the source or cause of movement or being moved.

Aristotle's account of nature thus begins with an analysis of change and the elements necessary for change to occur. Conversely, the principles of change thus prove to be the fundamental principles of nature. Aristotle first maintains that none of the four elements – air, water, earth, or fire – is the fundamental principle of nature. He posits a material substratum that underlies even these simple elements. This prime matter, which has no definite qualities as such, is the principle that underlies and persists through all change.

The other permanent source of change is form. Form is that into which something changes. Form may be any identifiable feature that something comes to possess. Something, for example, may turn white, or someone may become musical. Aristotle ultimately identifies form, in its primary sense, with substance. Thus, the most significant sort of form is the form of a particular natural being – this man, this horse, this tree, or this plant. Any change in nature can be explained as a change of some material substratum from lacking some form at one time to having it. Aristotle's initial analysis of change therefore involves three principles: the material substratum, a privation or lack of form, and the form into which something changes. This analysis of change fits well within the framework Aristotle sets up for scientific investigation, a framework based upon the four types of causes, or explanations, that the student of science seeks. Aristotle's word for cause, *aitia,* may mean literally a cause; but aitia may also be an explanation, a reason, or what is responsible for some change occurring.

There are four such causes. Medieval philosophers called these the material, the formal, the efficient, and the final causes. Aristotle's own account of them is more descriptive of their nature. The first cause, Aristotle says, is that out of which

Aristotle with scribe's tools; relief from Chartres Cathedral

a thing comes to be and that persists in the thing. In an animal this is the flesh and bones, in a chair the wood. The second cause is the form, or essence. The form in some sense is the shape of a thing, but more properly it is the definition of what something is. With a bronze sphere the spherical shape does indeed define what the object is. With a man, however, the shape does not coincide with the definition. Man is defined as a rational animal, and this definition most properly captures the form, or essence. The third cause is the primary source of change. This sense of cause, the efficient cause, is most like the meaning usually understood in ordinary discourse. It explains how something came to be the way it is. The builder is the efficient cause of a house; the father, Aristotle says, is the efficient cause of a child. As these examples suggest, this cause does not describe merely what causes some event to happen. Rather it explains what is responsible for some matter acquiring form. The fourth cause is that for the sake of which something happens or exists. One can explain something in terms of its purpose. The form, structure, and features of a house can all be largely explained in terms of the

purpose a house is meant to serve. Aristotle thinks the same is true of animals. Their purpose is their healthy functioning as living beings in their natural environment.

After his account of the causes Aristotle spends much of the rest of the *Physics* discussing motion. Throughout the discussion motion must be understood in a broad sense that includes all kinds of changes. Both generation and growth are motions; there are also changes of quality, changes of quantity, and changes of place. All these changes satisfy his definition of motion as the fulfillment or actualization of what exists potentially. This definition uses another important Aristotelian distinction, that between potentiality and actuality. A potentiality or potency is a capacity to become something or, in Aristotle's terms, to acquire some form. The corresponding actuality is the fulfilled capacity, or the possession of that same form. A pile of bricks, for example, is potentially a house, and once the bricks are built into the house one can say they are now actually what they were before only potentially: a house. Movement according to Aristotle's definition is simply the process by which this potentiality is actualized, a process by which something acquires form. In his account of other sorts of change, he follows this explanation but applies it to the other categories in which it is appropriate: quality, quantity, and place.

Aristotle's study of nature attempts to account for the way in which one perceives the world. His presentation of the causes is not simply a scheme suitable for analyzing change; it is a framework for scientific investigation in any of the sciences, including physics, astronomy, and biology. The causes guide the student by providing the appropriate questions to ask of the subject: What is it? What is it made of? What produced it? What is its purpose? One gathers evidence and proposes principles within this framework.

The limitations of this understanding of science began to be felt as scientists started believing that the reality of the natural world clashed with the way in which it was generally perceived. The field where this break came most dramatically was astronomy. In his work *On the Heavens,* Aristotle presents an account of the movements of the sun, moon, and stars that accords with how humans perceive them. These bodies move in circular patterns across the sky, which led Aristotle to believe that they circle around the earth. This view of the matter in its essentials was believed up until the time of Nicolaus Copernicus (1473–1543). With the advent of more and more exact devices for tracking heavenly movements, it became difficult to explain this movement as movement around the earth. Copernicus, however, showed that the recorded movements could be easily explained if one adopted the hypothesis that the earth moved around the sun. The eventual acceptance of this view not only discredited the geocentric view of the universe, it also discredited the Aristotelian scientific framework of which it was a part. When scientists turned their gaze toward what could be measured exactly and quantified mathematically, this meant turning their back upon what could be explained by the form and purpose of a thing.

The study of metaphysics, or "First Philosophy," as Aristotle calls it, falls within the theoretical sciences. The object of this science is being. Since being is more permanent than change, the primary topic of the *Physics,* being is more knowable, and the study of being is a superior science to physics. The books of the *Metaphysics* seem to have been written after the *Physics,* because most of them presuppose the theory of the causes that Aristotle developed in that work. In fact, one of the problems Aristotle poses for the student of First Philosophy concerns how one is to integrate the science of causes with the science of being. The *Metaphysics* is clearly a collection of separate books that have been bound together. The first book is a sketch of how previous philosophers have understood being; another book contains a series of problems that the student of First Philosophy must confront; and yet another book is a sort of philosophical lexicon of essential terms. Although various themes are developed in this work, most of the issues that are raised remain undecided. The main conflict, for example, about what metaphysics really studies is never resolved. On the one hand, the study of being seems to be the study of sensible substance, such as this man. On the other hand, it seems appropriate that the science of being should study an eternal immutable substance, such as God. Aristotle develops both of these views but never decides between them.

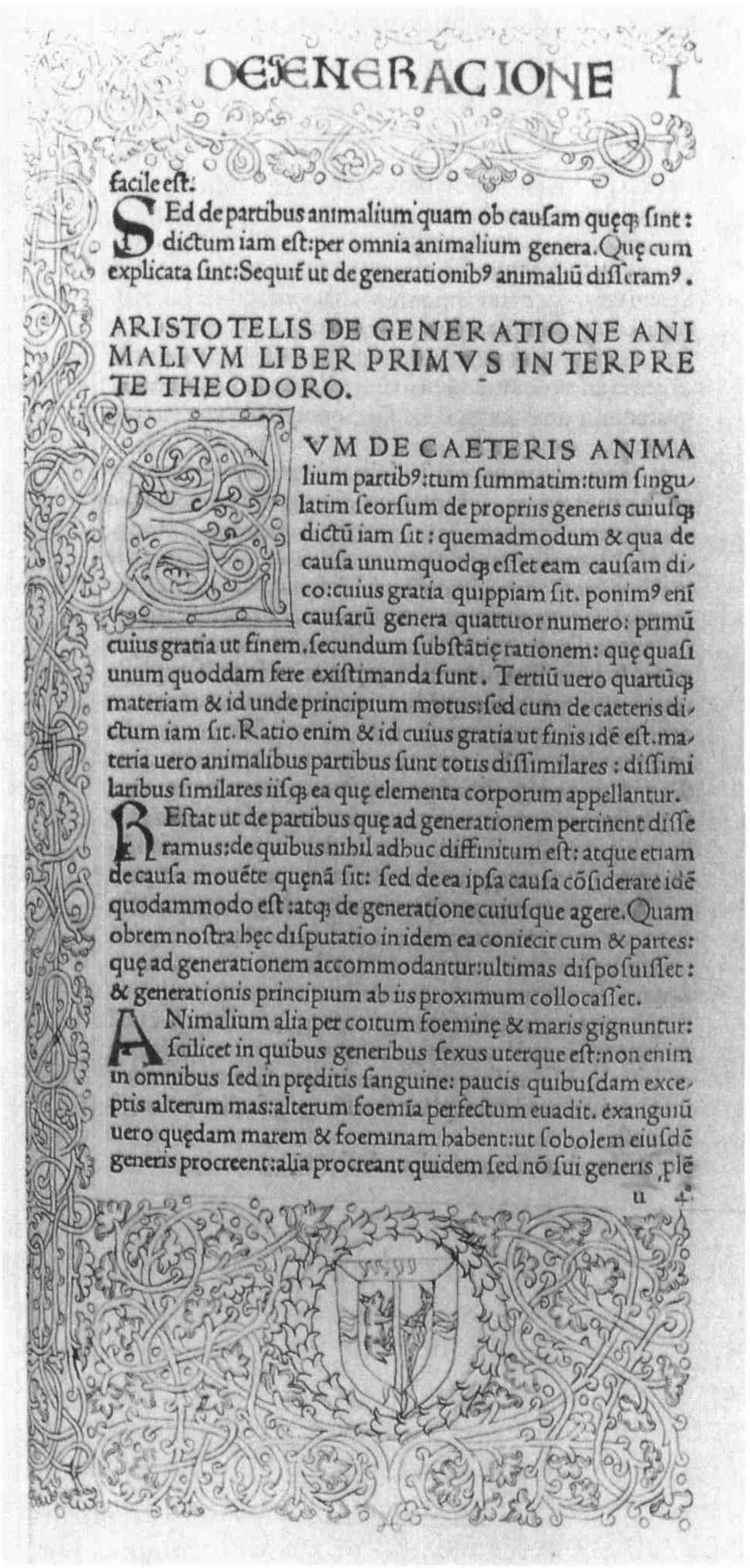
The beginning book of the *Metaphysics* is the first occurrence of what may rightly be called a history of philosophy. In this book Aristotle develops the idea that First Philosophy, or Wisdom, must be a study of first principles and causes. He then examines the views of previous philosophers, such as Thales, Heracleitus, the Pythagoreans, Parmenides, and Plato, in light of his own understanding of philosophy. When reading the works of Parmenides or Plato, one can discern the influence of previous thinkers and see how this or that view is an attempt to rectify what one particular philosopher judges to

be erroneous in the views of other philosphers. What is truly remarkable about Aristotle's introduction is that he describes the view of his predecessors as natural stages of development in a history of thought, a development that culminates in his own views. Previous thinkers were, he says, groping about confusedly for what he expresses clearly in his own thought. Thales and Heracleitus identified first principles with the material cause but failed to perceive the other causes. Plato was closest to Aristotle's own way of thinking because he discerned the formal cause and definition with his theory of Forms. He, however, mistakenly separates the formal cause from sensible substances. Aristotle concludes the book by presenting his argument that a science of being must be a science of causes, because knowledge is most of all a knowledge of what something is and why it is as it is.

In another book of the *Metaphysics* Aristotle discusses the problems that arise if one identifies the science of being with a study of the causes, as well as other difficulties that impose themselves on the student of First Philosophy. Aristotle calls these problems *aporia,* which literally means lack of passage. With respect to the causes, it is difficult to imagine a single science of the causes because there are four of them. If the causes were contraries, such as black and white, they could be reduced to a common genus, as black and white can be reduced to color. But they are not contraries, so what seems required for a single science of the causes is a way of reducing all the causes to one cause. Although he does not fully resolve this issue, Aristotle later argues that form, or essence, is primary.

A second problem arises from the point of view of definition. A science of being must define being, apparently by locating what is common to all beings. But then the science of being would be a universal science of all beings and would encompass all the particular sciences, such as biology, a result that is undesirable. Consequently one must not simply look for some common characteristic shared by all things that exist. Rather one must look for some nongeneric way of unifying the study of being.

In resolving the issues that plague a unified science of being, Aristotle revolutionizes the entire context of the problem. The various views do seem confused: the Pythagoreans believed that being was numerical; Parmenides asserted simply that being is an all-encompassing One; and Plato posited the being of transcendental forms for good, justice, and other moral virtues. Aristotle, however, observes that being is used equivocally; there is no one common meaning of the word *being* that applies to all these things. There is rather one central occurrence of being that truly illustrates what it means to be, the being of the sensible substance, this man or this horse. Other uses of the word *being* derive their meaning from this central occurrence. Aristotle's categories reappear in this metaphysical context as a way of explaining how these other uses of *being* relate to the primary meaning of the word. Number illustrates the category of quantity, and justice the category of quality. These categories are subordinate to the category of substance and cannot be


DE GENERACIONE I

facile eſt:

SEd de partibus animalium quam ob cauſam quęq; ſint: dictum iam eſt:per omnia animalium genera. Quę cum explicata ſint:Sequit ut de generationib⁹ animaliū diſſeram⁹.

ARISTOTELIS DE GENERATIONE ANIMALIVM LIBER PRIMVS INTERPRETE THEODORO.

QVM DE CAETERIS ANIMAlium partib⁹:tum ſummatim:tum ſingulatim ſeorſum de propriis generis cuiuſq; dictū iam ſit: quemadmodum & qua de cauſa unumquodq; eſſet eam cauſam dico:cuius gratia quippiam ſit. ponim⁹ enī cauſarū genera quattuor numero: primū cuius gratia ut finem. ſecundum ſubſtātię rationem: quę quaſi unum quoddam fere exiſtimanda ſunt. Tertiū uero quartūq; materiam & id unde principium motus:ſed cum de caeteris dictum iam ſit. Ratio enim & id cuius gratia ut finis idē eſt. materia uero animalibus partibus ſunt totis diſſimilares: diſſimilaribus ſimilares iiſq; ea quę elementa corporum appellantur.

REſtat ut de partibus quę ad generationem pertinent diſſeramus:de quibus nihil adhuc diffinitum eſt: atque etiam de cauſa mouēte quęnā ſit: ſed de ea ipſa cauſa cōſiderare idē quodammodo eſt:atq; de generatione cuiuſque agere. Quam obrem noſtra hęc diſputatio in idem ea coniecit cum & partes: quę ad generationem accommodantur:ultimas diſpoſuiſſet: & generationis principium ab iis proximum collocaſſet.

ANimalium alia per coitum foeminę & maris gignuntur: ſcilicet in quibus generibus ſexus uterque eſt:non enim in omnibus ſed in prędītis ſanguine: paucis quibuſdam exceptis alterum mas:alterum foemīa perfectum euadit. exanguiū uero quędam marem & foeminam habent:ut ſobolem eiuſdē generis procreent:alia procreant quidem ſed nō ſui generis ꝓlē

u 4.

First page of Theodorus Gaza's 1476 Latin translation of Aristotle's History of Animals

meaningfully spoken of apart from substance. One cannot intelligibly say, as Plato wants to, that justice is; one can only say that this man is just. Qualities such as justice or whiteness certainly *are* in some sense, but they are not in the same sense in which substance is. The meaning of *is* is equivocal but not arbitrary since qualities always and only exist as qualities of some sensible substance.

Aristotle also discusses whether or not there can exist nonsensible forms of the sort that the Platonists want to suppose. According to Plato and his followers there are eternal forms, such as beauty itself, justice itself, and duality itself, which are the perfect embodiment of what it is to be beautiful, what it is to be just, and what it is to be two. These forms transcend the world of human senses and can be grasped only by the mind. Beautiful things in the world are merely imperfect imitations of the transcendent form, beauty itself. Aristotle argues, however, that all the Platonists have done is take the sensible nature and separate it from beautiful things by adding the qualification "eternal" to it. Though he agrees with the Platonists that the nature of beauty and justice must be unchangeable to be known, he cannot see any reason for asserting that their natures exist apart from the statues that are beautiful or the men who are just.

When Aristotle places the definable form within the sensible individual, he creates one of the other main problems that weaves in and out of the discussions in the *Metaphysics*. Knowledge, according to Aristotle, can grasp only those features that are common to several things. Knowledge pertains to the universal, for example, to the manhood that all men possess. Sensation, however, acquaints one with this or that individual man. Recall, however, that Aristotle wants to say that the primary occurrence of being is the individual sensible being. Consequently, he seems forced into the contradictory position of proposing a science of being that is a science of an unknowable individual. Aristotle attempts to resolve the conflict here by showing that the individual sensible being is a composite of matter and form. The form, though inherent in the individual, has the requisite permanence and universality for knowledge. The characteristic "man," which Aristotle calls secondary substance in the *Categories*, is a form that may be common to many men but that inheres in the flesh and bones of this particular man. Aristotle never clearly explains how the form in one man is the same as the form in another man. He says that these forms are one in form but not one in number, but this amounts to declaring that they are the same, not explaining the nature of the identity.

All the foregoing issues must be examined by the student of sensible substance. Another line of argument in the *Metaphysics* suggests, however, that the most appropriate object for a science of being is divine substance. This divine substance is Aristotle's famous "unmoved mover." He discusses it in a book that is common to both the *Metaphysics* and the *Physics*. His argument for the existence of this being begins with the premise that there are some things that are indestructible. Matter and form are both indestructible, a premise that follows directly from Aristotle's analysis of change. According to this analysis, when something comes to be, it is the generation of something (matter) from something (privation) into something (form). It would then be nonsense to suppose that matter or form should come to be. Though one can explain the existence of particular changes and motions in terms of the form, matter, and privation, one cannot use them to explain the existence of everlasting motion, such as the motions of the heavens. It will not do to say that one motion could be caused by a motion preceding it, because then one would have to inquire into the cause of that, and so on. Aristotle concludes that there must be an unmoved mover, which is the efficient cause of the everlasting motion of the universe but which does not move.

One may ask further: how does this being move without being moved, and what is its nature? To the first question Aristotle answers that a divine substance moves something in the manner in which a desired object moves a person to seek it without itself moving at all. Of its nature Aristotle says that it cannot be in any way potential, since to have a potential means being able to become something else. But divine substance cannot change in any way; it is a pure actuality or, more properly, a pure act. Aristotle goes further to say that divine substance is a pure act of thinking, and since it cannot think of anything that involves change of any sort, it thinks of the only thing that involves no change whatsoever – itself. Though this conclusion does seem to follow from the principles of Aristotle's philosophy, it is nearly impossible to grasp what thought thinking itself might be.

Though the discourses in the *Metaphysics* are not finished works, they are sufficiently complete to show what Aristotle conceives to be the basic problems that confront a science of First Philosophy and to indicate how he thinks one should go

about resolving these problems. The influence of this work has been enormous, both because it lays out the essential problematic for a study of metaphysics and because it provides a persuasive way of thinking about the issues. Medieval philosophers such as Saint Thomas Aquinas (1224–1275) attempted to integrate their Christian beliefs into this framework, a synthesis that inevitably modified both the Christian dogmas and the Aristotelian system. Though modern philosophers beginning with René Descartes were anxious to reject the Aristotelian beliefs that were part of their scholastic education, much of the Aristotelian vocabulary, such as the notions of substance and attributes, remained. Even for contemporary philosophers, although their approach and analysis is seldom Aristotelian, many of the problems that Aristotle discusses in this work remain unresolved. Questions about the meaning of being or the nature of universals and one's knowledge of them are still vexing issues.

The *Nicomachean Ethics* has traditionally been the source of Aristotle's mature thought on ethics. This work, like the *Physics* and *Metaphysics,* is composed of several discourses on various ethical subjects that were later bound together in one volume. In fact, the *Nicomachean Ethics* shares three chapters or books with the *Eudemean Ethics,* an earlier work whose remaining chapters contain material written earlier in Aristotle's career.

Ethics for Aristotle is a science of human action. Whereas the aim of the theoretical sciences is knowledge, the aim of the practical sciences is both knowledge and action, to know the principles of good conduct and to act on these principles. Aristotle fully recognizes that the rules of action cannot be known with complete certainty, because actions are not permanent and unchanging as the objects of mathematics are. It is thus as much a mistake, he says, to seek mathematical certainty in ethics as it is to settle for probabilities in mathematical demonstrations.

Action itself is a sort of change or motion. Unlike building, however, which produces a finished product such as a house, the completed action is what is produced when one acts. The end or purpose of an action is the pivotal concept for understanding human action. The end, which is equivalent to the final cause, is that for the sake of which one acts. Every pursuit has some end or some good. The end of medicine is health; the end of military strategy, victory. Furthermore, he argues, some ends are pursued for the sake of other ends. The end of agriculture, for example, is the production of food. But food in turn may become the means to another end, health. Within this structure of human action Aristotle thinks it is clear that the good is that at which all things aim. The good for man is a final end that organizes all other human pursuits; this good is generally called happiness.

There are two obstacles to understanding what Aristotle means by happiness. The first is a strong tendency to identify happiness with a feeling. Certainly, it is natural to talk about feeling happy, but happiness for Aristotle is better identified with an overall state of well-being. Pleasure and pleasurable feelings are quite distinct from happiness in this sense. The happy life will include pleasure because the activities that produce happiness are pleasurable activities. Nevertheless, happiness should not be identified with the pleasurable feelings that accompany it.

The second obstacle is a conceptual one. Aristotle says that happiness cannot be identified with any one particular good thing or good activity. If one identified it with knowing, which is a particular good, happiness could be made better simply by adding another good to it, such as pleasure. Since happiness, however, is the most desirable end, it cannot be made more desirable. Consequently, happiness must be a complex whole of several goods, integrated in such a way that the result of adding further goods to this whole would be to make it less desirable, instead of more so. Happiness will thus be a certain sort of life or a way of living that includes several goods. What sort of life is it?

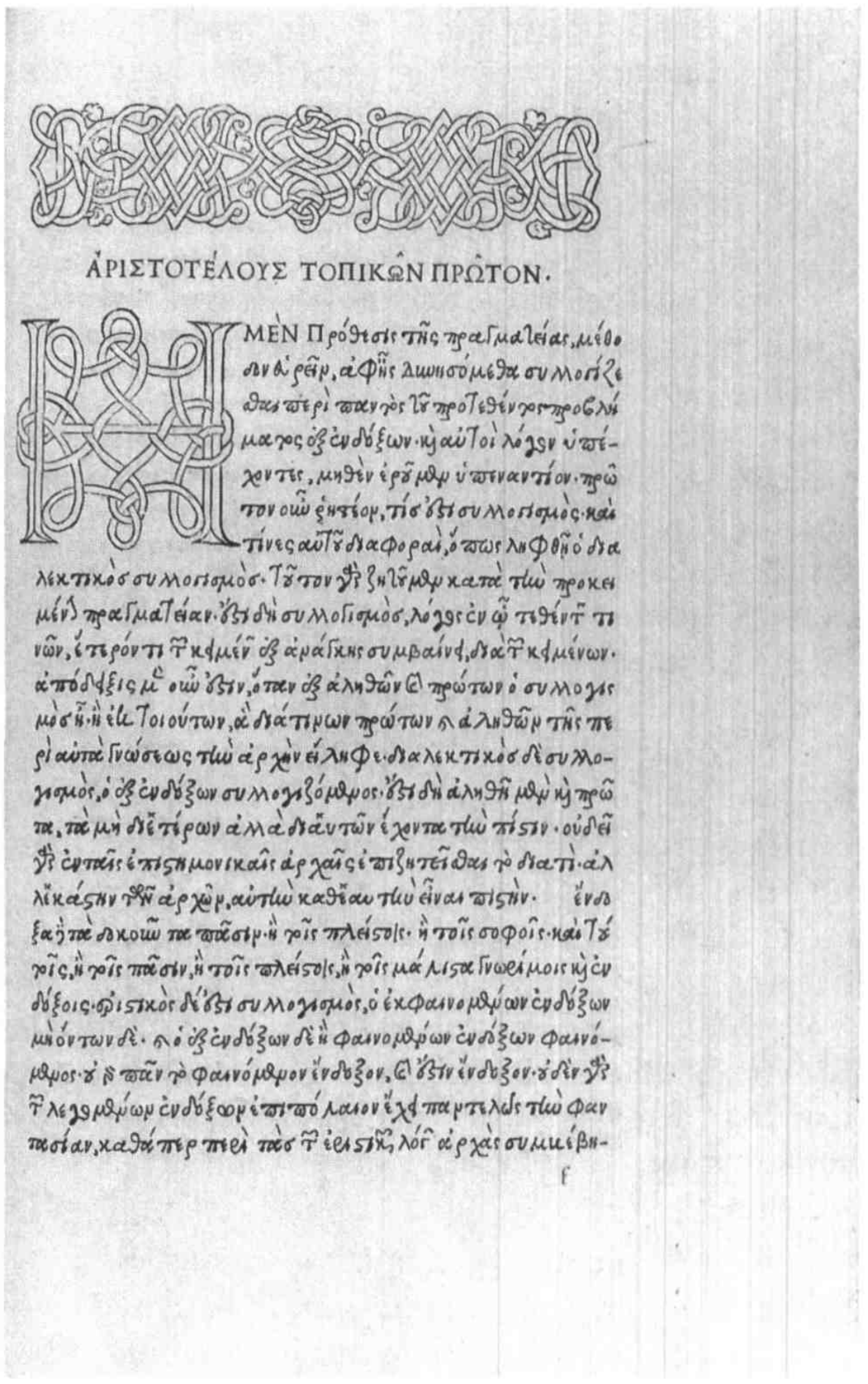
Aristotle thinks one can answer this question by considering what sort of activity is characteristic of human beings. It cannot be merely a life of nutrition and growth, because then one could correctly say that plants were happy. Nor can it be a life of sensation and appetite, because human beings share these faculties with other animals. Happiness must include the exercise of the faculty of reason, the faculty that distinguishes men and women from other animals. Aristotle thus defines happiness as the activity of the rational part of man in accordance with the virtue of that part. To say that happiness is an activity in accordance with virtue means that it is the exercise of the excellences, or virtues, that are characteristic of human beings; that is, it is a good activity. Aristotle's account of what actions constitute the good life thus depend on the nature of these virtues.

In general a virtue is the quality of something that makes it a good one of its kind. The word for virtue, *areté,* might also be translated as "excellence." So the virtue or excellence of an ax, for example, is its sharpness, because this quality makes

the ax a good one. For anything that is good, one should be able to say what quality or qualities make it good, and these qualities would in Aristotle's terminology be its excellences, or virtues. The same account of virtues applies to human beings. There are two sorts of virtues that make men good: intellectual virtues and moral virtues. The intellectual virtues concern the proper use of reason in its purely theoretical use. The exercise of these virtues includes the knowing involved in the theoretical sciences as well as the knowing of the rules of conduct for ethics. The moral virtues require the use of reason in guiding the desires and emotions by appropriate rules of conduct. The exercise of these virtues is simply the doing of good actions. Human goodness as Aristotle understands it is thus broader than the modern notion of goodness, in which goodness tends to be identified solely with the exercise of moral virtues, such as justice.

In developing his account of moral virtue Aristotle attempts to capture the popular moral platitude that one's actions should approach a golden mean. Aristotle proposes that every virtuous action is a mean between two extremes, an excess and a deficiency. Courage, for example, is the mean between foolhardiness and cowardice; charity the mean between an overly generous action and stinginess. Aristotle devotes part of the *Nicomachean Ethics* to showing how the qualities or virtues that men generally held to be virtues in Greek society during this period fit within his definition of virtue. It is also important to note that for Aristotle there are virtues with respect to the emotions. To feel anger, for example, is not in itself bad. To get too angry or not angry enough on some particular occasion is bad, however. One should learn to feel anger in the appropriate degree. The proper amount might be a mean between irritation and wrath. When one puts the foregoing account together, one can see Aristotle's definition of virtue. Virtue is a settled disposition to choose the mean course of action. A good person thus not only behaves in accordance with the mean, but also does so because of his or her character.

Aristotle's account of virtue is substantially different from Plato's. The most significant difference lies in how virtues are acquired. As many of Plato's dialogues attest, knowledge is the key to acquiring virtue. If one can learn what justice is, then one will be just. The intellectual grasp of the nature of goodness is sufficient for directing one's actions toward what is good. For Plato such moral knowledge is also necessary before one can say that one's actions truly are good. Unless one knows what is good, one is



ΑΡΙΣΤΟΤΕΛΟΥΣ ΤΟΠΙΚΩΝ ΠΡΩΤΟΝ.

ΜΕΝ Προθεσις της πραγματειας, μεθοδον δε λεγειν, αφ' ης δυνησομεθα συλλογιστικην εφοδον περι παντος του προτεθεντος προβληματος εξ ενδοξων· αυτοι τε λεγειν υπεχοντες, μηθεν εροῦμεν υπεναντιον· πρωτον ουν ειπωμεν, τινος και τισ ὁ συλλογισμος· και τινες αυτου διαφοραι, οπως λαβων ὁ δια-

λεκτικος συλλογισμος· Τουτου δε ζητουμενου κατα τινα προκειμενην πραγματειαν· ὁτι μεν συλλογισμος, λογος εν ω τεθεντων τινων, ετερον τι των κειμενων εξ αναγκης συμβαινει, δια των κειμενων· αποδειξις μεν ουν ὁταν εξ αληθων η πρωτων ὁ συλλογισμος ᾖ· η εστι τοιουτων, αι δια τινων πρωτων η αληθων της περι αυτας γνωσεως την αρχην εσχηκε· διαλεκτικος δε συλλογισμος, ὁ εξ ενδοξων συλλογιζομενος· ὁτι δε αληθη μεν η πρωτα, τα μη δι' ετερων αλλα δι' αυτων εχοντα την πιστιν· ουδει γαρ επιστημονι καις αρχαις επιζητειν δια τι· αλλ' εκαστην των αρχων, αυτην καθ' αυτην ειναι πιστιν· ενδοξα δε τα δοκουντα πασιν· η τοις πλειστοις· η τοις σοφοις· και τουτοις, η τοις πασιν, η τοις πλειστοις, η τοις μαλιστα γνωριμοις και ενδοξοις· φανερος δε ὁτι συλλογισμος, ὁ εκ φαινομενων ενδοξων μη ὁντων δε· η ὁ εξ ενδοξων δε η φαινομενων ενδοξων φαινομενος· ου γαρ το φαινομενον ενδοξον, ουδεν γαρ των λεγομενων ενδοξων εστι τοιουτον εχει παντελως την φαντασιαν, καθαπερ περι τους επαγωγικους λογους αρχας συμβη-

Page from the editio princeps of Aristotle's works, the Aldine Opera *(1495), with the opening lines of the* Topics

in danger of doing what is bad. Aristotle agrees with Plato that the person with moral knowledge who can establish and justify rules of conduct will also be a good person. But this knowledge, which Aristotle calls practical wisdom, is not necessary for someone to be virtuous. Because virtue is a settled disposition to do the right thing, one that has been developed through repeated action, it may also be described as a state of character that is developed by habit. One becomes virtuous by doing virtuous acts. Becoming virtuous thus requires only that one follow the correct moral rules, which have been established by those who have practical wisdom. In this respect proper training, not knowledge, is essential for acquiring virtue.

In the final book of the *Nicomachean Ethics,* Aristotle returns to the topic of happiness. As one would expect, happiness is produced by the exercise of the virtues that are characteristic of human be-

ings: the intellectual virtues and the moral virtues. Although he has previously argued that happiness cannot be one good thing, he does not develop any account of how one would balance the several good things that compose a happy life. One would assume that these goods include the exercise of all the virtues, both intellectual and moral. Presumably the person who has practical wisdom would be able to help organize the good things that one should pursue. Rather than present a single account of the good life, Aristotle argues that there are two distinct sorts of happy lives one may lead. The first life is the life of a philosopher or scientist, in which the exercise of the intellectual virtues is predominant. The life of a virtuous statesman or legislator exemplifies the second kind of life, in which the exercise of the moral virtues is predominant. Aristotle comments that both of these lives are happy, but of the two the former is preferable and in some sense happier than the other. No doubt his reasoning falls back onto one of the basic presuppositions of his philosophy, that what is permanent and unchanging is superior to what involves change. The knowing or theoretical activity that dominates the life of reason is a sort of unchanging mental activity that reflects upon unchanging objects, whereas virtuous action is a sort of change.

Although many particulars of Aristotle's ethical views no longer seem relevant, the method and categories he used to approach ethics continue to be influential. Unlike his scientific ideas, which were rejected, the main lines of Aristotle's ethics were revised and rethought but never wholly put aside. Medieval philosophers supplemented his ethics with the Christian virtues and modified his account of the greatest good to accommodate Christian revelation concerning a human being's purpose. These versions of Aristotle's ethics, and later ones, preserve the teleological order in which the good or end of human life determines what one should do. They do, however, give substantially different accounts of the nature of this good. The continued influence of Aristotle's ethics may be attributed in part to the relative independence that his analysis has in relation to his other works. Although a full understanding of his ethics requires that one study his other works, the basic problems that Aristotle discusses and the answers he gives to them are accessible to many people because Aristotle's ethical reflections resonate strongly with their own experiences.

Of Aristotle's major works, two are properly considered to be literary works – the *Rhetoric* and the *Poetics.* Both rhetoric and poetry fall within what Aristotle calls the productive sciences. The two books are studies of what has been created by the art of making speeches and the art of writing plays. These arts, like the art of medicine or the art of sculpture, produce their works in accordance with certain rules. The goal of these two works by Aristotle is to examine what these rules are and how they are applied in each craft. Aristotle's approach to rhetoric and poetry is quite different from that of Plato, who disapproved of the Sophists and believed that the poets have no real place in the ideal society described in his *Republic.* Plato criticizes the Sophists in his dialogue *Gorgias* for saying whatever satisfies their hearers. Rhetoric for them is not an art but a species of flattery. This criticism, like his criticism of the poets, stems from his belief that to persuade others to believe something that is untrue is somehow immoral and thus harmful to the hearers. Plato argues in the *Phaedrus* that a true art of rhetoric would have the speaker persuade his or her hearers only of the truth. Aristotle was not convinced that rhetoric and poetry could have the pernicious effects that Plato perceived. He comments bluntly in the *Rhetoric* that the objection that rhetoric may have bad consequences when practiced poorly or unskillfully applies to other activities as well.

Many of those who practiced and taught rhetoric in Greece in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. wrote books about the art of rhetoric. Aristotle's *Rhetoric* is written within this tradition; but his work is the first and only systematic treatment of rhetoric in this period. The previous works were concerned largely with oratory in the law courts. Aristotle criticizes these books for ignoring the use of argument and demonstration as a means of persuasion; these works examined almost exclusively techniques to arouse prejudice, compassion, and other emotions that should be irrelevant before a court.

In the first part of his *Rhetoric,* Aristotle defines rhetoric and discusses the three basic types of speech. Rhetoric, he says, is a skill of discovering the means of persuasion in reference to any subject whatever. A speaker may persuade by appealing to his own moral character, by trying to arouse certain emotions in his hearers, or by using logical arguments to demonstrate certain truths. Good speaking, therefore, involves knowledge of both ethics and logic. The speaker must be a competent judge of character; he must have a knowledge of the emotions; and he must be able to reason well.

There are three types of rhetoric: deliberative, forensic, and epideictic. Deliberative rhetoric is used to persuade one's hearers either to follow or to avoid some course of action. Since the purpose of deliberative oratory is to commend the goodness or the expediency of something, the speaker needs to establish what is good and what produces happiness. The purpose of forensic rhetoric is to accuse or defend someone in court. In a forensic speech one should thus consider the motives for wrongdoing of the person accused and whether or not the person acted voluntarily. In both deliberative and forensic oratory a decision is being reached. In epideictic rhetoric, which consists of such things as funeral orations or speeches at festivals, the audience is only a spectator. The purpose of an epideictic speech is to praise what is noble or censure what is disgraceful. A knowledge of one's audience is especially important, because the speaker must praise or blame something by appealing to what the audience likes or dislikes.

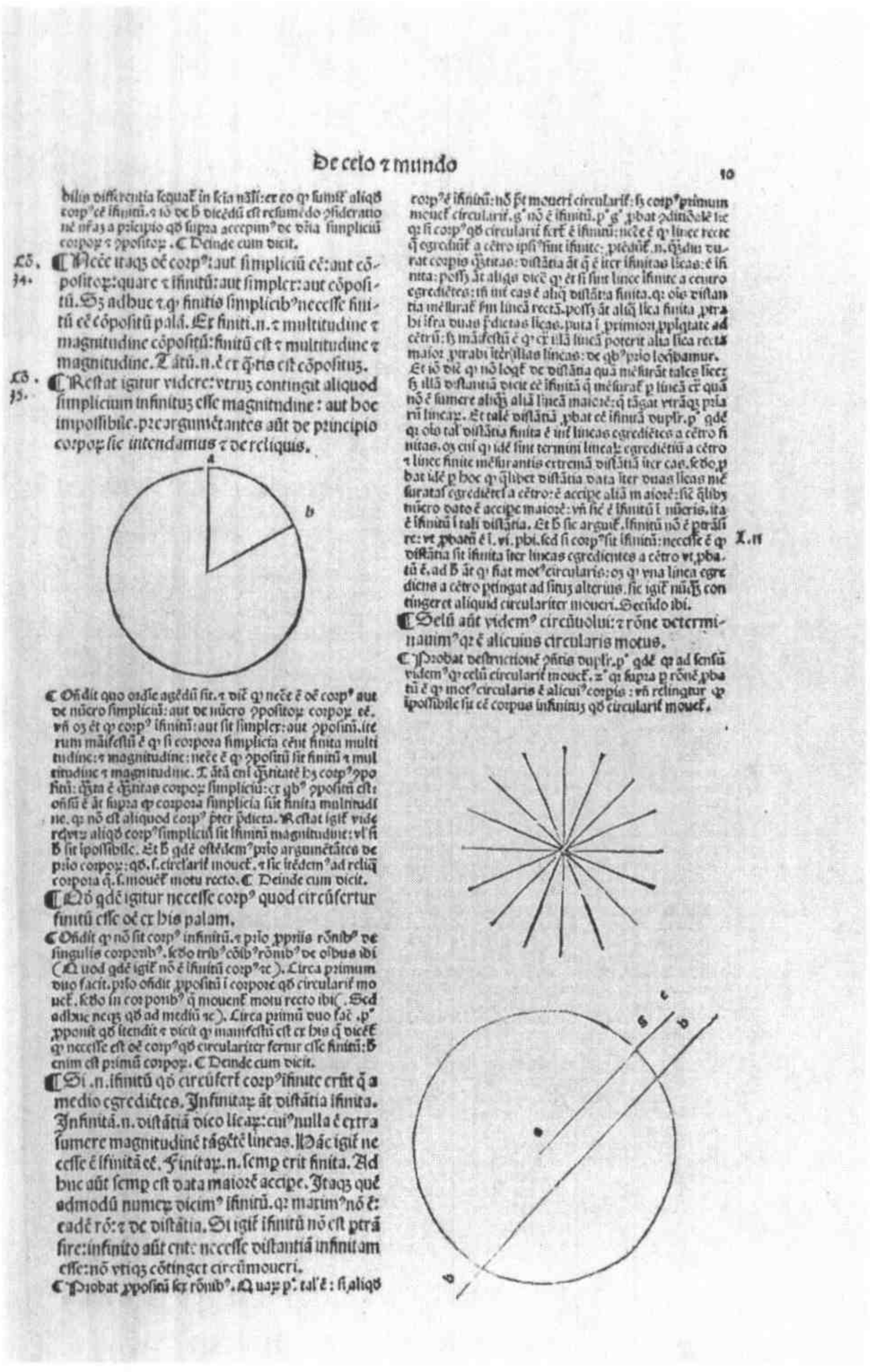
Skill in rhetoric involves not only knowing how to convince or persuade, but also how to create a certain impression of oneself and how to put one's audience in a certain frame of mind. Aristotle recognizes that logical demonstration helps produce conviction in one's hearers but that often their beliefs are shaped not by the facts, but by appearances. The speaker should thus appear to have good sense, to be virtuous, and to be disposed favorably toward the audience. To aid the orator in achieving this goal, Aristotle enumerates the virtues to which one would appeal in order to display one's moral character and the emotions one would attempt to arouse in the audience.

Aristotle devotes the last part of the *Rhetoric* to the issue of style, because not only is what one says important, but it is also important to say it well. The two main excellences of style are clarity and propriety. Clarity is achieved by using words in their proper sense. To avoid artificiality the language should include terms that occur in ordinary conversation. When using metaphors one should avoid exaggeration. Propriety of style consists of expressing emotion and moral character in a way that is suited to the subject matter and to the audience. Important matters should not be treated in a casual way, and trivial concerns should not be spoken of in a serious way. Aristotle then examines in some detail the use of simile and metaphor and gives some guidelines for their use.

It is unlikely that the *Rhetoric* had a significant influence as a handbook for public speaking among Aristotle's contemporaries, because by the time it was written political oratory was in decline. Though the work itself is not polemical, it no doubt served also to distinguish Aristotle's views on rhetoric from those of his rival Isocrates. Cicero and other Romans studied the *Rhetoric.* For them it is likely that its rhetorical principles were instructive as practical guidelines for oratory. When humanistic learning was revived during the Renaissance, the *Rhetoric,* together with works of Cicero and Quintilian, formed the basis for the study of rhetoric. Since the *Rhetoric,* like many of Aristotle's other works, carefully describes and analyzes his subject, it is still useful for examining and understanding the rhetorical works of Aristotle's contemporaries.

The works of Aristotle do not present a systematic aesthetic theory, but the *Poetics* is the work that comes closest to giving an account of literary criticism. Aristotle's approach to drama and poetry in this work can best be understood by reflecting upon his methods for investigating other subjects that he classifies as sciences, where science refers to any body of knowledge for which there are organizing principles and definitions. Poetry and drama, like rhetoric, are classified among the productive sciences, the aim of which is something useful or beautiful. Aristotle's investigation proceeds by definition and classification, followed by a careful examination of particular poems or plays to show how they fit or do not fit within his definitions. He defines poetry and divides it into four genres: epic, tragedy, lyric, and comedy. In addition to his general discussion of poetry and some brief comments on epic and lyric poetry, the *Poetics* contains an extended discussion of tragedy. The account of comedy that Aristotle apparently wrote has not survived.

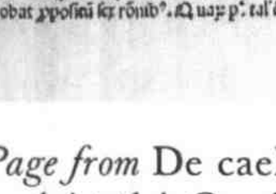
Just as persuasion is the essential feature of public speaking, it is imitation (*mimesis*) that chiefly characterizes the literary and other fine arts. These arts, Aristotle says, are all modes of imitation. The differences among the arts are created by the different means, objects, and manner that the imitation may take. In music, for example, rhythm and harmony alone are the means, while poetry uses language, rhythm, and harmony. The objects of imitation are actions and agents that are either good or bad. In tragedy, for example, the characters are better than the ordinary person, in comedy worse. By the manner of imitation, Aristotle refers to whether the action is related through narrative, as it is in Homer's *Iliad,* or through a dramatic presentation, in which actors reenact the action.


De celo ⁊ mundo 10

bilis differentia sequat in ꝟcia nãlꝫ: er eo q̃ sumꝫ aliqđ corp⁹ cẽ infinitũ. ⁊ ió de ꝟcedẽti est resumẽdo ꝓsiderato mẽ nr̃a a principio qđ supra accepim⁹ de vĩa simpliciũ corpo⁹ ⁊ ꝓpositoꝝ. ¶ Deinde cum dicit.

¶ Nece it aq̃s oẽ corp⁹: aut simpliciũ cẽ: aut cõpositoꝝ: quare ⁊ infinitũ: aut simpler: aut cõpositũ. Sꝫ adhuc ⁊ q̃ finitis simplicib⁹ necesse finitũ cẽ cõpositũ pbã. Er finiti. n. ⁊ multitudine ⁊ magnitudine cõpositũ: finitũ est ⁊ multitudine ⁊ magnitudine. Tãtũ. n. ẽ er q̃ntis est cõpositus.

¶ Restat igitur videre: vtrũ contingat aliquod simplicium infinituꝫ esse magnitudine: aut hoc impossibile. ꝓcꝛ argumẽtantes aũt de ꝓncipio corpoꝝ sic intendamus ⁊ de reliquis.



¶ Oñdit quo ordine agẽdũ sit. ⁊ dic̃ q̃ neẽe ẽ oẽ corp⁹ aut de nũero simpliciũ: aut de nũero ꝓpositoꝝ corpoꝝ. eẽ. vñ os ẽt q̃ corp⁹ infinitũ: aut sit simpler: aut ꝓpositũ. ite rum mãifestũ ẽ q̃ si corpora simplicia cẽnt finita multitudine ⁊ magnitudine: neẽe ẽ q̃ ꝓpositũ sit finitũ ⁊ multitudine ⁊ magnitudine. Tãtũ enĩ q̃ntitatẽ h̃z corp⁹ propinq̃: q̃nta ẽ q̃ntitas corpoꝝ simpliciũ: ex q̃b⁹ ꝓpositũ est: oñsũ ẽ aũt supra q̃ corpora simplicia sũt finita multitudine. q̃ nõ est aliquod corp⁹ pter ꝓdicta. Restat igit videre vtrũ aliq̃s corp⁹ simpliciũ sit infinitũ magnitudine: vl si ẽ sit ipossibile. Et ẽ qđẽ ostẽdem⁹ prio argumẽtãtes de prio corpoꝝ: q̃s. l. circlariꝫ mouet. ⁊ sic ĩẽdem⁹ ad reliq̃ corpora q̃. l. mouẽt motu recto. ¶ Deinde cum dicit.

¶ Nõ qđẽ igitur neceſſe corp⁹ quod circũfertur finitũ esse oẽ ex his palam.

¶ Oñdit q̃ nõ sit corp⁹ infinitũ. ⁊ prio ꝓpriis rõnib⁹ de singulis corporib⁹. scdo trib⁹ cõib⁹ rõnib⁹ de oĩbus ibi (Quod qđẽ igitur nõ ẽ infinitũ corp⁹ etc). Circa primum duo facit. prio oñdit ꝓpositũ i corpore q̃s circulariꝫ mouẽt. scdo in corporib⁹ q̃ mouent motu recto ibi (. Sed adhuc necꝫ q̃s ad medium etc). Circa primũ duo fac̃. p⁹ ꝓponit q̃s intendit ⁊ dicit q̃ manifestũ est ex his q̃ dicẽt q̃ necesse est oẽ corp⁹ q̃s circulariter fertur esse finitũ: B enim est primũ corpoꝝ. ¶ Deinde cum dicit.

¶ Si. n. infinitũ q̃s circũferẽ corp⁹ infinite erũt q̃ a medio egrediẽtes. Infinitaꝝ aũt distãtia infinita. Infinitã. n. distãtiã dico lineaꝝ: cui⁹ nulla ẽ extra sumere magnitudinẽ tãgẽtẽ lineas. Hãc igit necesse ẽ infinitã ee. Finitaꝝ. n. semp erit finita. Ad huc aũt semp est data maiorẽ accipe. Itaq̃ quẽ admodũ numeꝝ dicim⁹ infinitũ. q̃ maxim⁹ nõ ẽ: eadẽ rõ: ⁊ de distãtia. Si igit infinitũ nõ est ptrã sire: infinito aũt cntr: necesse distantiã infinitam esse: nõ vtiq̃s cõtingẽt circũmoueri.

¶ Probat ꝓpositũ ex rõnib⁹. Quaꝝ p⁹. tal ẽ: si aliq̃s corp⁹ ẽ infinitũ: nõ ꝑt moueri circulariꝫ: h̃z corp⁹ primum mouẽt circulariꝫ. g⁹ nõ ẽ infinitũ. p⁹ g⁹. ꝓbat ꝓmissẽ hoc q̃: si corp⁹ q̃s circulariꝫ ferẽt ẽ infinitũ: neẽe ẽ q̃ lineę recte q̃ egrediũt a cẽtro ipsi⁹ sint infinite: prędũt. n. ĩfinitum tunc distãtia q̃ntaq̃: distãtia aũt q̃ ẽ iter infinitas lineas: ẽ infinita: possũt aũt aliq̃s dicẽ q̃ ẽt si sint lineę infinite a centro egredientes: tñ inẽ eas ẽ aliq̃ distãtia finita. q̃ oĩs distantia mẽsurãt fm lineã rectã. possũt aũt aliq̃ lineę finitę ꝓtrahi infra duas ꝓdictas lineas. puta i primum ꝓpinquitatis ad cẽtrũ: h̃ mãifestũ ẽ q̃ cẽ illã lineã poterit alia linea recta maior ꝓtrahi itersũtias lineas: de qb⁹ prio loq̃mur. Et nõ dic̃ q̃ nõ logẽ de distãtia quã mẽsurãt tales lineę: h̃ illã distantiã dicit ee infinitã q̃ mẽsurat ꝑ lineã cẽ quã nõ ẽ sumere aliq̃ aliã lineã maiorẽ: q̃ tãgat vtrãq̃ ꝓtrarũ linearũ. Et talẽ distãtiã ꝓbat ee infinitã duplic. ꝑ qđẽ q̃ oĩs tal distãtia finita ẽ inẽ lineas egredientes a cẽtro finitas. os enĩ q̃ idẽ sint termini lineaꝝ egredientiũ a cẽtro ⁊ linee finite mẽsurantis extremã distãtiã iter eas. Sẽd ꝓbat idẽ ꝑ hoc q̃ q̃libet distãtia data iter duas lineas mẽsuratas egredientes a cẽtro: ẽ accipe aliã maiorẽ: sic q̃libꝫ nũero dato ẽ accipe maiorẽ: vñ sic ẽ infinitũ i nũeris. ita ẽ infinitũ i talꝫ distãtia. Et ꝟ sic arguit. infinitũ nõ ẽ ꝑtãli re: vt ꝓbatũ ẽ i. vi. phi. sed si corp⁹ sit infinitũ: necesse ẽ q̃ distãtia sit infinita iter lineas egredientes a cẽtro vt ꝓbatũ ẽ. ad ꝟ aũt q̃ fiat mot⁹ circularis: os q̃ vna linea egrediens a cẽtro ꝑtingat ad situꝫ alterius. sic igit nũꝫ contingeret aliquid circulariter moveri. Secũdo ibi.

¶ Delũ aũt videm⁹ circũvolui: ⁊ rõne determinatum⁹ q̃ ẽ alicuius circularis motus.

¶ Probat destructionẽ ꝓmissi dupliciter. ꝑ qđẽ q̃ ad sensũ videm⁹ q̃ celũ circulariꝫ mouẽt. ⁊ q̃ supra ꝑ rõnẽ ꝓbatũ ẽ q̃ mot⁹ circularis ẽ alicui⁹ corpis: vñ relinq̃tur q̃ ipossibile sit cẽ corpus infinituꝫ qđ circulariꝫ mouẽt.

Page from De caelo et mundo *(1495), an edition of Aristotle's* On the Heavens *with commentary by Saint Thomas Aquinas and Petrus de Alvernia*

The critically important word *mimesis* does not for Aristotle describe works that are merely copies of things. Ideally imitation represents the essential features of some action or event in such a way that the imitation creates the appropriate emotional response to the action in the audience. Imitative works of art for Aristotle are thus creative works that represent either what might be or what should be. Aristotle argues that poetry originated from man's natural instinct for imitation. Not only does all learning proceed by means of imitation, but everyone enjoys works of imitation.

One can further elucidate Aristotle's understanding of imitation by comparing it with Plato's. For Plato imitation may be applied to what one perceives with his senses as well as to works of art, but these objects occupy different levels of being. The most real and most knowable realm of being, a realm perceived only by the mind, contains the permanent, immutable forms, such as the forms of Goodness and beauty. The nonpermanent, changing objects of the senses occupy a lower realm of being. They are knowable only insofar as they participate in or imitate the forms. A beautiful person could be said to share in the form of beauty itself. The beauty in this person would then only be an imitation of beauty itself. Although Plato does not fully explain the exact nature of this sort of imitation, its nature entails that the imitation is less real than the form that it imitates. Works of art thus occupy an even lower realm of being, because they are even further removed from what is really real; they are imitations of imitations.

For Aristotle, however, the actions in a play are in an important sense as real as the actions that the players represent. Aristotle's main criticism of Plato's metaphysics is that the eternal, immutable qualities that the forms supposedly embody are simply the same characteristics that real human beings have. They are taken to be transcendent by means of an act of abstraction. The nature of justice that Plato makes a transcendent form is essentially the same universal characteristic that this just person possesses. But for Aristotle, when a dramatist represents a person as just, that person's actions display this same universal characteristic shared by just actions. Since the action in the play contains the universal, it is as real as the action it represents. Indeed, Aristotle argues that the purpose of the play is to represent the universal. The particular characters who are used to do this are only incidental. Moreover, he argues that this is the main difference between history and drama. History must represent particular events and persons, but art aims at the universal qualities that all actions of a certain kind share. A dramatist may thus make up whatever particular events or persons are necessary to achieve this end, whereas the historian must limit himself to the particular events that occurred.

The only genre of poetry that Aristotle discusses in detail is tragedy. Aristotle defines tragedy as the imitation of a serious and complete action, in language that is embellished, in a dramatic form, that arouses pity and fear in order to cause a catharsis of these emotions. The necessary elements of every tragedy are, accordingly, plot, character, diction, thought, spectacle, and melody. Aristotle insists that the heart of a tragedy is the action. The plot must depict an action that is whole and complete; that is, one that has a beginning, a middle, and an end. The development of character is subordinate to the action. The character of a person should be developed

only to further the plot. The action, moreover, should represent not events that actually occurred but events that might occur. The tragedian will thus show what events would probably or necessarily follow from the events that begin the story.

In his discussion of plot Aristotle also mentions features that distinguish especially good tragedies. A tragedy should have both reversals and discoveries. A reversal is an event in the plot at which the protagonist's fortune changes dramatically, either from misfortune to happiness or from happiness to misfortune. A discovery is an event in which someone learns something. In the best tragedy a reversal will coincide with a discovery. For example, in Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus,* a messenger who comes to remove Oedipus's fears about his mother reveals the story of his birth. As a result Oedipus learns that he is married to his mother.

The skillful use of reversals and discoveries is essential for the dramatist to cause the audience to feel fear and pity. The purpose of a tragedy is to effect a catharsis or purging of these emotions in the audience. Tragedy thus has a moral purpose, because how strongly or weakly one feels emotions is, for Aristotle, part of one's moral character. In a virtuous person emotions such as pity and fear should be experienced as a mean between the extremes of too much and too little and experienced toward the appropriate objects at the appropriate time. The action in a tragedy provides the occasion for one to exercise these emotions in the correct way. Aristotle is careful to explain which sort of plot is the best for arousing pity and fear. The reversal in the plot must be of a person going from happiness to misfortune. But the person cannot be a bad person, because the misfortune might then seem deserved, and pity is aroused only by undeserved misfortune. So the protagonist must be a good person. Since the unity of action requires that the reversal cannot simply occur by chance, Aristotle further argues that the reversal of misfortune must proceed from some error in judgment that the protagonist makes and not, as is sometimes maintained, from some character flaw. This mistake, which Aristotle calls hamartia, should be understood not as a moral wrong but rather as an instance of applying a correct rule to the wrong situation.

Aristotle's analysis in the *Poetics* has been criticized for being too narrow in its scope. He takes Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannus* as a model for tragedy and consequently limits the kinds of actions or plots that are capable of fulfilling the purpose of tragedy that he proposes. Nevertheless, his overall analysis is highly instructive and is significant insofar as, in contrast to Plato, he assigns a serious purpose to poetry. Not only does Aristotle find the pleasures associated with poetry harmless, but he also attributes a definite moral value to a good tragedy.

In Aristotle's time the influence of the *Poetics* did not extend beyond his own school, and, unlike his scientific and philosophical works, the book was rediscovered relatively late, during the Italian Renaissance. But its impact then became significant, especially upon the literature and literary criticism in France and England in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The principles of poetry and drama in the *Poetics,* together with those from Horace's *Ars Poetica,* were considered by many during this period to be the correct rational principles to which literary works should conform. As one would expect, however, the principles that Aristotle develops in the *Poetics* were used selectively and were frequently misrepresented. The three unities of time, place, and action replaced Aristotle's single requirement that a drama exhibit unity of action. Moreover, critics aligned themselves with Horace's view that the purpose of literature was to delight and instruct. For Aristotle, however, the purpose of poetry is imitation. Consequently, in accordance with the former purpose, critics tended to judge a work by the effect it had on its audience rather than by objective elements of the work itself. Finally, attempts to make the account of catharsis in the *Poetics* answer to the didactic element required by the Horatian principles made understanding the catharsis in terms of Aristotle's own ethical principles impossible. Despite these misunderstandings, much of the *Poetics* was still an authoritative source for literary principles. The *Poetics* was used, for example, to argue for clearly defined literary genres.

In considering the entirety of Aristotle's work, one notices two striking features. The first is the systematic nature of Aristotle's writings. Although he does not strictly adhere to the axiomatic structure of a science, which he outlines in the *Posterior Analytics,* he proceeds methodically to define the terms necessary for his subject and to propose principles that encompass the observed facts. He typically develops his definitions through a survey of what his predecessors have thought, and he verifies his conclusions by reference to numerous examples or to those truths that are generally accepted about the subject in ques-

tion. His search for knowledge is always firmly rooted in experience and common sense.

The second feature of Aristotle's works that surfaces continually is his opposition to Plato. Aristotle's feelings are summarized in the opening book of the *Nicomachean Ethics,* in which he acknowledges his friendship and affection for Plato but affirms his stronger fidelity to truth. Even where he does not explicitly point out his disagreements with the Platonists, their views usually serve as a background against which one must view Aristotle's own account of a topic.

Traditionally readers of Aristotle have been impressed most by the systematic nature of his work, and accordingly they have treated the whole of it as expressing a single body of doctrine. In this century, however, much scholarship has been devoted to exploring the development of Aristotle's thought. The underlying assumption of this approach is that at one time Aristotle more or less agreed with Plato but gradually began to articulate his own views. Such studies have focused on the relative influence Plato's views seem to have had on Aristotle in a given work as a way of assessing his intellectual development.

In Werner Jaeger's book *Aristotle: Fundamentals of the History of His Development* (1948), the work that pioneered these developmental studies, Jaeger argues that Aristotle's thought is divided into three periods that roughly correspond to the three main periods of his life. In his years at the Academy, Aristotle's views on the soul and on ethics, which may be found in surviving fragments, are thoroughly Platonic. After Plato's death Aristotle left the Academy and began to develop his own metaphysical and epistemological views. His return to Athens and founding of the school at the Lyceum marks a third period in his development, in which he turned from the philosophical problems he inherited from Plato and embarked upon a program of empirical research. This period thus includes his biological works as well as the lost collection of political constitutions.

Further research has discredited some of Jaeger's conclusions, in particular the claim that Aristotle's empiricism developed late in his life. The place-names that occur repeatedly in his biological works correspond to the places he visited during his travels after leaving the Academy. Consequently, it is likely that much of the research for these works, if not the actual writing of them, occurred before he established his school at the Lyceum. Moreover, a careful examination of these works shows that Aristotle does not reject his metaphysical views in favor of empiricism; rather, his biological research presupposes the account of substance as form that he presents in his other works. Thus, it seems more likely that Aristotle's mature metaphysical views developed in part through reflection upon his own empirical research.

Criticisms such as the foregoing one do not invalidate the general line of inquiry that Jaeger initiated. They conflict with the specifics of his account of Aristotle's development, not with the idea that a genuine development occurs. Most studies of Aristotle's development continue to assume with Jaeger that his thought progresses steadily away from Platonism. The less Platonic a work is, the later in Aristotle's career it occurs. This assumption seems to create two problems. First, it disallows a pattern of development in which Aristotle might, after wholly rejecting the doctrine of Platonism at one point in his life, return in his mature thought to views closer to those of Plato. The second problem is of a more general nature. By focusing on the widening differences between Plato and Aristotle, one tends to lose sight of or obscure the basic similarities between them. Both held the view that knowledge or science is possible only of what does not change. They also shared the correlative principle that being or substance does not change.

Whatever path of development Aristotle's thought followed before he returned to Athens, it is certain that the twelve years that he spent at the Lyceum are the most significant for establishing his importance as a major philosopher. It was during this period, in the congenial environment among his followers and students, that nearly all his works took their final form. Since the writings that survive are those that were written for circulation in the Lyceum and not those published for a popular audience, their influence was therefore limited to the school. Within the Lyceum Aristotle's works probably served as guidelines for both the scientific and metaphysical studies that were continued by Theophrastus, Aristotle's successor. The transmission of these works from Theophrastus's school to their Latin translations made it possible for Aristotle's thought to have a great impact on later philosophers.

Though the story that Aristotle's library was kept in a basement before being found and taken to Rome may represent what happened, it may also indicate that, after Theophrastus, there was a period during which Aristotle's works were no longer studied. Once the works were edited by

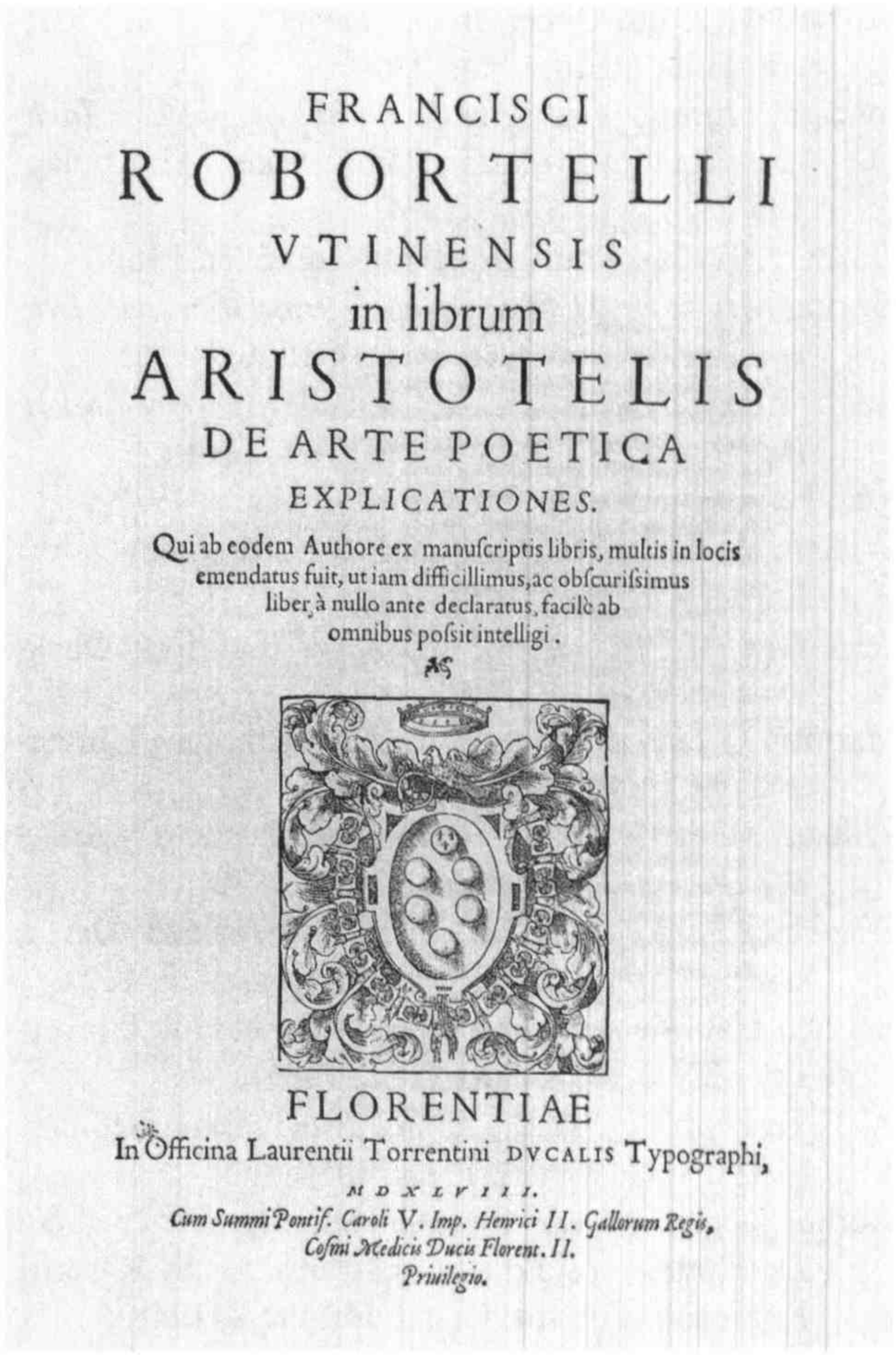
Andronicus, however, they became accessible. From the second century A.D. to the sixth century A.D. these works were the subject of extensive commentaries by Greek scholars, the most prominent of whom were Alexander of Aphrodisia (flourished circa A.D. 200), Porphyry (A.D. 233–circa 301), and Simplicius. In 529 the emperor Justinian closed the Greek schools of philosophy in Athens, and Aristotle studies fell into decline.

Aristotle's works reached the West through two different sources. Some of his logical works were known through translations and commentaries of Boethius in the sixth century A.D. Until the twelfth century, however, these were the only works of Aristotle available. The bulk of Aristotle's corpus traveled to the West by way of translation into Syriac, then Arabic. Finally, Latin translations of the Arabic texts and commentaries by Averros (1126–1198) entered Europe in the early part of the twelfth century. By the thirteenth century translations of the Greek texts had also appeared. In particular, William of Moerbeke produced the Latin translations that Aquinas used in his study of Aristotle.

The church's ban on Aristotle's philosophy of nature in 1210 indicates the popularity that his works had achieved in the universities in the thirteenth century. The respect that had developed for his thought in all fields of learning is captured by Dante Alighieri's epithet for Aristotle in the fourth canto of the *Inferno* (1315) as "the master of those who know." The culmination of the enthusiasm for Aristotle's works was Aquinas's synthesis of Aristotle's views with Christian doctrine. The synthesis ensured Aristotle's influence on subsequent thought by making Aristotelian views part of the teachings of the Catholic Church.

The decline of Aristotle's importance coincided with the rise of modern science. Aristotle's views on nature were no longer the subject for commentary, but rather the object of attack. The repudiation of his views was essentially a rejection of the Aristotelians who still affirmed the truth of his natural philosophy. The empiricism that characterizes many of his writings is congenial to the impulses that inspired modern science but was unfortunately overlooked during this period.

Aristotle's importance may be greater than that of any other philosopher, not only because what he said was taken to be authoritative during the formative periods of Western culture, but also because he addressed so many different fields of learning. Even now one must know something of the Aristotelian sciences in order to understand fully the rise of modern science. Aristotle's work is pivotal in the history of philosophy, but his views on central issues in metaphysics and ethics are still so significant to current philosophical problems that they cannot be ignored. Although his views in the *Poetics* do not offer any final account of the issues that are investigated in literary criticism, they may nevertheless serve as a significant reference point in contemporary discussions.


FRANCISCI
ROBORTELLI
VTINENSIS
in librum
ARISTOTELIS
DE ARTE POETICA
EXPLICATIONES.
Qui ab eodem Authore ex manuſcriptis libris, multis in locis emendatus fuit, ut iam difficillimus, ac obſcuriſsimus liber, à nullo ante declaratus, facilè ab omnibus poſsit intelligi.
FLORENTIAE
In Officina Laurentii Torrentini DVCALIS Typographi,
M D X L V I I I.
Cum Summi Pontif. Caroli V. Imp. Henrici II. Gallorum Regis, Coſmi Medicis Ducis Florent. II. Priuilegio.

Title page for a Renaissance commentary on Aristotle's Poetics

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Arrian

(circa A.D. 89 – circa 155)

Philip A. Stadter
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

MAJOR WORKS – EXTANT:

Anabasis of Alexander

Translation in English: *Arrian. The Campaigns of Alexander,* translated by A. de Selincourt, revised by J. R. Hamilton (Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin, 1971); *Anabasis,* translated by P. A. Brunt in *Arrian,* volumes 1–2, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976);

On India

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Circumnavigation of the Black Sea

Translation in English: *Arrian's Voyage around the Euxine Sea,* translated by Thomas Falconer and William Falconer (Oxford: J. Cooke, 1805);

Battle Formation against the Alans

Translation in English: "Battle Formation against the Alans," translated by Bernard S. Bachrach, in his *A History of the Alans in the West* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1973), pp. 126–132;

Tactics (circa A.D. 136–137)

Translation in English: *Arrian, Taktika,* translated by James G. DeVoto (Chicago: Ares, 1994);

On Hunting

Translation in English: *On Hunting,* translated by Denison B. Hull, in his *Hounds and Hunting in Ancient Greece* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964).

MAJOR WORKS – NONEXTANT or FRAGMENTARY:

Dion;

Timoleon;

Tillorobus;

Bithyniaca;

ΑΡΡΙΑΝΟΥ
ΠΕΡΙ ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ
ΑΝΑΒΑΣΕΩΣ.
Arriani de aſcenſu Alexandri.
σὺν θεῷ
Οὐ μετὰ πολὺ
Ἀρχὴ τοῦ ἡμισυ παντός.
Non ſine priuilegio.
M D X X X V

Title page for the editio princeps of Arrian's best-known work, the Anabasis of Alexander *(courtesy of the Lilly Library, Indiana University)*

Parthica [fragmentary]

Translation in English: *Arrian's Parthica,* translated and annotated by James G. DeVoto, in *Trajan's Parthian War,* by F. A. Lepper (Chicago: Ares, 1994), pp. 225–262;

Events after Alexander [fragmentary]

Translation in English: "Arrian's Events

after Alexander: Summary of Photius and Selected Fragments," translated by Walter J. Goralski, *Ancient World,* 19 (1989): 81–108;
On the Alans;
On the Nature, Composition, and Appearances of Comets;
On Infantry Exercises;
Discourses of Epictetus [fragmentary – four of at least eight books survive];
Manual of Epictetus.

Editiones principes: *Arriani de ascensu Alexandri* (Venice: Bartholomei Zanetti Casterzagensis, 1535); *Arriani et Hannonia periplus* (Basel: Froben, 1533); *Arrianus de venatione* (Paris: Sebastien Cramoisy, 1644); *Arriani Tactica et Mauricii Artius militaris libri duodecim* (Uppsala: Henry Curio, 1664).

Standard editions: *Flavii Arriani quae extant omnia,* edited by A. G. Roos, second edition, revised by G. Wirth (Leipzig: Teubner, 1967–1968); *Arrian,* 2 volumes, edited and translated by P. A. Brunt, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1976).

Arrian (Flavius Arrianus), widely known as the most readable and reliable of the extant historians of Alexander the Great and as preserver of the teaching of the philosopher Epictetus, was active in the first half of the second century A.D. His life is marked by duality: a citizen of the Greek city of Nicomedia who wrote his histories in cultured and classicizing Greek, he was also a Roman citizen and senator who, under the emperor Hadrian, rose to become consul (A.D. 129) and governor of Cappadocia (circa A.D. 131–137) with the command of two legions. Soldier, administrator, man of letters, philosopher, huntsman, he represented the ideal combination of Greek and Roman qualities for the century in which he lived.

Nicomedia (now Izmit) was a prosperous city of the Roman province of Bithynia, in the northwest corner of Anatolia. Arrian was born there in about A.D. 89 into an extremely wealthy family, which had probably already received Roman citizenship. Inscriptions indicate that his praenomen was Lucius (less probably, Aulus); in addition, he speaks of himself as Xenophon in *Circumnavigation of the Black Sea, Battle Formation against the Alans,* and *On Hunting.* Xenophon may have been a name he was given or took for himself or may have been an honorary title that indicated, as he remarks in *On Hunting* (1.4), his sharing of interests in "hunting, generalship, and wisdom" with the fifth-century B.C. Athenian, Xenophon. A portrait bust may survive, joined with a bust of Xenophon. In Nicomedia the young Arrian would have received a standard Greek education in literature and rhetoric. He developed a strong affection for his native city, where at some time he served as priest of the city's patron deities, Demeter and Kore. Later he celebrated the history of the city and the region in his *Bithyniaca.* However, in his late teens he elected to travel to Nicopolis on the Adriatic coast (near modern Prevasa) to study Stoic philosophy with the former slave, Epictetus.

Unlike many Stoics, Epictetus focused on moral decision and the mental conditioning that made it possible. His lectures were charismatic, even electrifying. The standard technique was the diatribe, or moral harangue, in which he confronted his regular pupils and any visitors – often prominent Romans stopping on their trips to and from the capital. He posed difficult, often irritating questions about fundamental values and how his hearers lived them, in a manner reminiscent of Socrates.

The heart of Epictetus's teaching, as recorded by Arrian, was a clear distinction between what things are in one's control and what things are not: "Under our control are conception, choice, desire, aversion, and in a word, all that is of our making; not under our control are our body, our possessions, reputations, offices, and in a word all that is not our own making" (*Manual of Epictetus,* 1.1). His lectures were devoted to leading his pupils and visitors to understand this distinction clearly and to make it the basis for their day-to-day choices and actions. When Epictetus spoke, Arrian writes, "the hearer could not help but feel exactly what Epictetus wanted them to feel." Using literary and contemporary examples, imaginary dialogue, and questions directed at the audience, the philosopher conveyed his vivid insight into the human condition. He was not afraid to confront high imperial officials or students who had lofty ambitions. Epictetus urged his students to public service but offered as a motive the god-given responsibility toward oneself, one's family, and one's community.

During his time as a pupil, which may have lasted several years, Arrian conceived the idea of recording the talks of his master, as Xenophon had written the conversations of Socrates in the *Memorabilia* (circa early fourth century B.C.). Keeping Epictetus's popular spoken language (the Koine) and style, Arrian selected, combined, and rearranged the material from his notes. According to a letter to his friend Lucius Gellius, which precedes the *Discourses of Epictetus* and serves as preface, Arrian did not intend to "compose" or publish the ma-

Map of the Black Sea, from Arriani Historici et Philosophi Ponti Euxini & maris Erythraei Periplus *(1577), a Latin translation of Arrian's* Circumnavigation of the Black Sea *(courtesy of the Lilly Library, Indiana University)*

terial but simply "tried, by writing down whatever I used to hear him say, as far as possible word for word, to preserve a record for myself of his thought and frank speech." He then notes that his records, "such as they were . . . have become generally available," as copies were passed on among his friends. The letter implies that this semipublication of the *Discourses of Epictetus* (amounting to at least eight books, of which only four survive), occurred after Epictetus's death, which would place the time at about A.D. 125–130.

The fame of this work, and perhaps the conduct of his life, won Arrian the title of "philosopher," with which he is honored in inscriptions found at Athens and Corinth. At Corinth a statue of Arrian had been erected by an L. Gellius Menander, who was either the recipient of the prefatory letter to the *Discourses of Epictetus* or at least a member of the same family. The *Discourses* were owned and cited by the millionaire Sophist Herodes Atticus, and the young Marcus Aurelius, before becoming emperor, found them in the library of his teacher, Rusticus, and refers to them in his late second-century A.D. *Meditations*.

At an indefinite date Arrian also prepared at the request of a certain Messalinus the *Manual of Epictetus* or handbook of Epictetian teaching, picking out the most important and striking precepts of the master. The short work (only thirty-three pages in the Greek text) is divided into three sections. The first section is about desires and reversals (1–29); the second is on duty (30–51); and the third section is on accuracy in judgment (52), with a concluding collection of philosophical quotations (53). This manual became the chief transmitter of the influence of Epictetus to later ages, and, since the Renaissance, it has been translated and cited frequently. Arrian also wrote a work on atmospheric phenomena, of which a few fragments are preserved.

Although strongly influenced by Epictetus, Arrian chose to follow a career in the public service of Rome. While still in his twenties, not long after 110, he sat on the privy council of a prominent senator and *corrector* of Achaea, C. Avidius Nigrinus. A favorite of the emperor Trajan, this senator may have been an important patron in the launching of Arrian on a career that, because his native language

was Greek, was still unusual in his day. That career was one that would lead Arrian to some of the most important offices in the empire. References in Arrian's works also suggest that he did military service on the northern frontier on the Inn and Danube Rivers.

Arrian may have participated later in Trajan's campaigns against the Parthian Empire (114–117), which he would describe in his *Parthica*. On this campaign, or earlier in Greece, he also became acquainted with Hadrian, who became emperor at Trajan's death in 117. Arrian shared with Hadrian a delight in Greek culture (including philosophy), in hunting, and in the discriminating use of military force. Under Hadrian, Arrian was made a Roman senator and advanced through the *cursus honorum* to praetor, consul, and governor of Cappadocia.

An inscription found near Córdoba, Spain (first published in 1971), contains a Greek epigram in honor of Artemis, patron of the hunt; it is signed by "proconsul Arrian." The subject, language, and signature have led scholars to identify the author with the writer Arrian. He would have composed the rather recherché epigram as proconsul of the province of Baetica (southern Spain) in the 120s, before becoming consul. However, a recent study by Beltran Fortes of the shape of the altar that bears the inscription has suggested that the date must be moved later: either the inscription has been reinscribed or the author is a different Arrian. Arrian's proconsulship in Baetica, therefore, is less certain than formerly believed.

On the other hand, numerous inscriptions, literary references, and his subsequent office of governor attest to Arrian's consulship. At this time between four and six pairs of consuls held the largely ceremonial position each year; Arrian would have been consul sometime between March and August 129. From at least 131 he was *legatus pro praetore,* or governor, of Cappadocia. The important post was located on the difficult frontier with Caucasian kingdoms and the Parthian Empire, in the territory from which Trajan had launched his attack on and temporary conquest of large areas of Parthia seventeen years before. The province, which had two legions in its service, ran from the Caucasus Mountains and the Black Sea down the upper Euphrates River to Syria. Hadrian had visited the province only a few years before and would have had a close interest in the military readiness as well as the financial stability of the province. He kept Arrian there for a long term of six years, through the year 136–137.

Three short works are closely connected with this period, although Arrian may have been writing other works as well at this time. The *Circumnavigation of the Black Sea* gives a three-part travelogue of the shore of the Black Sea. Arrian's work owes much to the ancient genre of the circumnavigation (*periplus*) but is remarkably different from other specimens that have survived. First, it is cast in the form of a letter to the emperor Hadrian, as indicated by the superscription and the references to Hadrian in the second person. Thus, it is more informal and intimate than other circumnavigations and employs asides and comments not usually found in them. Second, Arrian uses a first-person narrative in the first segment, chapters 1–11, the trip from Trapezus (Trebizond) east and north to Sebastopolis (Sukhum). He is clearly influenced by the account in Xenophon's *Anabasis* (mid fourth century B.C.), a narrative that includes an account of marching along the Black Sea and, although autobiographical, is written in the third person. Third, contrary to tradition, Arrian treats the circumnavigation discontinuously. After beginning with the part he personally toured (chapters 1–11), Arrian traces the south coast of the Black Sea from the Bosporus to Trapezus (12–16), and then, after a transitional paragraph, the north and west shores, from Sebastopolis to Byzantium (18–25). Arrian's actual voyage would have been made to tour military installations and meet with native rulers, but the details of these activities were reported separately to Hadrian in Latin. In the first part of the *Circumnavigation,* Arrian mentions the Roman garrisons he saw, but he also refers to Hadrian's visit to Trapezus, comments on the anchor from the *Argo* that was pointed out by the natives at the Phasis River, and recalls Prometheus's punishment on the rocks of the Caucasus. Arrian, that is, plays gentleman tourist as well as military commander. The second part is much simpler but pays homage to Xenophon by including verbatim every description of a city given by the earlier writer in his fifth-century B.C. *Anabasis.* The third part is noteworthy for its description of a cult of Achilles, which praises him as "a lover attached to his comrade, even choosing to die for his favorite" (23.4). Achilles' devotion to Patroclus here is meant to echo Hadrian's devotion to his lover Antinous, who had died not long before. In this occasional piece, Arrian combines in the framework of an ancient genre discreet praise of the emperor, thoughts on the duties of a governor, and a travelogue.

The *Tactics,* dated circa 136–137, is also a multiform work. The first half (1–32) repeats the man-

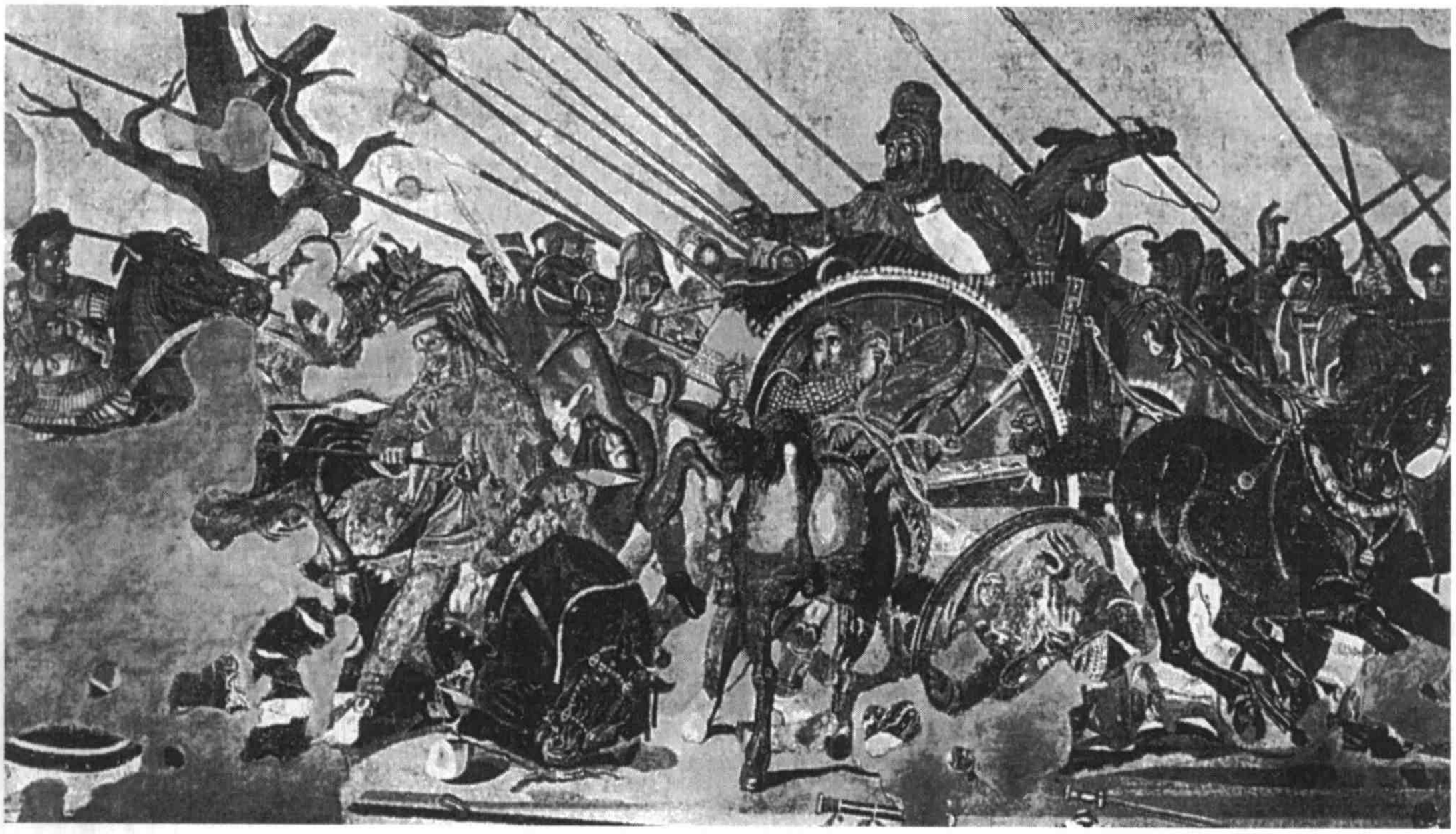
ual of Aelian, who under Trajan wrote on the same subject: Macedonian military formations and maneuvers. However, Arrian adds both new and old material and excludes technicalities. The second half (33–44) describes cavalry exercises in which Arrian was directly involved, and its tone is accordingly more lively and interesting, as troops of horsemen rush and swirl before one's eyes, executing their complex maneuvers. The piece ends with an encomium of Hadrian for introducing such exercises, and the whole work may be considered, as Everett L. Wheeler suggests in "The Legion as Phalanx" (1979), a celebratory piece for Hadrian's twentieth anniversary as emperor, which is mentioned at the end.

The short work *Battle Formation against the Alans* is truncated at the end and again is unusual in form. In 135 Arrian led a march to defend the province against the invading tribe of Alans, which had come from the Don Basin to attack south of the Caucasus. Rather than use a standard narrative, this booklet follows the style of an actual military order, using third-person imperatives and infinitives throughout. Arrian himself appears in the third person and calls himself Xenophon. He refers to particular army units but also heightens the style and uses archaizing language, such as *phalanx* for *legion* and *Scythians* for *Alans*. The campaign was evidently successful in deterring the nomads from attack. The apparent purpose of the work is to serve as a model for successful troop dispositions; one is struck by the similarity between the tactics prescribed and those found in the *Anabasis,* which also was meant to furnish instruction in military tactics. Nothing has been preserved of a more general work, *On the Alans,* which Arrian also is said to have written.

Arrian may have held other imperial posts after Cappadocia, but his next documented appearance is in Athens in 145–146 as eponymous archon, an honor bestowed on past or potential benefactors of the city. A brief glimpse into his later years is given by the physician Galen, who tells of "Arrian, the Roman consul, who, since he has injured his sense of hearing, puts the hollows of his hands beside his ears and inclines them forward, so that he can hear more easily." Arrian's leisurely life in Athens is suggested in his work *On Hunting,* where he praises his favorite dog, Horme (Onrush), who follows him to the gymnasium, waits for him at political meetings, sits at his feet as he eats, and communicates by a variety of barks.

On Hunting, apparently composed in Athens, describes the contemporary method of hunting from horseback and using dogs such as greyhounds that hunted by sight rather than scent. Arrian presents his work as a supplement to Xenophon's treatise on hunting, made necessary by that author's ignorance of the dogs and horses used by the Roman aristocracy. He then proceeds to describe the hounds used, their care, the nature of the chase, and the rules for training and breeding the hounds. The running dialogue with Xenophon's essay makes *On Hunting* less straightforward than need be, since Xenophon described a quite different kind of dog, a slow mastiff that worked by scent and required the aid of snares and other accessories to capture the quarry, whereas Arrian's hounds could easily run down a hare. This conscious intertextuality with his predecessor permits one to see the freedom with which Arrian treated a work that he admired; it also gives important indications for his use of sources in the *Anabasis* and other historical works. His charming work is remarkable for two features: first, for its warmth and personal feeling, seen, for example, in his description of his favorite hound; and second, for Arrian's sense of the superiority of his time to that of the classical past, seen most dramatically in his outburst in praise of the Libyan horses used by the Romans in comparison with the horses used by Xenophon and the Persian aristocracy (24.2–3). For all his love and imitation of the classical past, Arrian shows himself proud to live in his own day.

Arrian's modern fame as a writer and historian depends on the *Anabasis of Alexander,* his longest and stylistically most refined extant work (excluding the fragmentary *Discourses,* which is more commonly associated with Epictetus). Like his other long works, the *Anabasis of Alexander* cannot be dated definitively but probably belongs to Arrian's mature years as Roman senator and official (although it has been dated as early as before 117 and as late as the 150s). This account, avowedly encomiastic, takes the reader from Alexander the Great's accession and initial campaigns in Europe (336–335 B.C.), through his great battles for the Persian Empire, the march into India, the return to the Persian capitals, and finally to Alexander's death in Babylon in 323 B.C. in seven books. An unusual preface declares that the major sources will be the accounts of Ptolemy, the first Macedonian king of Egypt, and of Aristobulus, both participants in the march who wrote after Alexander's death. These provide the trustworthy core of the narrative, and other accounts are added as they seem important. By choosing to rely on relatively obscure contemporary accounts rather than the standard and often sensationalist histories written since Cleitarchus down to his own day, Arrian showed an admirable seriousness



A second-century-B.C. mosaic from Pompeii depicting Alexander (far left) confronting Darius, King of Persia, at Issus, a climactic battle in Alexander's conquest of the Persian Empire, described in the Anabasis of Alexander

of purpose. But this should not blind one to the fact that Arrian is not a modern documentary historian, nor does he desire to evaluate the political forces behind the conquest or its long-term effect. His goal was to celebrate Alexander as Homer had celebrated Achilles, focusing in epic fashion on the man and his deeds; and he thought his own excellence as a writer was his chief claim to success (*Anabasis of Alexander* 1.12). His laudatory narrative eschews romantic exaggeration, employing a carefully wrought classicizing Greek to bring out the extent of Alexander's conquests, the brilliance of his tactics in dealing with every military situation, and the challenges to his character that resulted from his unprecedented success.

The style of the *Anabasis of Alexander* is heavily indebted to Arrian's classical models, Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon; but the broad sweep of empire, the contrast of custom, and the revelation of fundamental human behavior found in the first two writers was not for him. His historical conception is more indebted to Xenophon, who in his fifth-century B.C. *Anabasis, Hellenica,* and *Cyropaideia* constantly returned to the theme of military and moral leadership. Arrian's *Anabasis* can be read as a field commander's guide; time and again it indicates the tactical situation confronted by Alexander and his analysis and response. The introductory section on the European campaigns (11.1.–12.1) is exemplary: in a few pages, Alexander forces a defended mountain pass, drives his enemy from protecting woods, crosses a major river, awes his enemy by precise and rapid exercises, crosses a river in retreat, executes a forced march, and captures a major fortified city. But the latter half of the book also examines Alexander's moral behavior, which was often criticized in antiquity. Arrian makes the turning point of his account several incidents of barbarism and violence: Alexander's mutilation of the pretender Bessus, the murder of his friend Clitus, his request for extraordinary homage, his execution of Callisthenes (4.7–14). Alexander had become master of the world: was he any longer master of himself (4.7.5)? The question had obvious relevance to imperial Rome, which had seen the excesses of Nero and Domitian and even select assassinations after the accession of Hadrian. In the following books Arrian continues to return to this theme, notably at the beginning and end of book 7, where Alexander confronts the final limitation of mortality. The naked philosophers of India had told him, "In a short time you will die, and possess only land enough to bury you" (7.1.6). Arrian's final evaluation of Alexander, heavily influenced by similar estimates in Thucydides and Xenophon (and by later rhetorical commonplaces), minimizes his faults

and justifies the greatness of Alexander as compared with lesser men.

Scholarship's trust in Arrian's historical accuracy depends on the value of his sources and the use he made of them. Unfortunately there is practically nothing preserved of Ptolemy and Aristobulus outside of Arrian, so that forming an independent judgment of these sources is difficult or impossible. Nor is it clear how Arrian implemented his plan to use the two authors: efforts to ascribe a predominant role to Ptolemy, for example, or to ascribe passages to one or the other author have not proved convincing. Arrian's practice in *On Hunting* with an author he admires is sobering: Xenophon is at various times quoted, paraphrased, rewritten, and distorted with little explicit indication. If one did not have the original, one would be completely baffled by the nature of Arrian's debt. However, studies contrasting the use made of Aristobulus and Nearchus by Strabo and by Arrian in *Anabasis* and *On India* (A. B. Bosworth, *From Arrian to Alexander,* 1988) have been illuminating: they reveal selection, adaptation, stylistic reworking, and change of emphasis even in short passages. In addition, Arrian employed other accounts of Alexander as they seemed, as he said in the preface, "worth narrating." Passages such as the account of Alexander's most criticized actions in 4.7–14 and the omens preceding Alexander's death depend heavily on such sources to create literary effects apparently absent from the two chief sources. Working at a distance of four and a half centuries from Alexander, Arrian selected, reshaped, and refocused earlier accounts, aiming at a veracious, useful, and stylistically admirable narrative of Alexander, rather than an analysis of sources or documents. Despite the charm of his style, the text can nevertheless be frustrating as a historical source, with errors of fact and unexplained omissions of useful information. The encomiastic purpose poorly fits modern attitudes toward dictators and conquerors. The eloquent speeches have been invented by Arrian to support his narrative and are not independent evidence. Modern historians no longer accept the *Anabasis* as the fundamental and trustworthy account of Alexander it once was considered, although they have been unable to find a better account. It remains the best written, least sensationalist, and generally reliable account of Alexander the Great.

Two other works are closely connected with the Alexander history, though quite different in form and scope. *On India* supplements the *Anabasis* with an account of the geography, ethnography, and history of India as it was when Alexander discovered it and gives a selective and stylistically improved retelling of the admiral Nearchus's account of his voyage along the coast from the Indus mouth to the Persian Gulf. The ethnographic section conflates notices of earlier authors, Megasthenes and Eratosthenes; again, as in the *Anabasis,* Arrian avoids the fantastic. Written in Ionic dialect, in imitation of Herodotus and other early ethnographic writers, *On India* looks toward the past and is silent on contemporary Roman acquaintance with the products or kingdoms of the Indus valley or the subcontinent or even the regular trade route around Arabia. Sometime after the composition of the *Anabasis* came the *Events after Alexander,* ten books on the war of succession immediately after Alexander's death in 323 B.C. All that remains of this work are a papyrus fragment and three fragments from a palimpsest manuscript, as well as a long summary preserved by the Byzantine patriarch Photius. Ten books for three years indicate an extremely dense narrative, which the papyrus and palimpsest fragments confirm. The fragments are immensely detailed and show a keen interest in troop movements and dispositions, sieges, and tactics. Arrian drew upon Hieronymus of Cardia, who also was the source of Diodorus, as well as other unknown writers, perhaps including Ptolemy.

At some time after Trajan's Parthian War (114–117), Arrian composed his *Parthica,* in seventeen books, of which a major part, perhaps the last ten books, were devoted to that war. Arrian reviewed in earlier books the foundation of Parthia and the history of Roman contacts with it. The preserved fragments indicate that Arrian presented both diplomatic exchanges and military actions. The campaigns of Trajan were handled like those of Alexander, as march narratives focused on the emperor. Quite different was the *Bithyniaca,* a history in eight books of the territory, later a Roman province, from mythological times to its accession into the Roman empire in 74 B.C. Arrian conceived it as an homage to his native land. Of the nature of the other works such as *Dion, Timoleon,* and *Tillorobos,* known to the present era only by name, one can only speculate. Dion and Timoleon, active in Sicily in the fourth century B.C., were also subjects of biographies by Plutarch; Tillorobos was an otherwise unknown bandit in Mysia in Asia Minor.

Arrian was highly regarded in his own day, as the honorary inscriptions attest. In *Alexander* (second century A.D.), Lucian calls him "a Roman of the first rank with a lifelong attachment to culture," and his countryman Dio Cassius wrote a biography, now lost. His works became standard: Dexippus in

the third century A.D. made Arrian's account the basis of his own book on the successors of Alexander. In the ninth century, Photius read and excerpted the four major works, and praised Arrian as "second to none of those best composing history." In the tenth century the major works were excerpted for the encyclopedia of history of Constantine Porphyrogennetos. The palimpsest of the *Events after Alexander* also was copied in the tenth century; portions survived in southern Italy until the fifteenth. The *Bithynica* and *Parthica* were lost late, probably at the time of the fourth crusade in the thirteenth century. The first known manuscript of the *Anabasis of Alexander* arrived in the West with Giovanni Aurispa in 1421. Four Latin translations were made in the fifteenth century alone, although the Greek editio princeps did not appear until 1535. Since then Arrian's history has been fundamental for the understanding of Alexander.

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Babrius

(circa A.D. 150 – 200)

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MAJOR WORK: *Mythiambi,* or *Fables in Iambic Verse* (late second century A.D.)

Editio princeps: *Babrii Fabulae Iambicaea CXXIII,* edited by J. F. Boissonade (Paris: Didot, 1844).

Standard Editions: *Babrii fabulae Aesopeae,* edited by O. Crusius (Leipzig: Teubner, 1897); *Aesopica,* volume 1, edited by Ben Edwin Perry (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1952), pp. 321–411, 427–477 – includes selected fables of Babrius and the full text of the Augustana collection; *Babrius and Phaedrus,* edited and translated by Perry (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1965; London: Heinemann, 1965); *Babrii mythiambi Aesopei,* edited by M. J. Luzzatto and A. La Penna (Leipzig: Teubner, 1986).

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The *Fables* of Babrius, written in choliambic verse, constitutes the earliest extant collection of Aesopic fables in Greek and is the only extant Greek collection from antiquity whose author attempts to present his fables in a more sophisticated literary form, that is, in verse. The earliest extant Greek collection in prose makes no such attempt. Rather it offers succinct narratives, told in simple, straightforward style, and makes little or no attempt at elaboration or sophistication.

The only thing securely known about Babrius is that he published a collection of 143 Aesopic fables; two introductory prologues have also been ascribed to him in ancient, medieval, and modern times. The title of Babrius's collection, which is not complete, is *Mythiambi,* or *Fables in Iambic Verse* (late second century A.D.). Fifty-seven additional fables exist, paraphrased in prose, that can safely be assigned to Babrius. These are found in the so-called *Bodleian Paraphrase,* named after its chief manuscript in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. The original collection apparently included two hundred fables in addition to the two prologues. Internal evidence from the text (that is, analyses of language and meter) together with the external evidence (that is, the earliest fragments of the text preserved on papyrus and wax tablets, datable to within approximately a half-century) indicate that the *Mythiambi* were composed sometime in the second half of the second century A.D.

Babrius is a Roman gentile name, and the fabulist was either the Hellenized descendant of Roman forebears or the offspring of a freedman who had taken a Roman name at the time of his manumission. Some scholars have held that Babrius was himself of Roman nationality and that his fables show the influence of the Latin language and its verse forms. That view is based on an analysis of the language and meter of the *Mythiambi,* which in fact proves the opposite: namely, that Babrius was for all intents and purposes a Greek writer working in a Greek literary and poetic tradition. It has been suggested by those who believe Babrius to be Roman that his full name was Valerius Babrius. But this assumption, based on the flimsiest of evidence, has now been proved false.

According to internal evidence derived from the text of the *Mythiambi,* it is probable that Babrius lived in Syria or nearby in the Middle East. For example, in fable 57 he relates that his knowledge of the Arabian character is based on personal experience. There he describes how the Arabs plundered a wagon laden with lies, deceit, and every kind of evildoing and concludes, "It is for this reason, as I have directly experienced, that the Arabs are liars and cheats." In his second prologue he demonstrates knowledge that the fable is not a Greek "invention" but goes back to an earlier Assyr-

Aesop (from an ancient kylix in the Vatican). Babrius's Mythiambi, *or* Fables in Iambic Verse *comprises the earliest collection of Aesopic fables in Greek.*

ian tradition: "Fable is the invention of the ancient Syrian [Assyrian] people, who lived long ago in the time of Ninus and Belus" (legendary Assyrian kings of about 1300 B.C., according to Greek tradition). Access to such information suggests proximity to sources in the Middle East. Indeed, Babrius probably took several of his fables from that tradition.

The second prologue also reveals that Babrius published a second book of fables intended to edify and entertain, which he dedicated to "the son of King Alexander." It is reasonable to assume that Babrius was tutor to a prince or princeling in some Middle Eastern royal court. Unfortunately, the identity of "King Alexander" is not certain. One candidate, a Jewish king named Julius Alexander who ruled in Cilicia at the end of the first century A.D., is a bit too early. A later Alexander is more likely, though a clear candidate does not emerge.

The first prologue, the introduction to Babrius's first book of fables, is addressed to a boy called "Branchos." He is likely to have been the same person as the prince mentioned above, although it is possible that he is another pupil. The name Branchos may be a poetic fiction. But it is also the name of the legendary ancestor of the prophetic family of the Branchidae, the clan associated with the oracle of Apollo at Didyma (also called Branchidae), about eleven miles south of Miletus. The clan was wiped out by Alexander the Great. But the name remained well known, and Babrius may be alluding to some connection on the part of his pupil's family with this famous cult.

Babrius published two books of fables, and from the second prologue it is clear that at least several years intervened between the two, time enough to permit inferior imitators to follow in his footsteps. "I was the first to open this door. But others came in after me, who publish fables in learned verse that look like riddles. All they've learned is to imitate me badly" (lines 9–12).

It is known that the total number of fables in the *Mythiambi* was approximately two hundred. What is not known is which fables were in which of the two books and what their arrangement was within either book. For example, the principal manuscript dating to about 1000 has taken most of the fables and arranged them alphabetically in one collection, putting the first prologue at the start and placing the second, whose first word is *mythos,* so as to precede the group of fables beginning with the letter *mu.* The likelihood is that Babrius's two books were not organized alphabetically and that the present arrangement is the work of later compilers.

In his first prologue Babrius sets himself squarely in the tradition of the Greek fable. He relates that he has taken the fables that "wise old Aesop" told in prose and has transformed them into a "sweet honeycomb of gentle verse." Thus, he names his Greek source and implicitly states his claim to be the first to give these fables a literary and poetic form in the Aesopic, that is, Greek, tradition. The best evidence for that tradition is the oldest and largest extant collection of fables written in prose and ascribed to Aesop. It contains 231 fables and probably took its present form in the second century A.D. This collection is known as the "Augustana," since it was first published from a manuscript called *Augustanus* from the Roman name of its former location, Augusta Vindelicorum, now the city of Augsburg. Several Babrian fables are not found in the Augustana or the later prose collections of Aesopic fables; Babrius used his own invention and other sources as well. The first "scientific" collection of Aesopic fables was made about 300 B.C. by the Peripatetic philosopher and Athenian dictator Demetrius of Phaleron. This may have been Babrius's principal source, but too little is known of this compilation and the ones that followed it to provide anything approaching certainty.

Greek fables of the Aesopic type are first ascribed explicitly to Aesop in the second half of the fifth century B.C., which is also the period that the

first information about this half-legendary, half-historical figure of Aesop appears. According to the most trustworthy accounts, Aesop, a Thracian slave living on the island of Samos in the early sixth century B.C., was famous for inventing and telling fables. It is unlikely that these fables were collected and published before the time of Demetrius, but some at least were well known and ascribed to Aesop more than a century earlier, as is shown by the comedies of Aristophanes (late fifth century B.C.) and Plato's *Phaedo* (399 B.C.), in which Socrates, preceding Babrius by some six hundred years, puts "the fables available and known to him, that is, those of Aesop, into verse."

However, the earliest Aesopic fable is found approximately half a century before the historical Aesop in the poetry of Archilochus (dating to about 650 B.C.). The explanation for this discrepancy is given by Babrius himself in his second prologue, in which he asserts that the "Syrians" invented fables, but that "Aesop the wise, they say, was the first to tell fables to the Greeks." *Syrian* may mean *Assyrian* for Herodotus and probably does so for Babrius. The legendary Ninus and Belus, eponymous founder of Nineveh and lord of Babylon, respectively, date back to about 1300 B.C. according to traditional Greek chronology, even earlier than the historical Assyrian Empire (about 1000 to 612 B.C.). In fact, Sumerian, Akkadian, and Assyrian fables written in cuneiform script have been found on clay tablets that date back as far as 1800 B.C. They represent a literary tradition that begins in Old Babylonian times and continues down to the end of the Assyrian Empire. Thus, the fable originates in ancient Mesopotamia in the second millennium B.C. and comes into the Greek tradition in the seventh century B.C. It is then taken up and popularized by Aesop in the sixth century B.C., and is principally associated with his name from the fifth century B.C. onward. A systematic collection of these fables was made at the end of the fourth century B.C.

For the most part Babrius works within the Greek tradition, but in at least two cases (fables 138 and 143) he probably derived his material from a source going back to Assyrian originals. In fact, one fable (84) appears to take important details of narrative and wording from its Babylonian counterpart and combine them with the ending of the corresponding fable in the Graeco-Roman tradition (fable 137 in the Augustana collection). In all three versions a gnat lands on a much larger animal. In Babrius's version and the Babylonian version the gnat is given a lively bit of direct utterance – he asks if he is a burden and promises to go off and sit either on the poplar by the river (in Babrius's version) or by the pond (Babylonian version). In the Greek prose version the gnat does not speak directly but is merely said to ask whether the other animal wants him to go away. The punch line in all three versions is the larger animal's declaration that he was totally unaware of the gnat's presence or absence. Here Babrius is a bit closer to the Greek prose version. It appears that Babrius had access directly or indirectly to non-Greek sources far older than the Greek tradition, the latter being represented by the Augustana and later prose collections.

Babrius also seems to have invented fables of his own. These include the clever and bawdy number 116, in which a husband spots his wife going out to consort with a youth; instead of giving way to a jealous rage, he convinces her to bring the boy into the house, where they can be amorous with him. Then there is fable 12, in which the famous sisters of Greek legend Procne and Philomela meet after many years of separation. The two were transformed into a swallow and a nightingale after an episode of brutal rape and monstrous revenge. Philomela was viciously assaulted by her sister's husband only to be avenged by Procne, who killed her own son and served him to his father in one of those cannibal feasts so popular in Greek myth. The dialogue of the avian sisters shows a fine ear for charm and pathos, ending with the sad acknowledgment that they must part again, this time forever. And above all there is fable 95 with its complex and sophisticated narrative, its effective characterizations, and its unusual length (102 lines); in effect, it is a short story in fable form.

To judge from the Augustana collection, Babrius uses several different techniques in reworking the prose versions of Aesopic fables. For example, he may add dialogue to expand and enliven the original narrative, as he does in fables 6 and 131, or to characterize one of the animals, giving a dramatic touch to the summary account of the prose fable (fable 13). Alternatively, descriptive details may be added to set the scene effectively, as in fable 72. In one case a short fable of the prose collection (Augustana fable 91) is expanded to twenty-five lines of verse (Babrius, fable 129). Here there is an instructive example of how Babrius gives "literary" form to his prose originals. The fable concerns a jealous donkey, a cute little puppy, and their master. The donkey tries to imitate the puppy's antics but eventually totally disrupts a meal and even endangers his master's life. Condign punishment follows. By telling more about the background of the story and about the little drama that follows, Babrius in-

creases the reader's interest in the whole business. And by increasing the punishment – Babrius's donkey is beaten to death, not just soundly beaten – the fabulist is able to give the poor animal a dying speech, not in the original, that presents the "moral" very tellingly indeed.

But Babrius differs from his Aesopic models in outlook as well as technique. As tutor to a prince, he would naturally be both scholar and courtier. And so it is not surprising to see a contempt for the lower classes, together with a positive belief in the existing social order, emerge from an overview of his fables. In Babrius the position of the ruler is unassailable, though the cruelty needed to maintain it may be concealed. Gentleness is the fabulist's counsel, but in the end only resignation is possible in the face of all-determining chance.

Few would claim the *Mythiambi* of Babrius to be a major achievement in the history of ancient literature. Nonetheless, it is a worthy contribution to a minor but not insignificant genre. As such it merits the attention of anyone interested in the folklore of Greek antiquity and in the history and evolution of the fable in the Western tradition. Babrius, always a competent versifier and at times an impressively clever one, is an able and innovative craftsman in this tradition. There is an excellent English translation of his work available, and he should not be overlooked.

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Callimachus

(circa 305 B.C. – 240 B.C.)

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MAJOR WORKS – EXTANT: *Aetia* (mid third century B.C.);
Epigrams;
Hymns;
Hecale;
Iambi;
Lyrics;
Ibis;
Pinakes.

MAJOR WORKS – NONEXTANT or FRAGMENTARY: *In Arsinoes Nuptias* [fragment 392] (278–273 B.C.);
Galatea [fragment 378] (after 278 B.C.);
Hymn 4 (after 270 B.C.);
Apotheosis Arsinoë [fragment 228] (after 270 B.C.);
Lock of Berenice [fragment 110] (246–245 B.C.);
Victory of Sosibus [fragment 384] (240 B.C.).

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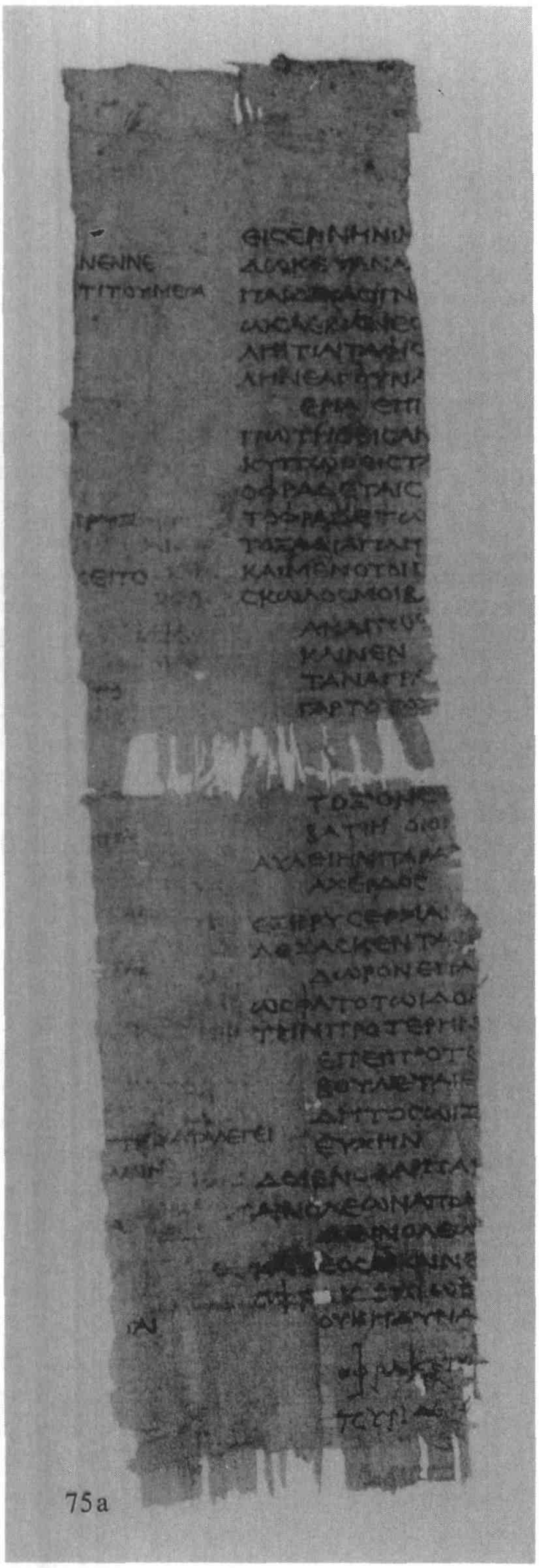
Translation in English: *Callimachus: Hymns, Epigrams, Select Fragments,* translated by Stanley Lombardo and Diane Raynor (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1988).

Callimachus was the most influential Alexandrian poet, scholar, and literary critic of his time, a figure who exerted an enormous influence on Greek, Roman, and, eventually, European literature. The author of more than eight hundred works (about forty survive in fragmentary form), he left literary works largely in the field of poetry, a genre in which he is in the front rank of ancient authors in terms of influence, if not poetic art. Called by the Roman poet Ovid "less gifted than skilled," Callimachus filled his verses with what a later Greek poet called "astringent honey"; and he celebrated the human aspects of myth for a world in which myth was largely ceremonial, if not religiously irrelevant. One of the phrases used against Callimachus is his fragment 612, "I sing nothing unattested." It is true that he offers the reader virtuoso displays of vast erudition and carefully polished work, but his human sensibility is always present, particularly in his most famous poem, the epigram on the death of his friend Heraclitus (fragment 2).

Had he been known to later readers only by his poetry, he would certainly have stood above all other ancient poets in productivity and range of subject matter; but his impact on antiquity was most felt in his prose works, particularly his catalogues of history, mythology, and literature, all of which are lost. His enormous erudition and skill at collecting and ordering the facts of the world in his prose essays and catalogues yields, in some cases, verse that seems stilted by learning and bathetic; yet he was, without question, the most significant poet and critic of his time (otherwise his influence on Roman poetry would not have been so enormous). Moreover, in the work of Callimachus, readers are at least as touched by the generosity of his portrayal of the peasant Hecale and the grief of Tiresias's mother as they are impressed by the poet's love of the abstruse in myth or language.

The chief record of Callimachus's life is the medieval Suda, a document written twelve hundred years after his death and notorious for its errors. Callimachus left as his epitaph "You are passing the tomb of Battus' son" (fragment 35). This Battus may have been a relative of the royal house of Cyrene – hence, the patronymic "Battiades" in *Epigram* 21, in Catullus, and frequently in Ovid. The



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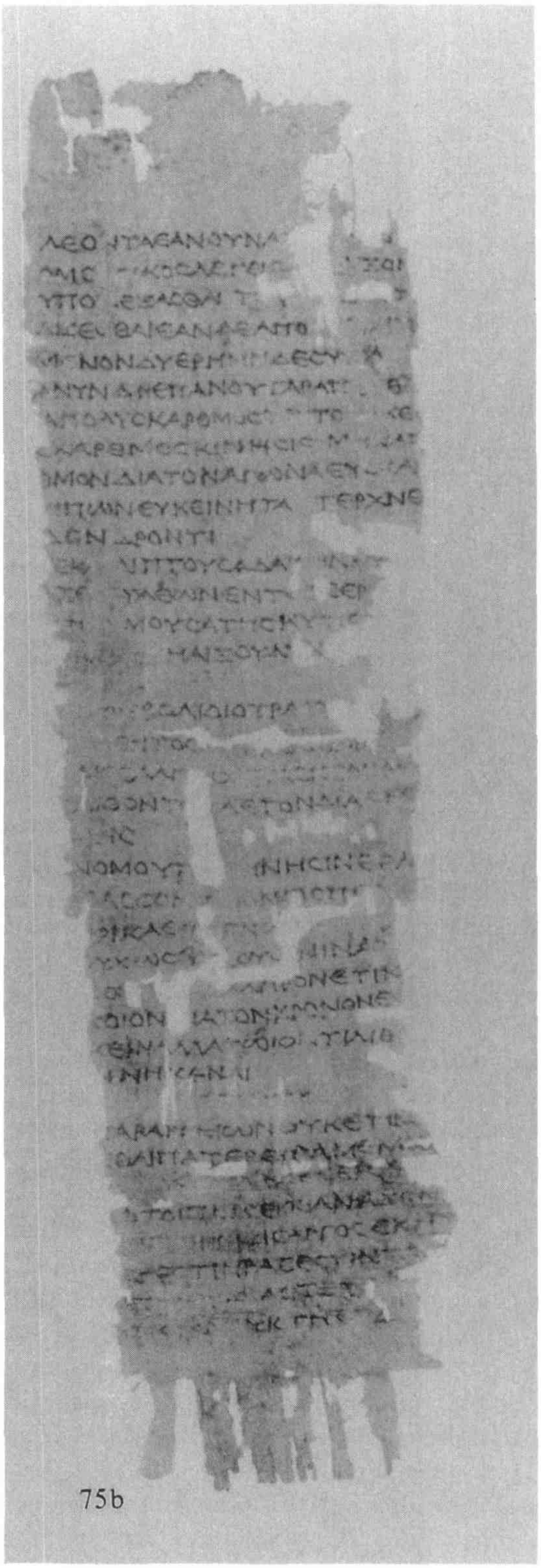


75b

Fragments of a third-century-B.C. papyrus text of Callimachus's Aetia *(P. Lille inv. 76d, 79)*

name may, however, mean no more than that Callimachus was Cyrenian. His mother was named Mesatma. He grew up in Cyrene and was educated by the grammarian Hermocrates of Iasos. Later he moved to the Alexandrian suburb of Eleusis and became a schoolmaster. Having come to the notice of the Macedonian king of Egypt, Ptolemy Philadelphus, Callimachus was appointed to the great Museum at Alexandria, where he probably worked for the rest of his life. Although he did not succeed Zenodotus as director of the library, as used to be erroneously asserted (the successor was Callimachus's student Apollonius of Rhodes), he was in charge of the ongoing project of cataloguing the holdings of the great library.

The only datable poem by Callimachus is the epic – of which only a fragment, 392, survives – on the marriage of Philadelphus and Arsinoë, written between 278 and 273. The *Galatea* (fragment 378) mentions an attack by the Gauls in 278. His *Apotheosis Arsinoë* (fragment 228) would have been composed after Arsinoë's death in 270 B.C. Callimachus's "Hymn to Delos" mentions Ptolemy as a god, following his deification in 270 B.C. According to the scholia on *Hymn* 2, line 26, the poet survived to the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus's son and successor Ptolemy Euergetes, whose marriage to Berenice in 246 led to the vastly influential *Lock of Berenice* (fragment 110, 246–245 B.C.). The *Victory of Sosibus* (fragment 384) may refer to one of Ptolemy Philopator's ministers; if so, it means that Callimachus was alive as late as 240, presumably when he complained of the effects of old age (fragment 1.33–38). Aulus Gellius relates in his second-century A.D. *Noctes Atticae* that Callimachus lived until shortly before the first Punic War. He married a daughter of Euphrates of Syracuse, by whom he had a daughter. His nephew, also named Callimachus, wrote an epic poem, "On the Island."

Callimachus's career centered around the legendary library that was built at Alexandria, Egypt. There he trained the great scholars that would follow him: Eratosthenes of Cyrene, Aristophanes of Byzantium, Ister, Hermippus, Philostephanus, and, most famous, Apollonius of Rhodes. Although Callimachus wrote a considerable number of works, most were probably not long, because he maintained that "a big book is a big evil" (fragment 465). His most famous work is unquestionably his *Aetia* (Origins, mid third century B.C.), but only his *Hymns* and *Epigrams* have come down from antiquity entire; all the rest of his works exist only in fragments or are lost altogether.

Callimachus's importance to literature centers on his view of the appropriate style, shape, and size of epic verse in an age that was seven centuries removed from Homer and his milieu. His critical opinions are known chiefly from his verse and by the accounts of others of the quarrel between him and his famous student Apollonius of Rhodes. During the time of Callimachus there were any number of imitators of Homer, men of mediocre talent and limited inventiveness, who were still trying to write long, believable poems about the gods and heroes of the Trojan War, and some, like Antimachus, enjoyed some popularity. But Callimachus led a group of scholars and writers who believed that only short poems of great learning and high finish could be meaningful to the sophisticated audience of the Hellenistic Age. Nor did he complain only of the irrelevance of epic. For him, the high tragic theater of the fifth century B.C. was impossible to emulate. He said that after writing a tragedy, he felt more mad than poor Orestes (*Epigrams,* fragment 59); and in fragment 215 he complains that "the tragic muse booms forth hollowly." His desire to avoid the common and to write new kinds of poems for his sophisticated circle is evident in this passage from fragment 28, which finds an echo in his Roman admirer Horace:

> I hate the cyclic epic, nor do I enjoy
> the road that carries many men hither and yon.
> I hate as well the vagabond lover, nor do I
> drink from every well. I hate all popular things[.]

While it used to be thought that Apollonius behaved like one of the Homeric throwbacks whom Callimachus describes as Telchines (a fairy race living in Rhodes, known for working metal and casting magic spells, and called by Hesychius "enviers,") it now seems likely that Apollonius attempted a rapprochement between the two literary styles, writing a long epic that was marked by polish, familiarity, high learning, and, most startling, a concentration on the love story of the hero. While there is much in Apollonius's *Argonautica* (third century B.C.) that Callimachus would have approved, there was clearly much that he did not; and one can see in the rewriting by Apollonius of passages from Callimachus that the disagreement ultimately devolved into a quarrel of some intensity. Callimachus pilloried Apollonius's taste in poetry (even if the poem is not directly aimed at Apollonius himself) in his *Ibis,* a poem imitated by Ovid. Although other critics such as Posidippus and Asclepiades attacked Callimachus's program and were replied to in kind and although it appears that, despite Callimachus's strictures, the popular love of the long Homeric-

Alexandria, mistress of the sea (third- or second-century-B.C. mosaic by Sophilos); the face may be that of Queen Berenice II, the wife of Ptolemy III, who appointed Callimachus to the Museum at Alexandria (Graeco-Roman Museum, Alexandria)

style epic could not be displaced by his *epyllion* (short epic), Callimachus's influence on his own generation and succeeding generations of Greeks and Romans, down to his imitators Catullus, Horace, and Ovid, was formative for Roman poetry as it is now known. He is second only to Homer in the number of times he is cited in the learned writings of antiquity. Apollonius, whose influence on Virgil was at least as great as Callimachus's, moved to Rhodes in the years after his dispute with Callimachus, perhaps overwhelmed by anger or defeat. Nevertheless, the tradition records that ultimately teacher and pupil were buried side by side in Alexandria.

How could Callimachus demonstrate his view of the epyllion? Callimachus's response to this task was to write in several different genres, whereas previous poets had tended to confine themselves to one genre. For this he was criticized (he responds in *Iambi* 13), but it is clear from the careers of the Roman authors such as Catullus, Virgil, Horace, and Ovid, all of whom were enormously influenced by him and all of whom wrote in a variety of genres, that such criticism had no lasting effect. But he continued to explore genres in which he could write Homeric verse without recourse to Homeric themes and assumptions about the existence of gods and heroes. One such genre was the hymn.

The *Aetia* (Origins or Causes) seems to have occupied Callimachus for most of his career. A long (very long by Alexandrian standards) epic poem of between four thousand and seven thousand lines, the poem, divided into four books, explored the causes (*aetia*) of customs, mythological events, and religious rituals. The *Aetia* contains many well-known fragments, including a prologue, added to a later revision and compilation of Callimachus's collected works, and the "Answer to the Telchines" (fragment 1), in which he describes his poetic program; it also contains the final *aetion,* the *Lock of Berenice* (fragment 110), famously imitated by Catullus in his sixty-sixth

poem. Indeed, considering the influence of the *Aetia* on Roman poets such as Virgil, Propertius, Catullus, and especially Ovid, one may say that it is the most influential poem in antiquity after the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. The poem exists only in fragments, but there are, too (also in fragmentary form), the remains of several versions of a *Diegesis* or digest, of Callimachus's works, in which the subject matter of his poems is given. These versions can be found in Rudolf Pfeiffer's *Callimachus* (1949–1953). They are sufficient to give an idea of how full of learning and how original in structure this great work was. A prologue attacks the Telchines (fragment 1.1–6):

> I know that the Telchines, who are ignorant
> and unfriendly to the Muses, complain of my poetry,
> Because I have not polished off one continuous poem
> of many thousands of lines on kings or heroes,
> But as a child would, I spin out a short tale
> though not few are the decades of my age.

The Telchines defy precise identification and should be considered personae for all those philistines who criticized Callimachus and championed the outmoded epic. Though an ancient commentary identifies the Telchines as the poets Asclepiades and Posidippus and the grammarian Praxiphanes of Mitylene, it is known that Asclepiades and Posidippus themselves wrote short poems. The commentator came hundreds of years after Callimachus and based his identification on internal evidence in the poems rather than any special knowledge. Chief among this evidence is that the elegiac poem *Lyde,* by Antimachus, who is accused of turgid and unclear writing in fragment 398, is praised by Asclepiades and Posidippus. But the Telchines are complaining about Callimachus's refusal to write epic, not elegy. It is known that Callimachus wrote a *Pros Praxiphanen* (in which he praises Aratus); the title is sometimes translated "Against Praxiphanes" but is more likely "In the Case of Praxiphanes," which was possibly a study of the style and language of Praxiphanes rather than a criticism of his works.

The Telchines criticize Callimachus's witty, playful, short poems for not being bloated archaic epics. But Callimachus, writing in *Hymn* 2, claims to have Apollo on his side (fragment 1.21):

> For when I first laid the tablet on my knees
> Lycian Apollo said to me "poet, feed the sacrificial victim
> So that he will be as fat as possible, but, friend,
> Keep your Muse slender.
> This too I order you: walk the path unused by wagons.
> Drive not your chariot on the common path others take
> Nor use wide roads, but use unworn ways,
> Though they be narrow."

The word for "slender" (*leptos*) is the key to Callimachus's poetic program: it connotes efficient workmanship, precise language, and brevity, as opposed to the swollen verse of the Alexandrian poetasters he condemns in *Iambi* 2: "all men have become loquacious and wordy" (fragment 192.13–14). The divergence-of-paths figure is from Hesiod (*Works and Days,* eighth century B.C.). Callimachus ends the prologue (as it now exists) with a comparison of his voice to the cicada, much as Posidippus had done.

Unfortunately, the rest of the *Aetia* is not as well preserved as the prologue. The first two books seem to continue the conceit of conversations with the Muses, reminiscent of Plutarch's first-century A.D. *Greek Questions* and the *Problemata*, a work that is attributed to Aristotle. The poem proper begins (in fragment 2) with Callimachus describing himself being transported to Mount Helicon, where the Muse gives him the mythological and historical information necessary for his poem, much as she had done in Hesiod's eighth-century B.C. poem *Theogony*. Hesiod is an apt model for Callimachus because his poetry is didactic, variegated, and shorter than the extended, high-sounding, full-blown epics of Homer. Also, his style was plain and direct. Like Hesiod, Callimachus concentrates on the dramatically pregnant episode, and he exhibited a singular creativity in his linking of these episodes by subtext, minor theme, or incident into a complex structure that was admired and imitated by Ovid in his *Metamorphoses* (early first century A.D.). Among the topics are the return of the Argonauts, the sacrifice at Lindus, Thiodamas the Dryopian, Linus and Coroebus, Diana of Lecas, and the Sicilian Cities. In short, he has adapted the demands, language, characters, events, and scope of the epic by means of a collection of episodes that are often lyric or elegiac in tone.

In the last two books, the question-and-answer format is abandoned (as is any real pretense to narrative) in favor of a recounting of the stories without any extended connecting device. Pfeiffer in *Callimachus* assumes that these were collected, or at least reworked, by Callimachus after 247 B.C., because the poet refers to himself as a youth in the "Dream" fragment but as an old man in the prologue against the Telchines. The mention of Hesiod in the epi-

logue connects with the Hesiodic dream sequence with which book 1 originally began.

Just as the Muses were the unifying element of books 1 and 2, it is now thought that Queen Berenice, from Callimachus's own Cyrene and the princess bride of Ptolemy Euergetes, is the unifying element of books 3 and 4. Book 3 probably began with a poem celebrating the victory of Queen Berenice in a chariot race (of which exists a fragment, the *Victory of Berenice,* discovered in 1941), while scholars know that book 4 ended with the famous aetion titled the *Lock of Berenice,* the original of which survives only in fragmentary form (fragment 110) but which also exists in a translation by Catullus. Shortly after he became king in 247 B.C., Ptolemy was obliged to fight the Syrians in the East. His wife promised a lock of her hair to the gods if her husband returned home safely, and, after she fulfilled her promise upon his safe return, the lock disappeared from the Temple of Arsinoë Aphrodite at Zephyrium. Subsequently the court astronomer Conon found it in the heavens, where it is still referred to as the Coma Berenices. Callimachus's poem is spoken by the enskied lock, happy to be in heaven but sad at being parted from its princess. Wit, irony, and elegance worthy of the English Augustans are here displayed, and it is not surprising that Alexander Pope's "Rape of the Lock" (1714) is indebted to Callimachus.

The most extended (and charming) story of the *Aetia* is that of Acontius and Cydippe (fragments 67–75), an account involving the early history of Keos, an appropriate topic for the poem. Acontius tricked Cydippe into marriage by tossing an apple to her as she stood at the Temple of Artemis. She picked up the apple and read the words written on it, "I swear by Artemis that I shall marry Acontius." By reading the inscription Cydippe betrothed herself to marry Acontius, although her father tried unsuccessfully to marry her off to others three times. She became inexplicably ill before each wedding day, and when her father consulted Apollo, he was told the reason for her illnesses, and the marriage to Acontius finally took place.

The story is typically Callimachean in that the librarian cites his source, one Xenomedes (fragment 75.54); no previous poet of antiquity had cited his sources. Xenophanes had written prose, of course, and Callimachus was practicing the Alexandrian art of *metaphrasis,* or the translation of prose works into poetry. Nicander and Aratus, linked with Hesiod by Callimachus in epigram 27, were the chief practitioners of this particularly popular art, which involved a certain incongruity between prosaic subject matter (for example, the cure for snakebites or the arrangement of the constellations) and elaborate verse technique and vocabulary. Metaphrasis enjoyed a considerable vogue in the Rome of Cicero, Catullus, and Virgil. Indeed, the *Aetia* was much studied by Roman poets. For example, Ovid's *Fasti* imitates books 1 and 2, while Propertius's elegies are indebted to books 3 and 4.

The story is also characteristic for its lack of narrative balance. Callimachus does not concentrate on the sequence of events, or even the events themselves, as another poet might: he is interested in the human responses to the events, so he focuses on the beauty of the young lovers, the despair of Acontius, the illness of Cydippe. Thus, he has effected his transformation and modernization of Homeric subject matter: an age that feels nothing for Olympian gods can at least feel much for the human vicissitudes of love.

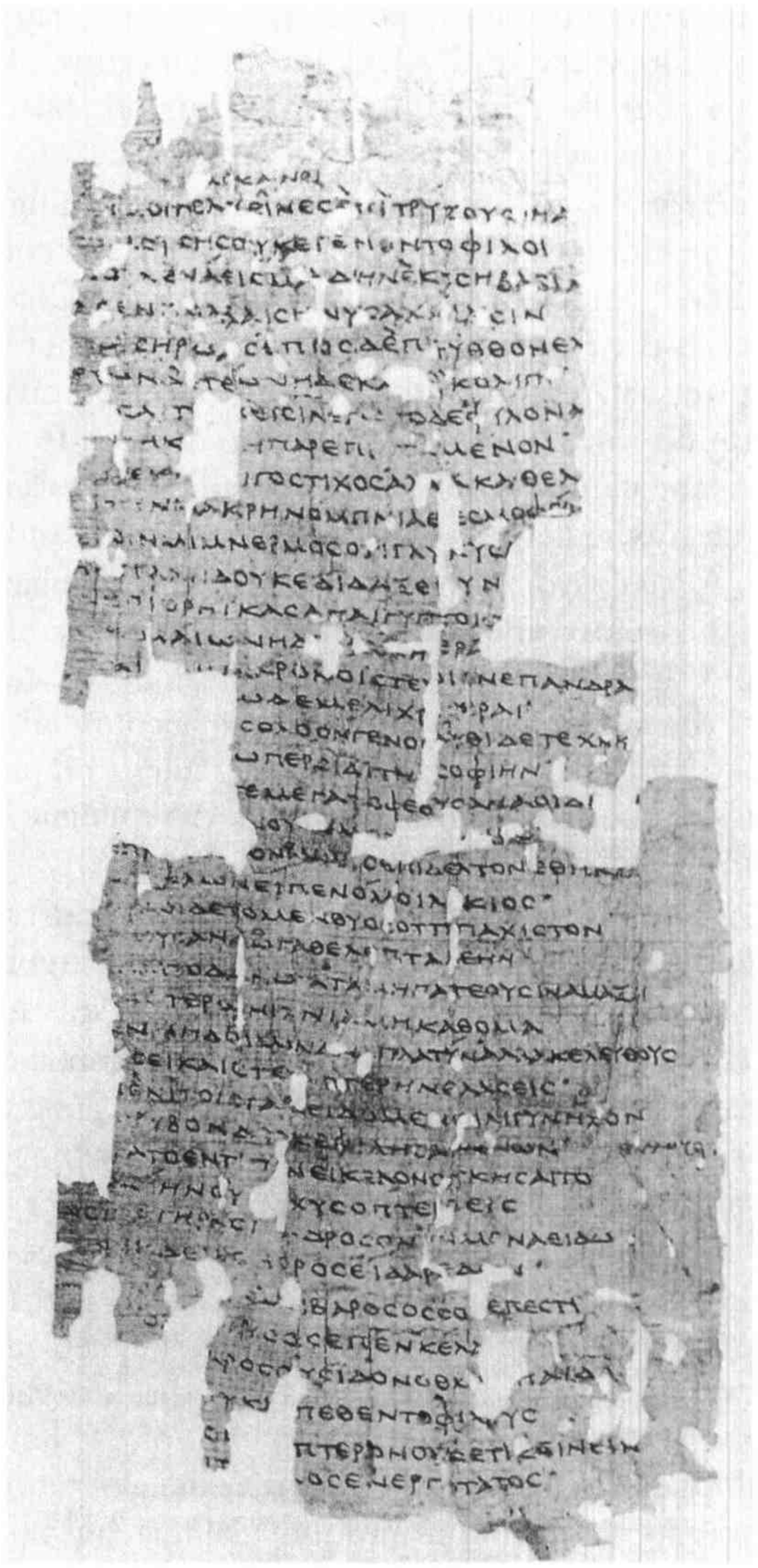
All six of Callimachus's *Hymns* survive, preserved in the same manuscript as the hymns of Homer (and others) on which they are based. (The first edition of Callimachus's *Hymns* is dated circa 1496 in Florence. It was edited by Stephanus in 1566 with a Greek commentary, Latin translation, and thirty-three of Callimachus's epigrams.) But Callimachus's hymns were not written for public performance at religious ceremonies; they were meant for his sophisticated circle of readers. Like the thirty-three hymns attributed to Homer, Callimachus's hymns deal with Homeric deities and employ Homeric formulas, and five are written in dactylic hexameter. But Callimachus makes these poems distinctly his own by variations and innovations in the genre that are deliberately un-Homeric: for example, he may address the god through the Muses and speak of the difficulty of his task before launching into it, as did Homer, but he felt no need, as authors of conventional hymns of earlier generations did, to beg a god's help in retelling the myth at hand.

The six hymns show an interesting arrangement that dates from at least the second century A.D., although it may not be Callimachus's own arrangement nor reflect the order of composition. The first four are in dactylic hexameter and Ionic dialect, like the Homeric Hymns; *Hymns* 5 and 6 are in the Doric dialect, and the former is written in elegiac meter. Although *Hymns* 1 and 2 are linked by the association of a contemporary political figure with the divinity in question, *Hymns* 2, 5, and 6 are linked by the epiphany of their deities at the beginning. The poems gradually increase in length, reaching a climax at *Hymn* 4 (326 lines), then decreasing in the last two hymns (142 and 138 lines, respectively).

Callimachus's first hymn, the *Hymn to Zeus,* has the traditional structure: an opening *priamel*, an exposition of the possible ways in which to praise his subject, a recounting of part of the god's myth, and an epilogue on the greatness of the subject. In Arcadia, following the birth of Zeus, his mother, Rhea, needs water, and Callimachus, who had written an essay on rivers, launches into a description of six rivers in the area that were dry. Rhea makes the rivers run with water and gives the infant Zeus to the nymph Neda to take to Knossos in Crete. En route, Zeus drops his navel at Omphalion, the "place of the navel," a fact that allows Callimachus to indulge, as he frequently does, his taste for the aetion. The boy Zeus becomes an adult and, according to Callimachus, is given control of Olympus by his family, as reported by Hesiod, not by lot, as reported by Homer and Pindar. Whether this passage relates to Ptolemy Soter's receiving control of Egypt from the staff officers of Alexandria or not, Callimachus explicitly links the temporal ruler Ptolemy with the ruler of the universe. In his traditional close, Callimachus laments every poet's inability to make his song match the greatness of the subject of this poem.

Hymn 2 is addressed to Apollo and begins not with a priamel but with Apollo appearing at his shrine; it ends with an elaborate symbolic representation of the literary situation at Alexandria. When the worshipers realize that the god is present, the chorus of boys sing the god's praises as an archer, poet, prophet, healer, protector of flocks, and founder of cities. Thus, Apollo founded Cyrene, and Callimachus relates that the ritual chant "Hië Paieon" (Shoot, son) comes from the crowd, which is urging Apollo to kill the great serpent Pytho. Whether or not Callimachus associates the king who has the protection of the Olympians at line 26 with Ptolemy Euergetes, the famous ending of the poem makes clear who Callimachus's poetical enemies are, as he drifts away from the subject of Apollo to settle some professional and artistic scores. Envy, who, according to ancient commentators, is the representation of a critic who faulted Callimachus for not writing Homeric-style and Homeric-length epic, pays a call and is literally kicked off the scene by Apollo (lines 105–113):

> Envy spoke privately in Apollo's ear:
> "I do not admire a poet who does not sing as great as the sea."
> Apollo kicked Envy out and said this:
> "The flood of the Assyrian River is great, but it carries
> Great filth and garbage in its waters.
> The priestesses of Demeter do not bring her water from each river,
> But only from that thin stream that arises pure and undefiled
> From the sacred fountain, the acme or waters.
> Hail, Lord, and let Blame go where Envy abides."



Fragment of a second-century-A.D. papyrus text of the prologue to Callimachus's Aetia *(Egypt Exploration Society, London)*

The "sea" may be the *Argonautica* of Apollonius of Rhodes, and this passage may be a reference to the quarrel between Callimachus and Apollonius. The garbage on the great rivers is the outworn affectation of Homeric style in long poems by contemporary Homeric imitators, while the clear thin stream is obviously a reference to the shorter, more rarefied work of Callimachus. If Callimachus speaks of certain poetic limitations at the close of the *Hymn to Zeus,* he is here approved and confirmed by Apollo.

Hymns 3 and 4 are cult poems that require for full appreciation a far greater understanding of genre

and background than is possible from what remains of hymnic verse and Alexandrian literature. It is known that they are filled with allusion, but the sources to which they point are not extant.

Hymn 3 is addressed to Artemis, beginning, as does the Homeric Hymn to Hermes, with the god in childhood, being dandled by her father, Zeus. Characteristic is the emphasis on the intimacy of father and daughter as Artemis pleads for eternal virginity (à la Sappho or Alcaeus) and a group of friends with whom she can hunt. She is delivered to the forge of Hephaestus, where Cyclops gives her a bow and arrows. A passage describing Artemis delivering plagues upon the unjust and prosperity upon the just reminds one of Callimachus's moral model Hesiod (see *Aetia*), while the poem concludes with an account of the goddess's return to Olympus and Hercules' complaint about the poor results from the hunt. An epilogue lists Artemis's worshippers and places of worship.

Hymn 4 differs from the rest by being addressed not to a god but to a god's land, in this case Apollo's Delos. The hymn treats his mother's, Leto's, search for a suitable place to give birth and Apollo's prophecy of the successful reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus. *Hymn* 4 to Delos is the most Homeric of the lot, approaching the style and tone of the Homeric Hymn to Apollo.

Hymns 5 and 6 tell of the dire consequences attending the denial of proper respect to a goddess. *Hymn* 5 is written in elegiac couplets. It begins with a description of the preparations for the festival of Athena at Argos and the anticipation of the female worshippers as they wait to escort Athena's statue to the river for its rite of purification. Callimachus builds upon the women's desire to see the statue, but a priest warns the men of the area not to come near the ceremony, invoking the story of Tiresias, who inadvertently spied Athena bathing and was blinded by her and then, after the complaints of his mother, was given the powers of prophecy in compensation. Callimachus focuses not on the act itself, nor the reaction of Tiresias, but rather on the grief of Tiresias's mother, the nymph Chariclo, who had been bathing with Athena at the time. By concentrating on the breathless anticipation of the celebrants and the grief of Chariclo, Callimachus moves this poem (as he does the next) from a staid religious hymn into a touching poem of human sensibility.

In *Hymn* 6 Erysichthon cuts down a grove of trees belonging to Demeter, despite admonitions. The crime is recounted in epic language, and Demeter visits upon him an insatiable hunger. Callimachus describes in detail the shame Erysichthon's parents feel as their son eats everything in the house, including the family pets, and ultimately becomes a beggar by the roadside. Again, it is not the central human character or deity with whom Callimachus is concerned; he is concerned, rather, with the emotions of supporting players – in this case, the parents.

Callimachus applied Homeric diction and tone to a sensibility and style that might more readily be associated with the meters and subject matter of lyric poetry, while revealing immense learning on the god in question, learning that is interesting, frequently recondite, and often personal. Other poets such as Nicander, Aratus, and Lycophron were adapting traditional genres to Alexandrian tastes, but Callimachus was probably the most learned of the lot.

The sixty-three epigrams and additional fragments that exist show that Callimachus was one of the ancient masters of the dedicatory and epitaphic epigram (though the authorship of some fragments is in question); nevertheless, other epigrams drawn from his experiences in youth have more appeal to many modern readers. His model was Asclepiades, who expanded the range not only of subject matter (beyond the funerary and the invective) but also emotion (beyond anger and passion) available to the epigrammatist. The grammarian Archibius, one generation later, wrote a commentary on the epigrams, which were collected early in the *Greek Anthology*. Callimachus was also much admired by Martial.

Asclepiades of Samos (*flourished* 290 B.C.) developed the amatory epigram and some of its enduring figures: Love as an archer and Eros as his child. Callimachus attacked him for admiring the Homerizing epicists of his day, poets such as Antimachus, but Callimachus at the same time derived considerable inspiration from Asclepiades' poetry. From Asclepiades' initial forays into the subject of love, it was only a short while before epigrammatic poetry became the genre of personal expression, not only of love but also of anger, jealousy, admiration, and, particularly memorable with Callimachus, grief, as in his poem on the death of his friend Heraclitus (not the philosopher). Here he develops the traditional funerary epigram (long used for epitaphs and funerary inscriptions) into a human lament of great passion (fragment 2), famously translated by William Johnson Cory:

> They told me, Heraclitus, they told me you were dead,
> they brought me bitter news to hear and bitter tears to shed.
> I wept as I remembered how often you and I
> Had tired the sun with talking, and sent him down the sky.
>
> And now that thou art lying, my dear old Carian guest,
> a handful of grey ashes, long long ago at rest,

and still are they pleasant voices, thy nightingales awake,
for death, he taketh all away, but them he cannot take.

Callimachus can also employ his playfulness in such epigrams, particularly fragments 47 and 13. J. Ferguson in "The Epigrams of Callimachus" (1920) showed the wit that lies beneath the surface of fragment 19:

Here a father buries his twelve-year-old son; Phillip
here he leaves his great hope, Nicoteles.

The name "Phillip" means "lover of horses"; the words meaning "his great hope" are also those that refer to the favorite in a race; and the word for "buries" can also mean "sent to pasture." To all these are added the ironic name of the dead boy, which means "winner." Thus, Ferguson renders the poem:

Mr. Ryder senior retired
his twelve-year-old son
here, the favorite,
Victor.

Elsewhere Callimachus puns on one who was short of stature, speech, and life: "This stranger was short, and thus this brief line / 'Theris, son of Aristaeus, a Cretan,' will be for a long time on me."

The literary values of Callimachus are most evident in the epigrams. Fragment 6 challenges the validity of the long Homeric-style poem, and fragment 28 uses this view as a pretext to argue that, just as a young lover can still be appealing, so epic poetry, if sufficiently beautiful, can appeal, no matter how trite or outworn the genre may have become.

Esteemed by Quintilian in his first-century A.D. *Institutes* as the greatest of elegiac poets, Callimachus in his elegies served as a model for Catullus, Propertius, and Ovid. Only fragments of the elegies remain, although their content and style can be guessed from some Roman imitations. The *Victory of Sosibus* (fragment 384) seems to be an attempt to write an *epinicion,* or victory ode, in the manner of Pindar but in elegiac meter. *Grapheion* is another such attempt.

Callimachus wrote a collection of thirteen poems in a variety of iambic meters (chiefly the scazon and iambic trimeter) totaling nearly one thousand lines. The dates of composition are not known and only fragments remain of the *iambi,* but summaries of their contents can be found in the *Diegesis.* The iamb, begun by Archilochus of Paros in the seventh century B.C., treated a variety of topics in a variety of meters. In the next century the vituperative Hipponax of Ephesus attacked enemies with his verse, although the enemies may have been as fictional as the Telchines. Callimachus's *Iambi* 1–3 and 5 lampoon contemporary morality and literature; 4 and 13 respond to his literary critics; 6 describes the statue of Zeus at Olympia by Phidias; 7–11 reflect the themes of the *Aetia;* 12 treats the birth of his friend Leon's daughter. The variety of meter and subject matter had significant influence on the development of Roman satire.

In *Iambi* 1 Callimachus assumes the voice of Hipponax, up from the underworld and upbraiding the Alexandrian poets for their incessant infighting (fragment 191.6). He compares them in Homeric similes to wasps and flies and relates the fable of the cup of Bathycles (fragment 191.31). The dying Bathycles orders his son Amphalces to award a golden cup to the wisest of the Seven Sages. Amphalces gives the cup to the philosopher Thales, who demurs and gives the cup to Bias, who passes it to another Wise Man, and on and on, through Solon and Chilon, until it comes back to Thales again. He dedicates it to Apollo, and he (or another of the Wise Men) is called "as mad as Alcmeon" for refusing to accept the cup. Hipponax then returns to Hades.

According to the *Diegesis, Iambi* 2 (fragment 192) is an animal fable in the choliambic meter. Originally all animals could talk, but after the swan approached Zeus to ask for the abolition of old age and the fox criticized the reign of Zeus as unfair, the god took speech from all animals and gave it to men. The result is that men talk too much, and Callimachus cites, as prime examples, Eudemos and Philton, two otherwise unknown figures (possibly comic writers).

Iambi 3 (fragment 193) is the most personal of the iambs and is written in the first person. It begins on a high moralistic note: we have declined from the highly moral times past; according to the *Diegesis,* money is nowadays more important than virtue. The general observation yields quickly to the personal as Callimachus reproaches a youth named Euthydemos for using his beauty and youth for money. Apparently the boy's mother has introduced him to a man richer and thus more desirable than Callimachus, who would prefer under the circumstances to be one of the emasculated followers of Cybele or Adonis (fragment 193.34–38). The poet concludes with the sad chestnut, "I must eat the dough I have kneaded" (fragment 193.39). The first-century B.C. Roman poet Tibullus wrote an imitation of this poem.

Although only shreds of *Iambi* 3 remain, most of 4 (fragment 194) seems to have survived. Callimachus and a rival are arguing when a certain Simos interrupts, saying he is as good as either of them (*Diegesis,* 7.2–5). Callimachus responds with the fable of the olive and laurel trees arguing on Mount Tmolus. Each of the two trees lists its own qualities and uses; then the two trees are interrupted by a bramble bush claiming to be the equal of the trees, to which the laurel responds, "You disgraceful thing, you pretend to be one of us? Zeus save me from that! Even having you nearby makes me gag" (fragment 194.102–104). This is a rhetorically sophisticated iamb in which the trees present like barristers formal arguments for their superiority and responses to criticisms, yet Callimachus manages to give them personalities: the olive is aloof and witty, the laurel aggressive and sclerotic. Whether they represent contemporary Alexandrian literary figures is debatable, nor would it even be clear which of the trees best represents Callimachus himself.

The remains of *Iambi* 5–12 are so scanty they can be dealt with briefly. In 5 Callimachus advises a schoolteacher (named either Apollonius or Cleon) who abuses his students that he might be caught. Though the opening (fragment 195.1–3) reminds the reader of Hipponax, the tone of friendly advice clearly does not. *Iambi* 6 (fragment 196) is a *propemticon,* a poem praying for the safe voyage and return of a friend. Callimachus's friend has left to see the statue of Zeus at Elis. The poet gives the dimensions of the base, throne, and footstool of the statue of Zeus; he also tells its cost and the name of the sculptor. The poem is written in the Doric dialect, and the meter is iambic trimeters, alternating with ithyphallics, as in the next poem. *Iambi* 7 (fragment 197) involves the statue of Hermes Perpheraios, carved by Epeus, the man who created the Trojan Horse. *Iambi* 8 (the one-line fragment 198) is Callimachus's attempt to adapt the formal *epinicion,* or victory poem, to his own tastes: he casts it in the iambic meter and includes an aetion. Polycles of Aegina has not only won the *diaulos* game (in which contestants race and return with a filled amphora), but he gives the aetion of the game itself. *Iambi* 9 (fragment 199) involves a statue of Hermes speaking to a lover, giving an aetion that explains the origin of his state of perpetual arousal. *Iambi* 10 (fragment 200) describes the origin of the sacrifice of boars to Aphrodite; 11 (fragment 201) treats the origin of a proverb; and 12 (fragment 202) is a birthday-celebration poem for a friend.

There is little doubt that *Iambi* 13 (fragment 203) was intended to round off the book with a reminiscence of *Iambi* 1. It is in Ionic dialect and choliambic meter, and it deals with the literary climate at Alexandria. Callimachus answers those unnamed critics who criticized the variety (*polyeideia*) in his poems (*Diegesis* 9.34–36). His model, he says, is the poet Ion of Chios (born in 490 B.C.), who, like Callimachus, wrote in a wide variety of genres, in poetry and prose. After all, Callimachus argues, one does not criticize a craftsman for making different kinds of tools. With the fragmentary remains of this poem is a counterpart to the epilogue of the second hymn and the prologue to the *Aetia.* Again the high temperature of the literary feud is evident: a poet's sanity is questioned; one nearly assaults another; one is called a slave; and other poets or the Muses flee the scene, lest they be slandered (fragments 203.20–21; 52–53; 54–58; 59–60).

According to the ancient commentary on the *Hymns,* Callimachus wrote the *Hecale* to embody his views on the proper size and style of the epic: "In this poem he attacks those who criticized him for not being able to write a long poem." Earlier thought to be a response to Apollonius's *Argonautica,* the poem is more likely a response to the experiments of Antimachus in his *Lyde* already mentioned. Research has shown, however, that the *Argonautica* draws in several places from the *Hecale* and the *Lyde* was written in elegiacs.

In line with his stricture against large books, the poem is an epyllion of one thousand lines that treats events concerning the defeat of the Marathonian bull by Theseus (*Diegesis,* 10.18–11.7). The full story is told by Plutarch in his late-first-century A.D. *Life of Theseus:* Medea had tried unsuccessfully to kill Theseus, who is now protected by his father. But a bull is devastating Marathon, and Theseus sneaks out of the house by night to vanquish the animal. A rainstorm forces him to seek shelter with an old woman named Hecale, who, despite her poverty, shares with Theseus whatever she has. When he leaves at dawn, she vows to make a sacrifice to Zeus for his safe return. After killing the bull, Theseus returns to find that Hecale has died; he then establishes a deme and sanctuary to Zeus, giving her name to both. Fewer than 150 fragments of this poem exist, and it is impossible to do more than speculate on its nature. It can be said that, in characteristic fashion, Callimachus focuses not on the decisive fight, but rather on the old woman's kindness and generosity to Theseus, despite her poverty. He mentions the details of the fire, the implements, and the food involved in the simple dinner with the sentimental attachment of a metropolitan Alexandrian longing for the simple life. The conversation of Theseus and Hecale allows the poet to show off his learning by bringing in

CALLIMACHI
HYMNI,
EPIGRAMMATA
ET
FRAGMENTA,
cum notis integris
H. STEPHANI, B. VULCANII, ANNAE FABRI,
TH. GRAEVII, R. BENTLEJI;
quibus accedunt
EZECHIELIS SPANHEMII
Commentarius,
& notae nunc primum editae
TIBERII HEMSTERHUSII & DAVIDIS RUHNKENII.
Textum ad MSS. fidem recensuit, Latine vertit, atque notas suas adjecit
JO. AUGUSTUS ERNESTI.
TOMUS PRIMUS.

LUGDUNI BATAVORUM,
Apud SAMUELEM ET JOANNEM LUCHTMANS,
Academiae Typographos. MDCCLXI.

Frontispiece and title page for an eighteenth-century edition of the works of Callimachus with Latin translations and commentary

local legends. On the other hand, Callimachus in fragments 243 and 313 recalls the epic tone and milieu by the similarity, both in language and subject, to the visit of Odysseus to the swineherd Eumaeus (like Hecale, not born a peasant) in the *Odyssey*. Ever the historian, Callimachus includes an aetion on the founding of an Attic deme, complete with talking birds. Ovid (in his early-first-century-A.D. *Metamorphoses*) and the poet of the Virgilian *Moretum* adapted the eating scene, while Ovid also used the talking bird in *Metamorphoses*. The poem also resembles Callimachus's fragment 383, a victory ode for a winner at the Nemean games, with an account of how Heracles established the Nemean games by ridding Nemea of a devastating lion. The focus in that poem is not the killing of the lion but Heracles' stay with Molorchus, a dirt farmer. When Molorchus offers Heracles his last ram, the hero tells him to wait until after his struggle with the lion: if he wins, he will take it; if he loses, it should belong to the underworld.

In both cases Callimachus characteristically moves the telling of the story away from the actual events and into the human drama associated with the events. This original way of treating traditional material is perhaps the most significantly original literary contribution that Callimachus made. The interest in such rare and even small features of a story, treated in epic language and meter, affected the Alexandrian taste; it led to a resurgence and redefinition of the elegy, lyric, and – in the hands of Callimachus's student Apollonius and, later, Virgil – the epic.

Of the lyrics that Callimachus wrote, fragments of only four remain (fragments 226–229): a poem in phalaecean meter on the Lemnian women (also treated by Apollonius of Rhodes in the *Argonautica*); a drinking song in honor of the Dioscuri; the *Deification of Arsinoë;* and a poem on the deification of Branchus, who founded Apollo's temple at Didyme. The poet's effective use of the galliambic meter must have influenced the Romans Catullus and Varro of Reate.

Ibis, a polemical poem that was called by the *Suda* "obscure and abusive," attacked an enemy, possibly Apollonius of Rhodes. Ovid used the style but not the subject matter of Callimachus for his own poem *Ibis.* Callimachus's poem is entirely lost. The *Suda* also refers to tragedies, comedies, and satyr plays written by Callimachus, all of which have disappeared.

Among Callimachus's prose works, *Pinakes* (Lists) was the first comprehensive catalogue of the literature and authors of ancient Greece, the catalogue of the Alexandrian Library, composed of 120 volumes. Callimachus arranged the works of the Alexandrian Library chronologically into classes such as oratory, comedy, tragedy, philosophy, and so forth. A commentary was written by Callimachus's student Aristophanes of Byzantium. Callimachus seems to have been an inveterate cataloguer and compiler. Among his other known prose works are "A Chronological Register of the Athenian Dramatists," "A Collection of Marvels in All the Earth According to Localities," "On Nymphs, Birds, Games, Winds, Rivers, etc.," "On Games," "On Winds," and "Against Praxiphanes"; he also wrote a treatment of the subjects and language of the philosopher Democritus, as well as other encyclopedias. He composed, too, the *Mouseion,* a treatment of the Museum of Alexandria and the scholars who worked there.

It is arguable that there has never been a poet of such wide learning and poetic accomplishment as Callimachus, nor one who exerted such a lasting influence, either before or after his time. Certainly no one else at Alexandria appears to have written in so many different genres nor to have had such lasting influence on later writers. By shaping the work of the Latin poet Propertius, for example, Callimachus had an influence that extended to the twentieth-century American poet Ezra Pound, who not only learned from Propertius but who himself influenced generations of American writers.

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Cassius Dio

(circa A.D. 155/164 – post A.D. 229)

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MAJOR WORK – EXTANT: *Roman History* (early third century A.D.)

MAJOR WORKS – NONEXTANT: *On Dreams and Portents;*
The Life of Arrian the Philosopher.

Editiones principes: 36–58: *Dionis Romanarum Historiarum libri XXIII a XXXVI ad LVIII usque,* edited by R. Stephanus (Paris: R. Stephanus, 1548); *Epitome of Xiphilinos: Dionis Rerum Romanarum a Pompeio Magno ad Alexandrum Mamaeae epitome,* edited by Joannis Xiphilinos (Paris: R. Stephanus, 1551); *Dione Cassio,* translated by M. Francesco Baldelli (Vinegia: Gabriel Gilito de' Ferrari, 1565).

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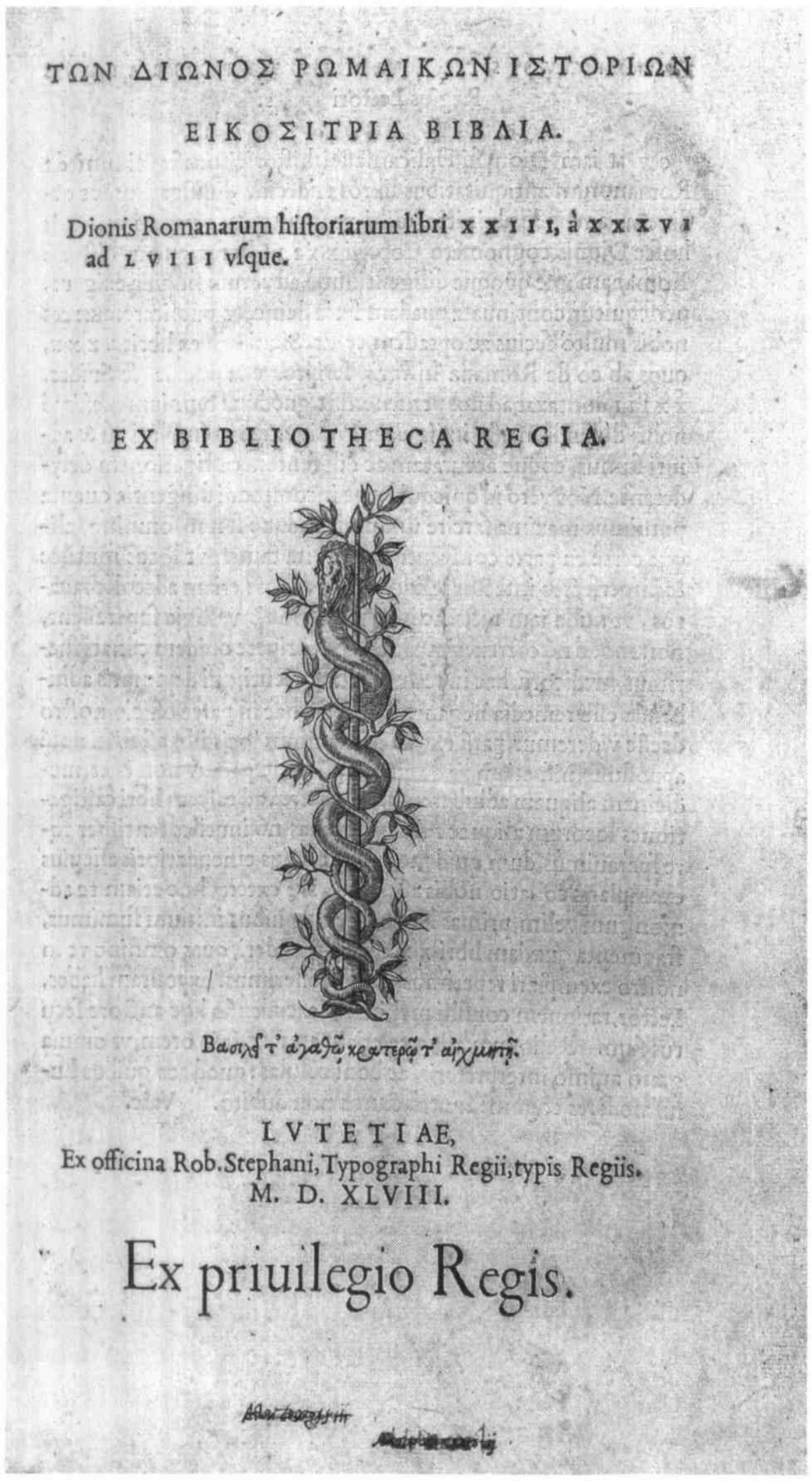
Cassius Dio, a Bithynian Greek who later became a Roman senator and consul, is known primarily for his partially extant *Roman History* (early third century A.D.). This work, eighty books long, was the last full history of Rome to be written in antiquity; it covers the more than one-thousand-year period from the supposed arrival of Aeneas in Italy in the eleventh century B.C. until Dio's own consulate in A.D. 229. During a public career in which he was remarkably adept at shifting with changing political winds, Dio prospered under a series of emperors from Commodus (who ruled from A.D. 180 to 192) to Severus Alexander (who reigned from A.D. 222 to 235); Dio preserves in his remarkable history firsthand accounts of all of them. In *A Study of Cassius Dio* (1964) Fergus Millar writes that there exists for Dio "a more valuable record of personal experience than for any other ancient historian."

Dio, whose full name was Cassius Dio Cocceianus (his praenomen, or first name, is unknown), was a native of Nicaea in Bithynia. For his date of birth, various dates between A.D. 155 and 164 have been suggested. If his praetorship of A.D. 194 was held in or after his thirtieth year, as was customary, he could not have been born after 164. His family was distinguished both for imperial service and literary composition. He was the son of Cassius Apronianus, who held the office of *suffect* (substitute) consul before serving as the proconsul of Lycia and Pamphylia and then became the governor of Cilicia in 182–183. Dio's name also suggests that he was a relative, presumably through his mother, of the epideictic orator Dio Cocceianus Chrysostom of Prusa. Dio would have received the standard rhetorical education of all senatorial youth; he mentions, for example, unnamed Greek writers "whose books we read with the object of acquiring a pure Attic style" (translated by Earnest Cary in *Dio's Roman History,* 1914–1927. All subsequent translations are by Cary; all subsequent quotations from Dio refer to this same edition of Dio's work.).

By the beginning of the reign of Commodus, Dio was in Rome with his father; he was therefore a firsthand observer of events at Rome, especially in the senate, beginning about 180. At this point in his history, he stresses that "I state these subsequent facts not, as hitherto, on the authority of others' reports, but from my own observation." His attendance at meetings of the senate at this time, however, does not necessarily mean that he was an actual member, for sons of senators were permitted to attend from the age of sixteen or seventeen. Dio believed that he was living through and witnessing a time of Rome's decline and degradation, as is seen in his final words on the philosopher-emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, who reigned from 161 to 180. Dio writes of Aurelius: "I admire him all the more for this very reason, that amid unusual and extraordinary diffi-



Title page for the editio princeps of Cassius Dio's Roman History *(courtesy of the Lilly Library, Indiana University)*

culties he both survived himself and preserved the empire. Just one thing prevented him from being completely happy, namely, that after rearing and educating his son [Commodus] in the best possible way he was vastly disappointed in him. This matter must be our next topic, for our history now descends from a kingdom of gold to one of iron and rust."

In 182–183, Dio accompanied his father to Cilicia presumably as a *comes* (comrade), when his father was *legatus Augusti pro praetore* (imperial legate with power of a praetor). While in this region Dio visited the oracle of Amphilochus in Mallus, where the prophecies were delivered in the form of drawings. Dio also noted that in Cilicia his father ascertained the true circumstances behind the accession of Hadrian in 117, when the death of Trajan was concealed for a few days so that Hadrian's adoption could be announced first.

Back in Rome, Dio served as an *advocatus* (barrister) and also entered public service. The dates of his earlier offices are uncertain, but if he followed the standard senatorial *cursus honorum* (course of offices), he would have held the office of quaestor around 188. It has been suggested that he served in this capacity in Phrygia. Dio then was admitted into the senate, which may have occurred around 189, at which time Dio begins to use the Greek word for *we* when referring to activities there. He then would have become even more familiar with the realities of life as a senator under the close watch of an emperor who did not always act in a rational manner. Dio's account of the reign of Commodus is full of details of the emperor's excesses and of the *phobos* (fear) felt by the senators. In addition to noting the building body count of senators, Dio relates about the year 192:

> This fear was shared by us [senators] as well as by the rest. And here is another thing that he did to us senators which gave us every reason to look for our death. Having killed an ostrich and cut off its head, he came up to where we were sitting, holding the head in his left hand and in his right hand raising aloft his bloody sword; and though he spoke not a word, yet he wagged his head with a grin, indicating that he would treat us in the same way. And many would indeed have perished by the sword on the spot for laughing at him . . . if I had not chewed some laurel leaves, which I got from my garland, and persuaded the others who were sitting near me to do the same so that in the steady movement of our jaws we might conceal the fact that we were laughing.

Not long after, Commodus was assassinated, an event that Dio saw as the beginning of a period marked by "most violent wars and civil strife."

Under the short-lived emperor Pertinax (who reigned in 192–193), Dio was awarded several unspecified honors and made praetor designate. After the murder of Pertinax and the accession of Didius Julianus on 24 March 193, Dio reports: "As for us [senators], when the news was brought to each of us individually . . . we were possessed by fear of Julianus and the soldiers. . . . I was one of these, for I had received various honors from Pertinax, and when acting as advocate for others at trials I had frequently proved Julianus to be guilty of many offenses." Nevertheless, Dio and the other senators boldly went to the senate, surrounded by soldiers, to hear Julianus's accession speech. Julianus later courted the senate, unsuccessfully, in an attempt to gain support.

Dio also was present when the senate deposed Julianus in favor of Septimius Severus (193–211) the following June. His account shows the senate

bowing as a matter of course to political prudence. As Severus approached Rome, Dio reports: "Silius Messala, who was then consul . . . assembled us in the Athenaeum . . . and informed us of the soldiers' action. We thereupon sentenced Julianus to death, named Severus emperor, and bestowed divine honors upon Pertinax."

At the beginning of Severus's reign, Dio composed his first known work, titled *De domnis et prodigiis* (On Dreams and Portents), which told of the omens that had given Severus reason to hope that he would become emperor. Dio later recalled how the publication of this little book led him to embark on his much more ambitious project:

> [Severus], after reading the copy I sent him, wrote me a long and complimentary acknowledgment. This letter I received about nightfall, and soon after fell asleep; and in my dreams the Divine Power commanded me to write a history. Thus it was that I came to write the narrative with which I am at this moment concerned. And inasmuch as it won the high approval, not only of others, but, in particular, of Severus himself, I then conceived a desire to compile a record of everything else that concerned the Romans. Therefore, I decided to leave the first treatise no longer as a separate composition, but to incorporate it in this present history, in order that in a single work I might write down and leave behind me a record of everything from the beginning down to the point that shall seem best to Fortune.

The pamphlet on dreams may have been one thing that kept Dio in Severus's good graces, with the result that he was allowed in 194 to serve his term as praetor. It has been convincingly argued that the "first treatise," later incorporated into the history, was an account of Severus's wars presented to the emperor after the defeat of his British rival Clodius Albinus, who reigned from 193 to 197. This latter year, therefore, would be the date when Dio began work on his Roman history. It was also then, in 197, Dio reports, that Severus's policy toward the senate (which had favored Albinus) became more hostile:

> [He] showed that he possessed none of the qualities of a good ruler. . . . Now that he had overcome all armed opposition, he was venting upon the unarmed all the wrath that he had stored up against them in the past. He caused us especial dismay by constantly styling himself the son of Marcus and the brother of Commodus. . . . While reading to the senate a speech, in which he praised the severity and cruelty of Sulla, Marius and Augustus . . . he inveighed against the senate for dishonoring [Commodus] unjustly.

As a result of these threats, Dio concluded, "All pretended to be on the side of Severus." Dio, at least, did so successfully. He remained sufficiently in Severus's favor to have been named governor of some unknown province and to have been made a suffect consul, perhaps in 205 or 206: he reported that on the latter occasion he found three thousand indictments for adultery entered on the docket at Rome. Dio also was a member of Severus's *consilium* (imperial council), at the meetings of which he claimed he had full liberty to speak. Then, during Severus's absence in the East between 197 and 202, Dio spent time on an estate in Campania working on his history. He was there in 202, when he recorded an eruption of Mount Vesuvius, noting:

> On Mount Vesuvius a huge fire blazed up, and there were bellowings mighty enough to be heard even in Capua, where I live whenever I am in Italy. I have selected this place for various reasons, and particularly for its quiet, in order that when I have leisure from the offices of the capital I may write this history.

Dio remained in public life under Severus's son and successor Caracalla, who reigned from 211 to 217. He continued as a member of the consilium and was present with Caracalla at Nicomedia in the winter of 214–215. Dio then returned to Rome, where he was present in the senate when the letter of the usurper Macrinus announcing his seizure of the throne was read on 11 April 217. Macrinus, a mere knight, ruling from 217 to 218, set a precedent by awarding himself the titles of *Augustus, Caesar, Imperator, Pius, Felix,* and *Severus* without waiting for senatorial authorization.

Under Macrinus, Dio continued to prosper. He was sent as *curator ad corrigendum statum civitatum* (caretaker for correcting the situation in the cities) to settle the affairs of Smyrna and Pergamum in the province of Asia; he was still in Pergamum in the winter of 218–219. Subsequently, after spending some time back in Bithynia, where he fell ill, Dio was made proconsul of Africa, probably early in the reign of Alexander Severus, who ruled from 222 to 235.

After his proconsulate Dio returned to Italy, whence he almost immediately was sent as legatus Augusti first to Dalmatia and then, perhaps in 227, to Upper Pannonia. He described the Pannonians, based on his personal experience, as "most fierce and murderous." Of all his positions, only these last two were of real significance, both being military commands; in Pannonia, Dio had two legions under his control. This was rather unusual, not only because Dio was a Greek

commanding legions in Europe, but also because of his total lack of military experience. Dio's holding of such important positions has been seen as an example of the momentary resurrection of the influence of the senate during the reign of the young and inexperienced Alexander Severus. The army, however, seems not to have been amused. After his service in Pannonia, Dio fell afoul of the soldiers. He records:

> Our troops . . . indulge in such wantonness, license, and lack of discipline that those in Mesopotamia even dared to kill their commander . . . and the Praetorians complained of me to [their commander] Ulpianus, because I ruled the soldiers in Pannonia with a strong hand, and they demanded my surrender, through fear that someone might compel them to submit to a regime similar to that of the Pannonian troops.

The emperor, however, protected Dio, who reports:

> Alexander, however, paid no heed to [the soldiers], but, on the contrary, honored me in various ways, especially by appointing me to be consul for the second time, as his colleague, and taking upon himself personally the responsibility of meeting the expenditures of my office. But as the malcontents evinced displeasure at this, he became afraid that they might kill me if they saw me in the insignia of my office, and so he bade me spend the period of my consulship in Italy, somewhere outside of Rome.

This second consulate, in 229, was the ordinary consulate, which meant that Dio's name was given to the year. And Alexander's assuming of Dio's expenses suggests that Dio was of rather moderate means, at least for a senator.

After the expiration of his term as consul (which probably was less than a year because of the customary appointment of suffects during the course of the year), Dio returned to Rome and Campania to visit the emperor for a few days; he claimed that on that occasion the soldiers no longer had any desire to do him any harm. Then, because of his age and poor health (Dio referred to his podagra, or gouty feet), Dio was allowed to retire from public service, and he returned home to Nicaea, where he spent the rest of his life. Of the rest of Dio's family, little is known. In the year 291, another Cassius Dio was consul, and he later served as proconsul of Africa in 295 and as prefect of Rome in 296–297. It has been suggested by some scholars that he was a grandson or great-grandson of the historian.

Dio is known almost exclusively for his eighty-book *Roman History*. The work begins with a brief discussion of the arrival of Aeneas in Italy, supposedly in the eleventh century B.C. It then jumps to the founding of Rome in 753 B.C. and continues to Dio's own second consulship in A.D. 229. All in all, Dio says that he spent ten years collecting material that dealt with matters up to the time of Severus's death, and that the work was published after twelve years of writing. He also noted, "As for subsequent events, they also shall be recorded, down to whatever point it shall be permitted me."

If Dio began work in A.D. 197, as suggested above, then the history up to the death of Severus in A.D. 211 (through book 77) would have been completed by around A.D. 219. It seems that books 78 through 80, covering the years A.D. 218–222, were added soon after the death of Elagabalus in A.D. 222. Because he was in the East at the time, Dio was very well placed to cover the civil war between Macrinus and Elagabalus in 218, as well as other important eastern events of this period. Ensuing events up to 229 are treated cursorily and may have been added after Dio's retirement; indeed, they might more properly be considered as an appendix to the eighty books of the complete history. Dio notes: "Thus far [until A.D. 222] I have described events with as great accuracy as I could in every case, but for the subsequent events I have not found it possible to give an accurate account, for the reason that I did not spend much time in Rome."

The eighty books, which seem to have been divided into decades, are only partially extant. The sections that survive in any completeness include books 36–54 (68 to 10 B.C.); books 55–60 (9 B.C. to 46 A.D.), which have some defects (such as a gap in book 55); and book 78 and part of 79 (from the death of Caracalla in A.D. 217 into the reign of Elagabalus).

The rest of the history must be reconstructed from fragments, which are found primarily in three texts made in Byzantine times. A collection made under the emperor Constantine Porphyrogenitus (912–959) preserves many excerpts that are often verbatim. Johannes Xiphilinus, an eleventh-century Byzantine monk, made a helter-skelter epitome of books 36–80, often following Dio's wording fairly closely. And the twelfth-century "Epitome of History" of Johannes Zonaras preserves parts of books 1–21 (from Aeneas until 146 B.C.) and books 44–67 (from Julius Caesar until Nerva, A.D. 96–98). His wording tends to be somewhat altered from the original. There also survive fragments for the years 207–200 B.C., which were discovered in the binding of a manuscript of Strabo; other verba-

tim fragments are found in several other manuscripts as well.

Dio opens his account with a brief explanatory preface, saying:

> Although I have read pretty nearly everything about [these matters] that has been written by anybody, I have not included it all in my history, but only what I have seen fit to select. I trust, moreover, that if I have used a fine style, so far as the subject matter permitted, no one will on this account question the truthfulness of the narrative, as has happened in the case of some writers; for I have endeavored to be equally exact in both these respects, so far as possible.

Dio purported to follow the annalistic method of organization, in which all the events of a given year were grouped together, but by the time he reached the time of Caesar, he often focused on particular developments that extended beyond the one-year time span, which sometimes makes his chronology difficult to follow. Furthermore, the early years are treated only sketchily, while those beginning with Julius Caesar are covered in detail.

Dio's personality shows through in his history; he had strong opinions and was not averse to expressing them. His account after A.D. 180 is wholly personal, based on his own observations or what he heard from others, and largely anecdotal. He was, of course, very well placed to write just this kind of history. The history seems to have been composed seriatim, and Dio does not appear to have made alterations as he went along; only his description of the Pannonians may have been inserted later as a result of his personal experience. This means that nearly all his history was written from the perspective of A.D. 222 and earlier; that is, before Dio held any of his most important offices.

It is not easy to identify Dio's specific sources for the period before Commodus, because he rarely identifies them. He does seem to have used Livy as one of his main sources down to about 30 B.C., and Tacitus for the early imperial period. He also mentions Sallust, Augustus's *Res gestae* (Deeds; after A.D. 14), Plutarch, and Arrian.

Dio divided his history into three periods: the republic, the empire down to the death of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, and his own time. Analyzing his sources, he discusses his historical methodology in fascinating detail, noting:

> The events occurring after [the Republic] can not be recorded in the same manner as those of previous times. Formerly, as we know, all matters were reported to the senate and to the people, even if they happened at a distance; hence all learned of them and many recorded them, and consequently the truth regarding them, no matter to what extent fear or favor, friendship or enmity, colored the reports of certain writers, was always to a certain extent to be found in the works of the other writers who wrote of the same events and in the public records. But after this time most things that happened began to be kept secret and concealed, and even though some things are perchance made public, they are distrusted just because they can not be verified; for it is suspected that everything is said and done with reference to the men in power at the time and of their associates. As a result, much that never occurs is noised abroad, and much that happens beyond a doubt is unknown, and in the case of nearly every event a version gains currency that is different from the way it really happened.

Commodus as Hercules (Palazzo dei Conservatori, Rome). Dio's account of Commodus's reign criticizes the emperor's excesses.

Dio then proceeds to discuss, in the same passage, the great difficulties that he faces in his historian's role:

> Furthermore, the very magnitude of the empire and the multitude of things that occur render accuracy in regard to them most difficult. . . . Hence in my own

> narrative of later events . . . everything that I shall say will be in accordance with the reports that have been given out, whether it be really the truth or otherwise. In addition to these reports, however, my own opinion will be given, as far as possible, whenever I have been able, from the abundant evidence which I have gathered from my reading, from hearsay, and from what I have seen, to form a judgment that differs from the common report.

In spite of this condemnation of the reliability of evidence produced during the empire, and in spite of the troubled times that he himself lived in and documented, Dio was very much the monarchist, and he condemned any opposition to the idea of the empire. He criticized the republican sentiments of Brutus, Cassius, and Cicero and praised Caesar. In this regard he was very much a man of his own times and had made peace with some apparent inconsistencies, not the least of which was the subservient role of his own senatorial order. Indeed, one of the leitmotifs of his work is his description of the interactions between emperor and senate.

Dio's own fullest statement of how he viewed the significance of the empire is found in his discussion of the principate of Augustus, which is the most extensive account of this period to survive. He states, for example: "The senate . . . freed [Augustus] from all compulsion of the laws, in order, as I have stated, that he might be in reality independent and supreme over both himself and the laws and so might do everything he wished and refrain from doing anything he did not wish."

One of the most famous surviving sections of Dio's history recounts a debate held before Augustus (27 B.C.–A.D. 14) in which Agrippa, Augustus's trusted lieutenant, and Maecenas, one of his confidants, discussed the course of action that Augustus should take after he had come to power. Agrippa argued for a restoration of the republic, but Dio's own perception of the significance of the empire is seen in the words that he put in the mouth of Maecenas. This speech, which is a virtual political pamphlet in its own right, reflects the opinion of an influential and experienced senator about how the empire ought to function, not at the time of Augustus, but in the early third century. It begins with Maecenas saying:

> Hence, if you feel any concern at all for your country. . . reorganize it and regulate it in the direction of greater moderation. . . . Put an end to the insolence of the populace and place the management of public affairs in the hands of yourself and the other best citizens. . . . You should yourself, in consultation with the best men, enact all the appropriate laws. . . . Thus whatever business was done would be most likely to be managed in the right way, instead of being referred to the popular assembly, or deliberated upon openly, or entrusted to partisan delegates, or exposed to the danger of ambitious rivalry.

Maecenas's ensuing description of how the empire should be administered described either the actual state of affairs in the early third century A.D., or what Dio thought it ought to be. He took a pragmatic view of what relations between the emperor and the senate should be, on the one hand wanting his own order to have as important a role as possible, but, on the other, accepting that all real authority lay with the emperor. The most that the senate could hope for, he knew, was the appearance of power. Very much a realist, he realized that senators must either acquiesce to the will of emperors who were often tyrannical, or face the loss of their lives.

Speaking one's mind, of course, could be dangerous; hence, Dio's method of expressing his own sentiments about how the empire should be governed by putting them into the mouth of a person dead for two centuries. Nevertheless, Maecenas's words to Augustus were just as appropriate for Dio: "For of course my purpose in doing this will be not to hear myself talk, but that you may learn by a strict demonstration that it is both possible and easy, for a man of sense at least, to rule well and without danger."

Maecenas (as the probable mouthpiece for Dio) recommended that the emperor choose the entire membership of the senate and populate it with the "noblest, best, and richest men . . . not only from Italy, but also from the allied and subject nations." He realized that the continuation of the old republican offices (quaestor, aedile, tribune, praetor, and consul) was a sham; nonetheless, he advised the emperor to allow the elections to continue, "merely out of regard for the institutions of our fathers and to avoid the appearance of making a complete change in the constitutions." These offices should be deprived of their power, Dio said, but not of their prestige.

In several places Dio recommended giving the senate the appearance of having authority, while the emperor kept the real power in his own hands. Dio urges: "For the impression to prevail that the senate has full authority in all matters . . . you would do well to have all your legislation enacted by the senate, and to enforce no measure whatever upon all the people alike except the decrees of this body." He also rationalizes that:

> These matters, then, should be referred by you to the senate, and also those others which are of the greatest importance to the state. For interests which are shared in common should be administered in common. Besides, it is doubtless a quality implanted by nature in all men that they take delight in any marks of esteem received from a superior which imply that they are his equals, and that they not only approve of all decisions made by another in consultation with themselves, as being their own decisions, but also submit to them as having been imposed by their own free choice.

Dio's arguments for a continuation of the fiction that the senate was an equal partner perhaps indicate that Dio felt that even the fiction was at risk – as indeed it was.

As to the other orders of society, Dio recognized the rising influence of the knights, especially under Severus and his successors. He recommended that the emperor enroll as many as possible of those men who "hold second place . . . as regards birth, excellence, and wealth." The best of the knights, he suggested, should then be incorporated into the senate. He had little good, however, to say about the less privileged orders of society, and he also resented the influence of the Praetorian Guard.

Dio also recognized a current trend when he proposed removing all privilege from Italy (save the city of Rome) and giving it the same administrative status as the rest of the empire. This particularly provincial point of view came more and more to be the attitude of the emperors, and Dio's proposal was in fact instituted under the emperor Diocletian, who ruled from 284 to 305. Another of his recommendations, for a mandated balanced budget, in which annual income and revenues were be calculated and balanced, likewise was eventually instituted under Diocletian and his successors. Dio also anticipated Diocletian by recommending that city coinages should cease, and that direct appeals to the emperor should be discouraged.

With regard to city government, Dio, influenced no doubt by some of the excesses of the second century, proposed that the emperors take increasing control of local matters: "The affairs of the other cities you should order in this fashion: in the first place, the populace should have no authority in any matter, and should not be allowed to convene in any assembly at all. . . . The cities should not indulge in public buildings unnecessarily numerous or large, nor waste their resources on expenditures for a large number and variety of public games."

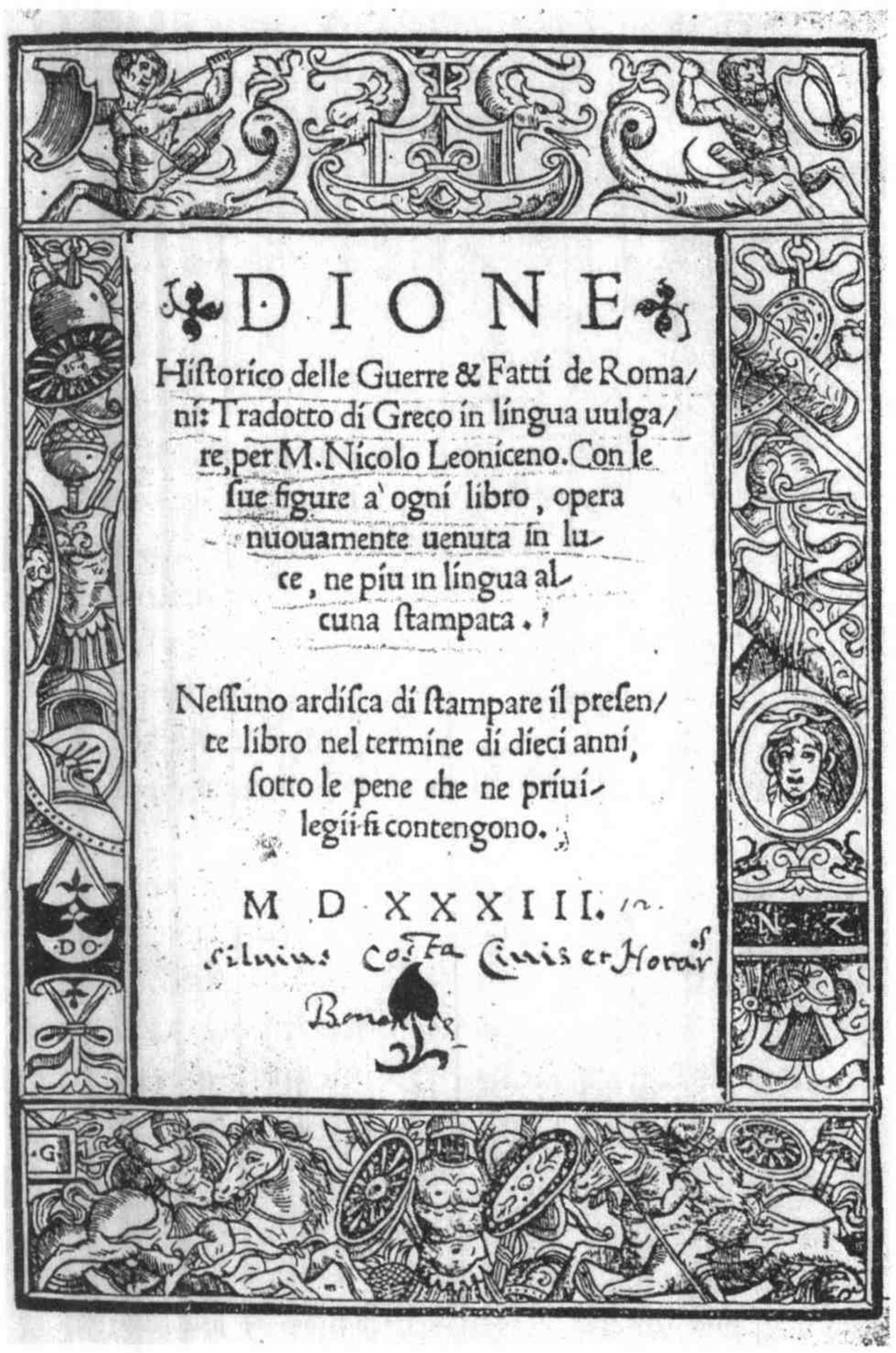
Even though, with the exceptions of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus and Pertinax, Dio had little good to say about the emperors of his own time, he did not see any other option except to try to live with them as best as one could. Nor was he at all ashamed of what senators had to do to survive. The empire was a monarchy that embraced only those democratic elements that each emperor saw fit to incorporate. In Dio's account of his own times, he continued to show his concern with how to survive under the scrutiny of a "bad" emperor – as most of them were – while at the same time retaining the shreds of one's dignity. He especially admired, for example, the senator Aemilianus, who "by remaining neutral and watching events in order to take advantage of them, seemed to surpass all the senators of that day in understanding and in experience of affairs."

Indeed, Dio often forgave "bad" emperors their excesses, which he blamed, as in the case of Commodus, upon their associates. And, to his credit, he strove to give a balanced portrayal even of emperors for whom he did not care. For example, in his final assessment of Septimius Severus, he writes:

> As for education, he was eager for more than he obtained, and for this reason was a man of few words, though of many ideas. Toward friends not forgetful, to enemies most oppressive, he was careful of everything that he desired to accomplish, but careless of what was said about him. Hence he raised money from every source, except that he killed no one to get it, and he met all necessary expenditures quite ungrudgingly. He restored a very large number of the ancient buildings and inscribed on them his own name, just as if he had erected them from his own private funds . . . In fine, he showed himself so active that even when expiring he gasped, "Come, give it here, if we have anything to do."

Dio ended his work by saying that he had been commanded in a dream by the "Heavenly Power" to conclude his history with a quotation from Homer's *Iliad,* and this is exactly what he did. His final words are: "Hector anon did Zeus lead forth out of range of the missiles, / Out of the dust and the slaying of men and the blood and the uproar." Like Hector, Dio had been led out of the range of the missiles, but unlike his Homeric counterpart, Dio probably died in his bed.

In general, Dio's style is pure, careful, and elegant, although also full of Latinisms; his narrative is vivid and judiciously managed. He attempted to model himself on Thucydides; his account of the war with Sextus Pompey in 36 B.C., for example,


DIONE
Historico delle Guerre & Fatti de Romani: Tradotto di Greco in lingua uulgare, per M. Nicolo Leoniceno. Con le sue figure a' ogni libro, opera nuouamente uenuta in luce, ne piu in lingua alcuna stampata.

Nessuno ardisca di stampare il presente libro nel termine di dieci anni, sotto le pene che ne priuilegii si contengono.

M D XXXIII.

Title page for a sixteenth-century Latin translation of Roman History *(courtesy of the Lilly Library, Indiana University)*

mimics Thucydides' account of the battle in the harbor of Syracuse. However, although Dio's good intentions should not be questioned, several of his artistic traits interfered with his ability to report history clearly and objectively. For one thing, his writing was heavily influenced by his rhetorical training. For example, Dio shows a fondness for antithesis, as seen in his description of the emperor Severus. More seriously, Dio frequently embellished his accounts in order to achieve a more dramatic effect. The speeches that he puts in the mouths of historical personages such as Maecenas often reflect, even more than was customary among historians of his time, his own thoughts about what ought to have been said. And his introductory apologies for his "fine style" suggest that he himself was well aware of the possible criticism that could accrue as a result. Dio therefore is often not as clear or as specific as one would like. In instances where Dio can be compared to his source, and this is not always easy to do, his own version is often so distorted as to be virtually unrecognizable.

Furthermore, Dio's portrayals of events were affected by his philosophical inclinations. He often saw events as being influenced by divine intervention, of which he identified several forms, including "to theos" (God), which was responsible for the fate of the emperor and the empire; "to daimonion" (Divinity), which often conveyed the messages from "to theos"; and "tyche" (Fortune), which could determine the outcome of particular events, especially for individuals. It has been suggested that such beliefs indicate Dio's adherence to Stoicism.

Divine intervention, of course, had been the subject of Dio's first tract, that on Severus's accession, and in his history Dio shows a great fondness for reporting omens and portents. For example, in 221, while Dio was still in Asia, he heard a report that the ghost of Alexander the Great had appeared near the Danube and traveled to Chalcedon, where it buried a wooden horse and vanished. And he reported that, after the death of Commodus, "Many eagles of ill omen soared about the Capitol and moreover uttered screams that boded nothing peaceful, and an owl hooted there; and a fire that began at night in some dwelling leaped to the temple of Pax (Peace) and spread to . . . the palace and consumed very extensive portions of it, so that nearly all the state records were destroyed."

Dio's belief in divine intervention extended even to his own life, and in particular to his decision to write history. He claims: "This goddess [Fortune] gives me strength to continue my history when I become timid and disposed to shrink from it; when I grow weary and would resign the task, she wins me back by sending dreams; she inspires me with fair hopes that future time will permit my history to survive and never dim its lustre."

Dio often preferred to relate anecdotes and minutiae, such as Commodus's escapades or the exact length of an emperor's reign, rather than to discuss broader historical developments or cite relevant details. He himself was aware of this propensity and defends himself, saying:

> And let no one feel that I am sullying the dignity of history by recording such occurrences. On most accounts, to be sure, I should not have mentioned this exhibition [of Commodus], but since it was given by the emperor himself, and since I was present myself and took part in everything seen, heard and spoken, I have thought it proper to suppress none of the details, but to hand them down, trivial as they are, to the memory of those who shall live hereafter.

And in the same section of his history, he particularly defends his use of detail in cases in which he

was himself an eyewitness: "And indeed, all the other events that took place in my lifetime I shall describe with more exactness and detail than earlier occurrences, for the reason that I was present when they happened and know no one else, among those who have any ability at writing a worthy record of events, who has so accurate a knowledge of them as I." There words provide a fair assessment by Dio himself of his historical method: to present a report of his personal knowledge of events as they occurred, rather than a mere summary or recapitulation of what had been previously reported by others. This being the case, it is especially unfortunate that Dio's accounts of his own times survive almost exclusively in fragments and epitomes.

Although Dio had little later influence on the writing of Roman history during the Roman period, he was seen in the Byzantine period as the standard source for Roman imperial history. The tenth-century Byzantine compilation known as the *Suda* also lists four other works by Dio, of which only two may actually have been written by him: a *Life of Arrian the Philosopher,* that is, the historian Arrian, who was also from Bithynia; and a work titled *The Matters Subsequent to Trajan,* which, if genuine, probably was incorporated into the history. The other works listed by the *Suda* under Cassius Dio's name are a *Persica,* actually by Dio of Colophon, and a *Getica,* actually by Dio of Prusa.

For modern historians, Dio, for all his faults, is of primary importance. He provides eyewitness coverage of a critical period of Roman history. One must praise his efforts and good intentions, even if the result is not always felicitous. Moreover, unlike many ancient authors, Dio the man is more than just a name. The remarkable history that he labored on for more than twenty years shows him as a real person with genuine concerns. As a senator he tried to protect the interests of his class, which he realized were being threatened on all sides: on the one hand, emperors who had little in common with the senate relied more and more on the army and treated the senate with ever-increasing disdain; and, on the other, members of the equestrian order were increasingly favored by the emperors and appropriated rights and positions that in the past had been reserved for senators. The most that senators such as Dio could do in this turbulent time was to try to be conciliatory and purport to be satisfied with whatever scraps of power the emperors chose to throw their way.

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Demosthenes

(384 – 322 B.C.)

Galen O. Rowe
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MAJOR WORKS – EXTANT: The Demosthenic Corpus (all dates are B.C.):

Early Private Forensic Oration:

Against Aphobus I and II (364);
Against Aphobus in Behalf of Phanus (363–362);
Against Onetor I and II (362–361);
On the Trierarchic Crown (359);
Against Spudias;
Against Callicles.

Public Forensic Orations:

Against Androtion (355);
Against Leptines (354);
Against Timocrates (352);
Against Aristocrates (352);
Against Meidias (349);
On the Fraudulent Embassy (343);
On the Crown (330).

Deliberative Orations:

On the Navy Boards (354);
For the People of Megalopolis;
For the Rhodians (351);
The First Philippic (351);
The First Olynthiac (349);
The Second Olynthiac (349);
The Third Olynthiac (348);
On the Peace (346);
The Second Philippic (344);
On the Affairs of the Chersonese (341);
The Third Philippic (341);
The Fourth Philippic (341).

Later Private Forensic Orations:

Against Conon (356);
On behalf of Phormion (352);
Against Stephanus I (351);
Against Boeotus Regarding the Name (350);
Against Pantaenetus (346–345);
Against Eubulides (346–345);
Against Nausimachus and Xenopeithes.

Miscellaneous

Letters I–IV (324–323);
Prooimia.

MAJOR WORKS – NONEXTANT:

In Praise of Pausanias;
Speeches In Behalf of the Orators;
Concerning Not Surrendering Harpalus;
Concerning the Money (or *In Defense of Gifts* or *Speech Concerning Harpalus' Money*);
Against Demades;
Demurrer Against Polyeuktus;
Against Medon;
Against Critias Concerning the Claim of Property;
Against Satyros on Behalf of a Trustee.

Spurious Deliberative Oration:

On Halonnesus, by Hegesippus? (342).

Forgeries of Deliberative Orations:

On the Treaty with Alexander;
Reply to Philip's Letter, by Anaximenes of Lampsacus?;
Philip's Letter, by Philip II of Macedonia?;
On the Assessment.

Spurious Forensic Orations:

Against Theocrines (339);
Against Aristogeiton I and II.

Forensic Orations Attributed to Apollodorus:

Against Callippus (369/8);
Against Nicostratus (368);
Against Timotheus (367);
Against Polycles (357);
Against Evergus and Mnesibulus (356);
Against Stephanus II (351);
Against Neaira (343–340).

Forensic Orations Attributed to Demosthenes' Contemporaries:

Against Boeotus Regarding the Dowry (347);
Against Macartatus;
Against Olympiodorus (343);
Against Leochares;
Against Lacritus (341);
Against Phaenippus;
Against Zenothemis (by Demon?);
Against Phormion;
Against Apaturius;

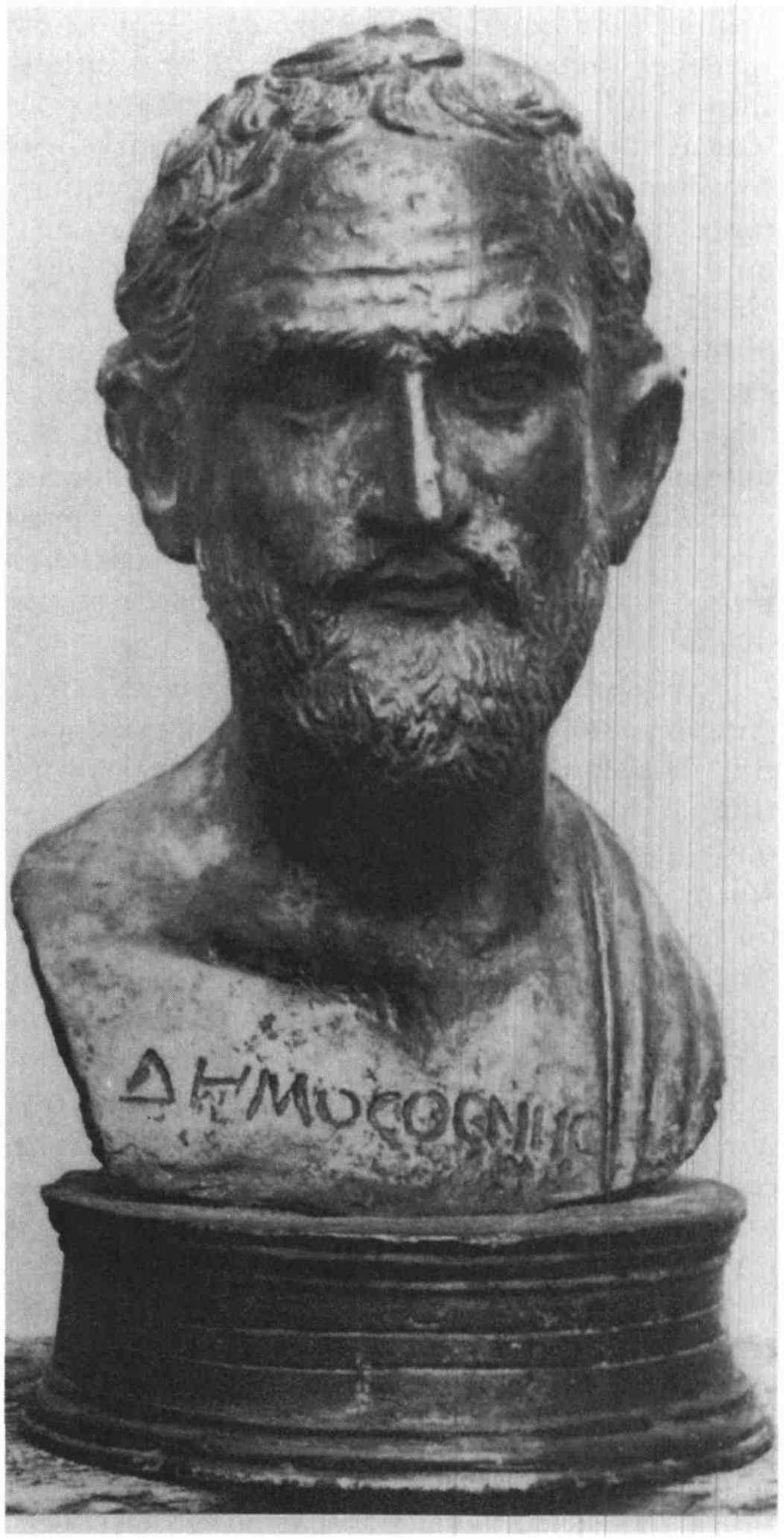
Against Dionysodorus.
Miscellanous Forgeries:
The Funeral Oration;
On Love;
Letters V and *VI.*

Editiones principes: Letters. In *Epistola diaphorwn, philosophwn, rhetorwn, sophistwn, etc.* (Venice: Aldus Manutius, 1499); Speeches. *A Demosthenis orationes duae et sexaginta,* edited by Aldus Manutius and Scipione Forteguerri (Venice: Aldus Manutius, 1504).

Standard editions: *Demosthenis Orationes,* 3 volumes, edited by S. H. Butcher and W. Rennie (London: Clarendon Press, 1903–1931); *Demosthenes,* 7 volumes, edited and translated by J. H. Vince and others, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1926–1949).

With the possible exception of Cicero, no orator has given so much to the development of his art or achieved as much with it as Demosthenes. He was everywhere referred to simply as "the orator." Some of the best literary criticism in antiquity was directed at Demosthenes' speeches by such notable writers as Cicero, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Caecilius of Callacte, Quintilian, Hermogenes, and the author of the treatise *On Style.* In sixteenth-century England Roger Ascham regularly met with Queen Elizabeth to read the works of Demosthenes. Three centuries later a famous parliamentary orator, Henry, Lord Brougham, popularized Demosthenes through his studies and comments. In the nineteenth century two outstanding works of classical scholarship appeared – Arnold Schafer's *Demosthenes und seine Zeit* (Demosthenes and His Time, 1858) and Friedrich Blass's volume on Demosthenes in *Die attische Beredsamkeit* (Attic Oratory, 1893). In the early twentieth century Demosthenes became a rallying point for the voices of independence and democracy; Georges Clemenceau, premier of France, wrote a book eulogizing Demosthenes' ability to awaken his countrymen to their spiritual values. At the end of the century a growing number of books and articles has focused on Demosthenes' importance to literature.

Demosthenes was born in Athens, in the deme of Paiania, in 384 B.C. His father was also named Demosthenes, and his mother was Cleobule. Although not many facts about his early life are known, it is known that when Demosthenes was seven years old, his father died, leaving not only Cleobule and Demosthenes but also a five-year-old



Bronze bust of Demosthenes discovered in 1753 at Herculaneum (National Museum, Naples, inv. 5467)

daughter. When he was still a young man, property issues relating to his father's death significantly shaped the direction of Demosthenes' career. He studied rhetoric under the orator Isaeus, and he made his earliest public speech when he was eighteen years old. Ancient testimony is unclear about the name and origins of his wife. He had one daughter, probably an only child, who preceded him in death. Demosthenes lived most of his life in Athens and died in 322 B.C..

Of the sixty-eight extant works – sixty-one speeches (including *Philip's Letter,* the collection of *Prooimia,* and six letters) – assigned to the Demosthenic corpus, scholars accept about thirty-six as

definitely authored by Demosthenes. For a few speeches the evidence for Demosthenic authorship is sufficiently tenuous to ensure that the debate about the authenticity of various works will continue. What remains of Demosthenes' writings represents only a small portion of his activity as a public speaker and logographer (speechwriter). He did not routinely publish his speeches. Most of his speaking before the assembly was probably extemporaneous, and he did not feel the need to advertise his services through publication. Although there are several different reasons for the survival of all the works, both genuine and spurious, the chief reason appears to be that several were found in Demosthenes' possession at the time of his death.

The surviving work of Demosthenes offers glimpses into the nature of his literary craftsmanship. His statements that he took great pains with composition are borne out by certain speeches, obviously in draft form, in which alternative wordings for the same idea appear, as if the orator had not yet decided upon the final wording or its placement. Certain speeches also appear to have lacunae that Demosthenes may have intended to fill in after further deliberation. Of the *Proomia,* a collection of sixty-eight speech introductions, Demosthenes composed some so that he could be prepared for standard occasions; he may have borrowed others from contemporary orators for use as models. The *Prooimia* indicate that Demosthenes did not merely draft speeches but exercised himself in the art of composition. In preparation for delivery he wrote out his speeches in their entirety; however, he did not deliver them by reading from a prepared text or from memory verbatim. He probably followed the general outline of the written text and delivered from memory those passages in which precision of expression and stylistic effects were especially important. Demosthenes also wrote or revised some of his speeches after, rather than before, delivery. Because of these differences between the written speech and its delivery, one cannot assume that the extant speeches represent exactly what Demosthenes said in the court or the assembly.

The dates of Demosthenes' surviving works divide his life into three main periods: first, his youth and beginnings as a writer of private forensic (legal) speeches (364–359); second, his political activity as represented by the deliberative (legislative) speeches and forensic speeches, both private and political (355–341); and third, his final years, highlighted by the speech *On the Crown* (330) and his letters, both of which serve as defenses of his political career (330–323).

The first of Demosthenes' writings, the so-called guardian speeches, describe the events that determined the entire course of his life. Demosthenes's father, who died when Demosthenes was seven years old, had carefully arranged for his property, which consisted of a sword factory, a furniture factory, and various additional assets, to be managed by guardians, his nephews Aphobus and Demophon and a friend Therippides, until the son attained majority. But the guardians flagrantly abused his trust, invaded the estate, and left the heir, at the age of eighteen, in severely straitened circumstances. Sickly as an adolescent, Demosthenes had led a sheltered existence. For public speaking he lacked the important requisite of a strong voice, and he may even have had a speech defect. His only assets, which he was to exploit to the fullest extent, were a rich education in history and literature and his extraordinary perseverance.

For the immediate purpose of recovering his patrimony, Demosthenes hired Isaeus, an orator and logographer especially expert in inheritance cases. Some ancient scholars believed that Isaeus actually composed the guardian speeches; but it is more likely that Demosthenes wrote them himself, while Isaeus served as tutor and coach. In 364–363, two years after initiating his suit, he faced Aphobus in court, delivering the first of the guardian speeches as the formal accusation and the second as a rebuttal of Aphobus's defense. Demosthenes won a verdict for the full amount of his claim; however, Aphobus attempted to invalidate the entire process through a series of legal maneuvers, which prompted *Against Aphobus on Behalf of Phanus* (363–362) and the two speeches *Against Onetor* (362–361). Demosthenes probably won these cases against Aphobus. The remaining two guardians, when they saw his victory, may have decided to settle with him out of court. In any event, despite his remarkable achievement in the courts, Demosthenes succeeded in collecting only a portion of what the guardians owed him.

Demosthenes' success encouraged him to take up the profession of logographer, a writer of speeches for others to deliver in court in civil and criminal cases. Two speeches in the corpus belong to this early period of speechwriting – *Against Spudias,* written against the client's brother-in-law, who was contending for the father-in-law's inheritance, and *Against Callicles,* in which Demosthenes' client was being sued by Callicles for directing floodwaters onto his property. The speech *On the*

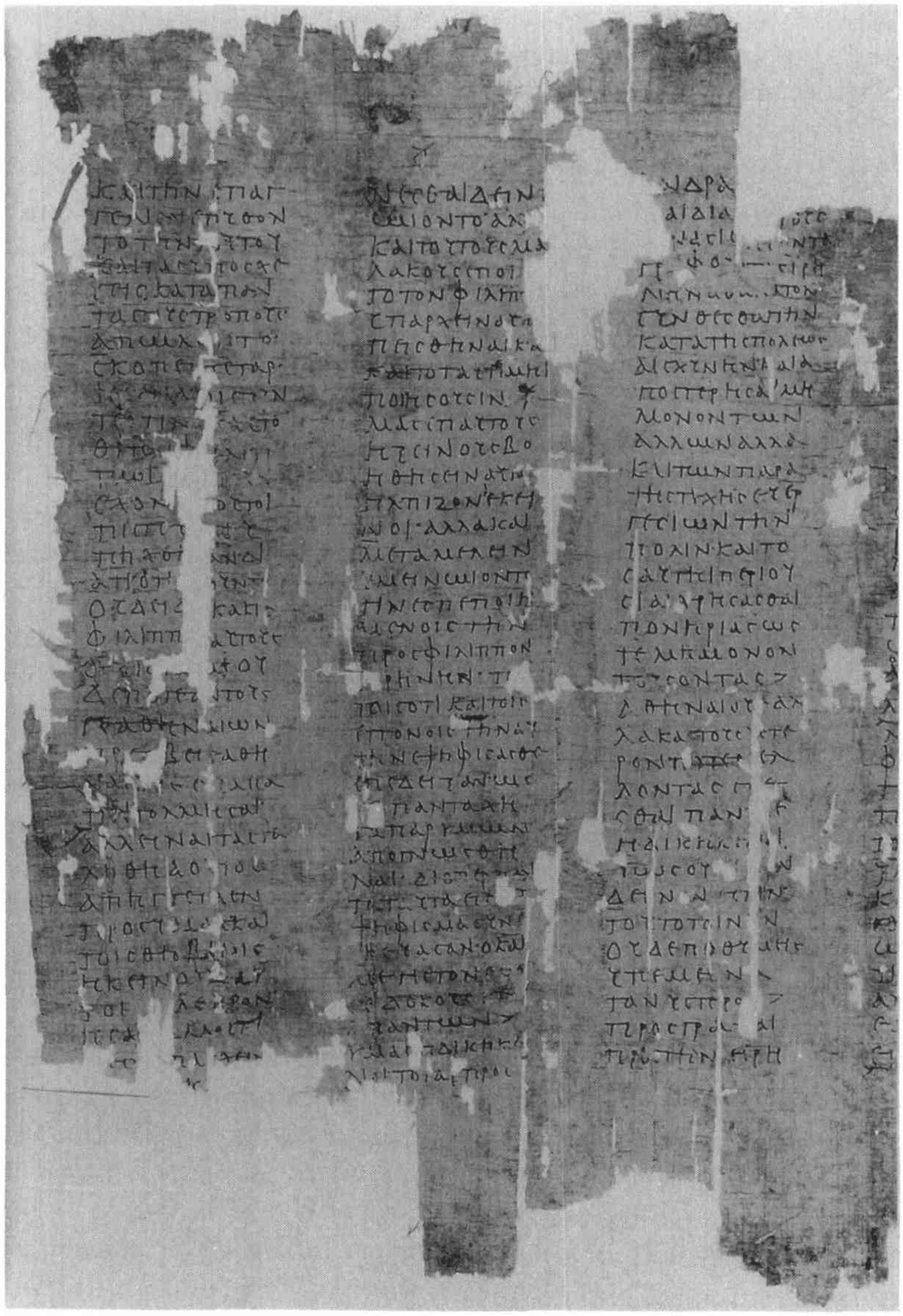
Triarchic Crown, although it is not a work of logography, is included in this group as a work of private pleading. Demosthenes wrote and delivered it probably in 359 before the Athenian Council to claim the award of a crown for having made his ship ready first for a naval expedition.

Demosthenes' artistry, in this early period, combined originality with literary influences, both direct and indirect. Isaeus obviously supplied the direct influence. In fact the guardian speeches contain a few passages borrowed almost verbatim from Isaeus's speech concerning the estate of Kiron. Demosthenes also appears to have closely followed Isaeus in his approach to arrangement and in his use of figures of speech. In the main, however, Isaeus, not famous for his style, guided Demosthenes in the practical aspects of organization and tactics.

The indirect influences, on the other hand, which were eventually to have the greatest influence on Demosthenes' style, had only begun to make themselves apparent. These are the authors, such as the historian Thucydides, whose work Demosthenes is said to have read with a passion, and the philosopher Plato and the rhetorician Isocrates, both of whose writings he doubtless knew. Demosthenes may even have heard the last two lecturing, although, contrary to some ancient opinion, he could not accurately be described as their disciple. If Demosthenes reveals little sympathy with Isocrates' ideas and style as a whole, he shares with the latter the same exacting approach to the composition of words. In fact, Demosthenes is conspicuous among the orators for his adherence to Isocrates' hiatus law – the avoidance of a word beginning with a vowel following a word ending in a vowel; and he employs it, especially strictly, in the guardian speeches. Isocrates also may have been the instigator of Demosthenes' sensitivity about prose rhythm, although Demosthenes developed a greater variety of rhythms than the ones he found in Isocrates' works. Demosthenes appears to have read and borrowed from his predecessors and contemporaries in forensic oratory, like Lysias, from whom he may have learned the arts of narrative and character portrayal. Poetry generally informs his mature works with the dramatic, sentimental, and stylistic qualities that have distinguished them through the centuries. Initially, however, poetic influence can be seen in Demosthenes' use of prose rhythm. It was probably his familiarity with the rhythms of early tragic verse that led him to develop his stylistic signature, the avoidance of more than two consecutive short syllables, which appears tentative in the early speeches but becomes pronounced by the beginning of the second period. These indirect influences, while noticeable in the earliest works, manifest their full richness only when Demosthenes enters the political arena.

The inspiration to enter politics occurred in 366, when Demosthenes heard the Athenian statesman Callistratus successfully defending himself in a celebrated trial of impeachment. The grandeur of Callistratus's speech and the acclaim that it received made a lasting impression on the eighteen-year-old Demosthenes. When he was twenty-nine, the prosecutors Euktemon and Diodorus hired Demosthenes to write the seconding speech *Against Androtion* (355); this was a speech for Diodorus to deliver against the prominent politician Androtion, who had been charged with proposing an illegal measure to the assembly. Although in the ensuing trial the judges acquitted Androtion, the prosecutors again hired Demosthenes, this time to write the main speech against Timocrates, Androtion's political ally. Again the charge was that of proposing an unconstitutional law, a law that financially benefited Androtion. Diodorus, for whom Demosthenes wrote the speech, probably lost the case. Between the two trials Demosthenes joined a group of citizens attacking a certain Leptines for proposing to cancel exemptions to civic duties involved with religious festivals. On this occasion it appears that Demosthenes himself delivered the speech that probably was intended to carry the burden of the prosecution. The outcome of the trial is not known. The final political trial regarding illegal proposals, in which Demosthenes was involved as a logographer, occurred at about the same time (352). He composed a speech for Euthykles of Thria to deliver against Aristocrates, the proposer of a decree granting special protection to Charidemos, a captain of mercenaries in the service of Cersebleptes, king of Thrace. Although the outcome of this trial is also not known, the national and international importance of the issue, combined with the highly developed style of the speech, suggests that Demosthenes had definitely arrived as a politician and a speechmaker.

His new prominence attracted the attention of enemies as well as friends. One of the former was Meidias, a wealthy and impetuous citizen, who had actively sided with Demosthenes' guardians in the early days and had remained his bitterest foe. In 348 Meidias assaulted Demosthenes in the Theatre of Dionysus during a choral performance. Demos-



Fragment of a first- or-second-century A.D. papyrus text of Demosthenes' On the Fraudulent Embassy *(Cairo Museum, Inv. 47446)*

thenes promptly brought a charge against Meidias of committing a crime and prepared the prosecuting speech; however, scholars continue to argue whether the case ever came to trial. The speech has survived, but Meidias may have settled with Demosthenes out of court.

Even the first of the public forensic speeches, *Against Androtion,* makes it clear that in the political forum Demosthenes had found his métier. His style begins to teem with seemingly effortless creativity and originality. Whatever literary techniques he has borrowed – and he continued to borrow copiously – he has also transformed and given a more effective use and a more nearly perfect expression. In his use of the Attic Greek language Demosthenes, like Lysias and Isocrates, remains a purist, yet a different purist than either of the two. Instead of confining himself to their limited and bland vocabulary, a kind of officialese sanctioned for the court, Demosthenes reaches deeply into the lexicon and style of everyday communication. He makes ample use of metaphor, metonymy, hyperbole, and other tropes. He knows when to insert an oath, make an appeal to the gods, or use a cliché without seeming coarse or affected; and in this respect he seems to have been influenced by Plato.

An example of how Demosthenes' use of the vernacular brings an idea to life can be seen in *Against Androtion* where he represents Androtion "bawling from the platform in the Assembly, calling men slaves and slave-born who were better men than himself and of better birth, and asking if the

gaol was built for no object. I should certainly say it was, if your father danced his way out of it, fetters and all, at the procession of the Dionysia" (translated by J. H. Vince). It is not just the metaphor of his father "dancing" out of jail that deflates Androtion's earnestness but the carnival atmosphere of the entire context – the procession of Dionysus in which the participants might exchange insults and the mention of the god himself, appropriately the god who liberates.

To his freedom in the selection of words Demosthenes opposes severe restrictions in their composition. He continues the practice, adapted from Isocrates, of avoiding hiatus. In addition, he has definitely ruled out combinations of words that result in rhythms of more than two consecutive short syllables, something that appears as only tentative in the earliest speeches.

Rhythm plays an important role, also, at the ends of subordinate clauses and sentences (*clausulae*), where Demosthenes uses various metrical feet to reinforce the completion of a thought with a sense of completion in the sound. Paradoxically these restrictions, which would seem to stifle any expression, have a liberating effect on Demosthenes' prose. They require him to abandon trite and predictable expressions and to discover new ones. This tendency to express standard ideas in new ways also characterizes Thucydides' style. Forcefulness is achieved through Demosthenes' unique periodicity. He shapes his sentences in the manner of a sculptor – highlighting and shading various details, paying attention to but not being enslaved by considerations of balance and symmetry, and integrating all the parts into one complete form.

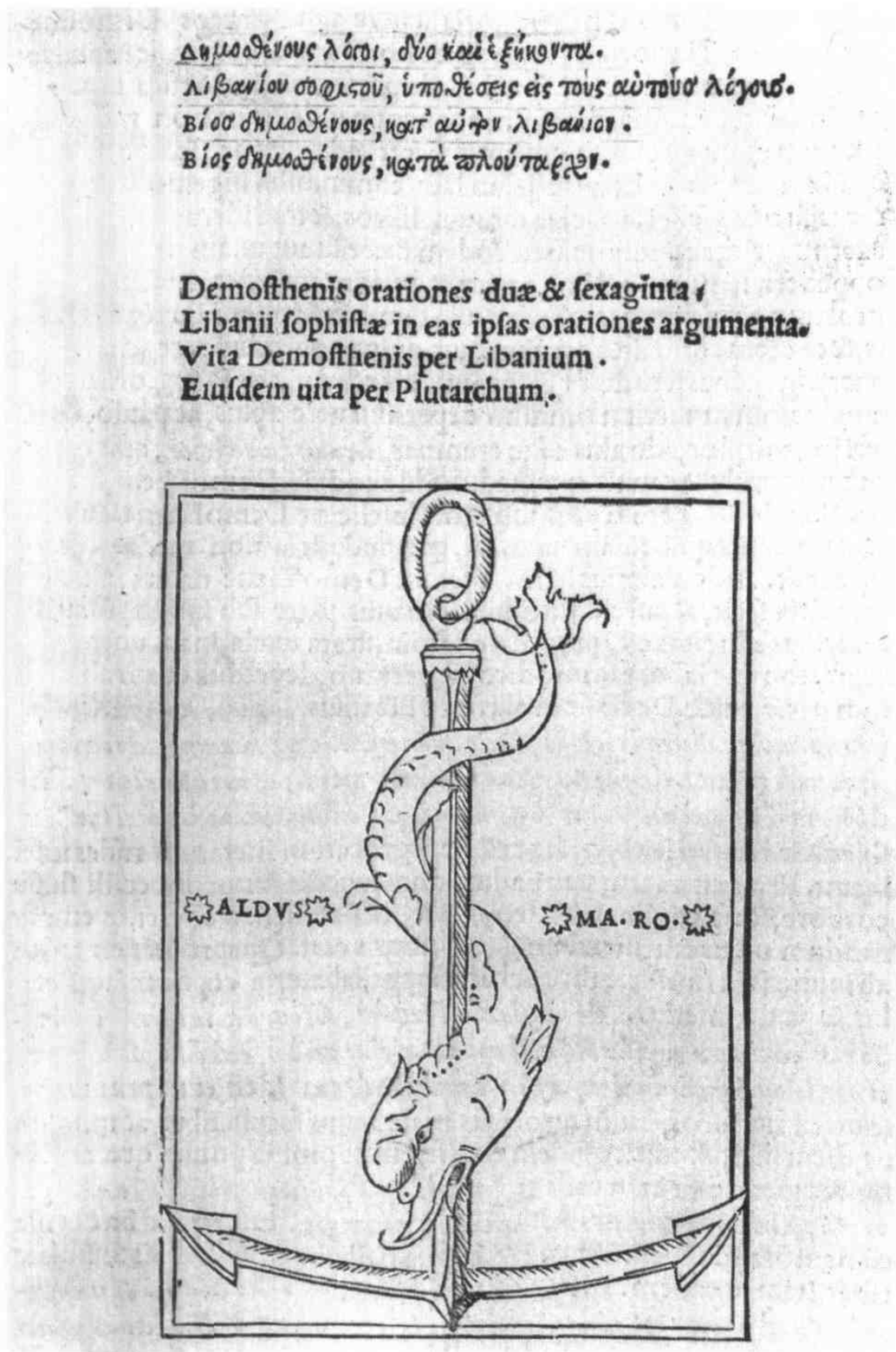
His larger sentences, or periods, consist of several subordinate clauses, which he arranges in a seemingly infinite variety of ways. He often places the subordinate clauses at the beginning of the sentence, thereby creating tension, as the listener or reader attempts to anticipate the completion of the thought. *Against Meidias* offers an example of a typical Demosthenic period:

> But when the whole people, acting honourably and rightly, evinced such anger, such exasperation, such deep concern at the wrongs which they knew I had suffered, that, in spite of the frantic efforts of the defendant and a few supporters, they were deaf to their arguments, shut their eyes to their wealth and their promises, and condemned him by an unanimous show of hands, thereupon, gentlemen of the jury, many citizens, including some of you who are here in court, came to me and demanded and even implored that I should take the further step of bringing Meidias under your jurisdiction; and they did so, I think, for two reasons, men of Athens, because, so help me heaven! they thought that my own wrongs were serious, and they also wished to punish Meidias for conduct which they had witnessed on other occasions, as a scoundrel, and a ruffian who could no longer be tolerated. (translated by Vince)

In this compound period the subordination that precedes the completion of the first thought has three degrees, consisting of a temporal clause ("But when") and within it a correlative clause ("such anger . . . that") and within it a relative clause ("which they knew"); but that is not the end of it. The subordinate clauses are deliberately prolonged through pleonasm ("such anger, such exasperation, such deep concern") and apostrophe ("gentlemen of the jury"). The second complete thought is prolonged through subordination ("conduct which") and exclamation ("so help me heaven") but proceeds rather more briskly to the culminating and final words, "a ruffian who could no longer be tolerated." An expressive structure this massive, erected by a lesser artist, would come crashing down in the minds of a baffled audience; but Demosthenes brilliantly imbues this period with both clarity and power.

Although within the period's overall structure Demosthenes uses an abundance of stylistic figures, they seem neither gaudy nor obtrusive but appropriate to the ideas that he is expressing. Even in passages where his sentences are of average length, he achieves the overall expansiveness and variety of the periodic style. Finally, the public forensic speeches reveal Demosthenes' distinctive approach to character portrayal. Unlike Lysias, whose forte as a logographer was to create his clients' characters through the words that he places in their mouths, Demosthenes focuses on the characters of his adversaries. His descriptions of them are not portraits but caricatures, yet compellingly believable as personifications of the crimes for which the adversaries are standing trial.

As he became involved in politics, Demosthenes reduced his activity as a logographer; however, seven private forensic speeches have survived from the middle period. Some of them rank as masterpieces of logography, equal if not superior to the best works of Lysias. The speech *Against Conon* (356) was written for a young client, Ariston, charging Conon with assault. Demosthenes' description of the entire affair, as well as his portrayal of the principals, has unrivaled power and vividness. The speech *On Behalf of Phormion* (352), in which a deceased banker's freedman, Phormion, and the banker's son Apollodorus contend for the bank's as-



Title page for the editio princeps of Demosthenes' Orations *(courtesy of the Lilly Library, Indiana University)*

sets, is a model of precision and clarity. Demosthenes wrote *Against Stephanus I* (351) for Apollodorus, the adversary of his client Phormion in the previously mentioned speech. Although some have questioned Demosthenes' ethics in this case, the majority of Athenians probably saw no impropriety in writing speeches for both sides in the same quarrel.

In *Against Boeotus Regarding the Name* (350), Mantitheos, Demosthenes' client, sues his half brother, Boeotus, because the latter had adopted the same name, Mantitheos, in order to strengthen his claim to the deceased father's estate. *Against Pantaenetus* (346–345) concerns the extremely complicated finances of a silver mine. One of the creditors, Nicobulus, asks the court to dismiss a suit brought against him by his debtor, Pantaenetus. In *Against Eubulides* (346–345) Demosthenes' client Euxitheus protests the removal of his name from the rolls of citizenship. Finally, Demosthenes wrote *Against Nausimachus and Xenopeithes* for an unknown defendant attempting to have the suit of Nausimachus and Xenopeithes dismissed. The two plaintiffs, once wards of the defendant's father, allege that their guardian withheld a portion of their inheritance. All seven of the later private speeches, despite their extremely different topics, share the stylistic traits associated with Demosthenes' public forensic speeches – first, a purely Attic, yet extensive vocabulary; second, an avoidance of hiatus and more than two consecutive short syllables; third, forceful and varied expression; and finally, effective use of stylistic figures.

Soon after writing the first of the public forensic speeches, Demosthenes entered the Athenian assembly as a speaker. His speech *On the Navy Boards* (354) serves as an excellent introduction of his qualifications. In response to a rumor that the Persian king was preparing to attack Greece, Demosthenes advises against precipitate action and for a state of preparedness by reforming the navy boards, the associations of citizens responsible for building and equipping warships. About a year later he delivers the speech *For the People of Megalopolis,* the people who had appealed to Athens for help against an attack threatened by Sparta. He advocates that the Athenians support the Megalopolitans to prevent Sparta from becoming a threat to Athens itself. In the next year (351), in *For the Rhodians,* he favors restoring to power the exiled democrats from the island of Rhodes, whose country was controlled by an oligarchy sympathetic to Persia. Although the Athenians probably approved none of the three proposals, they must have been favorably impressed by the new orator. In these speeches Demosthenes demonstrates good sense, a thorough understanding of the issues, and unquestionable patriotism. The three speeches, therefore, involving familiar adversaries (Persia and Sparta) and issues of secondary importance are a kind of warm-up for Demosthenes. The rest of his public speeches, forensic and deliberative, have a new and single focus – Philip II of Macedonia.

As early as 357, Philip II of Macedonia had begun a series of actions that increasingly threatened Athenian interests in the North. Each of his actions took the Athenians by surprise, yet left them unwilling to respond in any but a halfhearted manner. In an attempt to awaken his fellow citizens, Demosthenes in 351 delivered his *First Philippic,* a magnificent satire of the Athenians' lethargic attitude toward Philip. Two years later, when the city of Olynthus appealed to Athens for help against an imminent attack by Philip, Demosthenes pronounced the three *Olynthiacs* (349, 348 B.C.) urging the Athenians to assist the Olynthians. De-

spite relief expeditions sent by the Athenians, Olynthus eventually fell.

Further military reverses made the Athenians decide to negotiate a peace. Reluctantly they sent ten envoys, including Demosthenes and his soon-to-be enemy Aeschines, to Macedonia. In the course of this peace mission Demosthenes became offended by Aeschines' conduct, alleging that it constituted collaboration with Philip and disloyalty to Athens. In the speech *On the Peace* (346) Demosthenes advised the Athenians to keep the peace between the two states. In the same year, however, he caused Aeschines to be brought to trial for misconduct and presented his accusations in the speech *On the Fraudulent Embassy*. In the trial, which did not occur until 343, Aeschines was acquitted of the charge but also resolved to retaliate against Demosthenes.

Even while the peace between Athens and Macedonia remained in effect, Demosthenes continued to arouse suspicion and resentment toward Philip, both within Athens and abroad. In his *Second Philippic* (344) he declared Philip to be Athens' enemy and reminded the Athenians of Philip's encroachments, which the peace had left unrectified. Confrontations between Athenian and Macedonian forces prompted the three speeches of 341. The first, *On the Affairs of the Chersonese,* responds to Philip's demand that the Athenians repudiate the actions of Diopithes, the Athenian general in conflict with Macedonian forces in the Chersonese. In his speech Demosthenes vigorously supports Diopithes, denounces Philip as the aggressor, and urges the Athenians to take the actions and make the sacrifices necessary to defeat him. When, following Demosthenes' advice, the Athenians refused to repudiate Diopithes, Demosthenes delivered the *Third* and *Fourth Philippics,* advocating that reinforcements be sent to Diopithes and that Athens persuade the other Greek states and Persia to join in an alliance against Macedonia. The speeches achieved immediate success. Philip was checked in the North, and an alliance was formed that included even Thebes, which heretofore had opposed Athens at every opportunity. The Athenians, moreover, appointed Demosthenes special commissioner of the navy, thus enabling him to carry out the reforms in naval procurement that he had advocated fifteen years earlier. For his success in forming the alliance the Athenians conferred upon Demosthenes a golden civic crown.

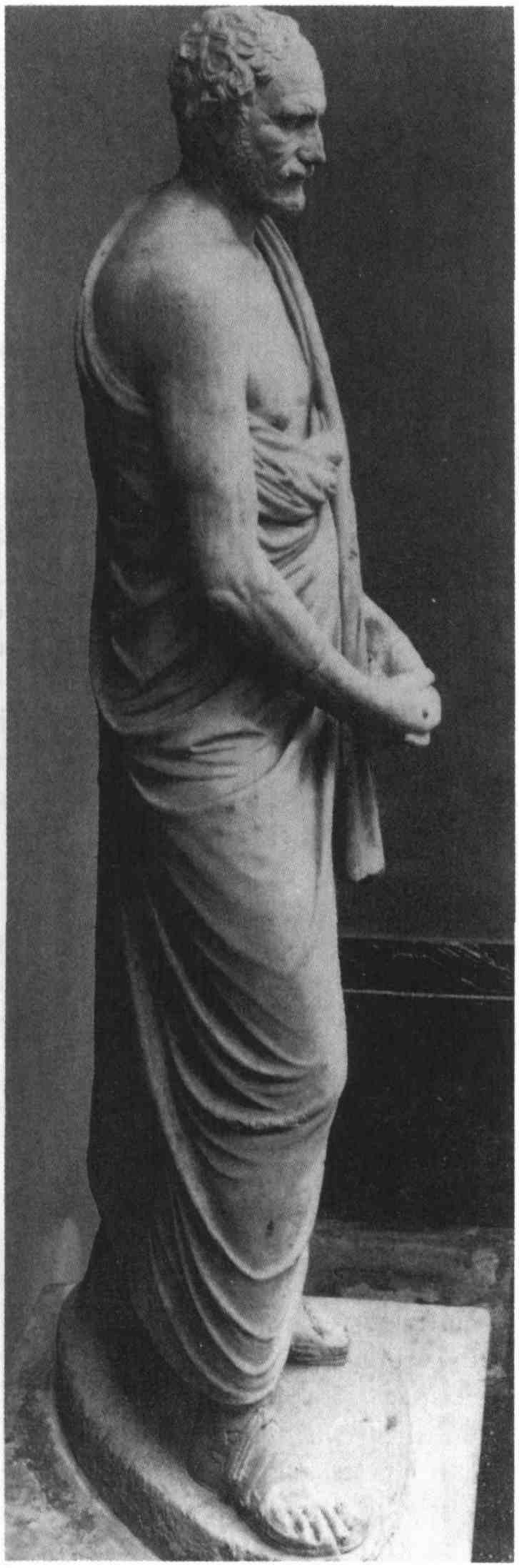
Demosthenes' success made inevitable a final, grand confrontation with Philip. In the autumn of 338 the Macedonian forces under Philip, about thirty-two thousand strong, engaged the slightly larger army of the allies and decisively defeated it at Chaeronea in Boeotia. Demosthenes was on the battlefield when the Athenian line broke. Some people said that he deserted his post and ran; others that he made haste to Athens to prepare her defenses. After his victory Philip danced a jig on the battlefield while mocking the beginning of a motion by Demosthenes – "Demosthenes, son of Demosthenes, of Paeania, thus moves." The Athenians, however, assigned Demosthenes the honor of pronouncing the eulogy over the fallen soldiers. The eulogy has not survived. No one seems to have remembered what he said.

With his orations against Philip, Demosthenes established the deliberative speech as a literary form, as Gorgias had done for the epidictic and Lysias the forensic forms of oratory. In this development Demosthenes was probably inspired by Thucydides, whose history derives its brilliance largely from the speeches that he placed in the mouths of his characters as they spoke before governmental bodies. Like Thucydides' speeches, Demosthenes' orations shape and explore the great dichotomies, such as the past versus the present, words versus deeds, state versus individual, freedom versus slavery, success versus failure, friend versus enemy, reality versus fantasy, democracy versus despotism, principle versus expediency, and honor versus shame.

In exploring these dichotomies Demosthenes employs a mimetic rather than an expository method. His principal characters, Philip and Athens, as well as the other Greek states, come to life as dramatis personae who act out their parts and reveal their motives. Demosthenes makes extensive use of thought figures, such as *exclamatio, sermocinatio, aitiologia,* apostrophe, and *pusma,* that lend the effect of dramatic speech through dialogue or soliloquy. Although all the *Philippics* have basically the same subject, each has its own distinct tone; and some have an aesthetic unity that is achieved largely through recurrent imagery – as, for example, in the accounting metaphors and similes in the *Second Olynthiac.*

There are two even more remarkable instances of such imagery, however. In the *First Philippic* Demosthenes, through recurrent and systematically developed imagery, creates a satiric portrait of Athens as a *mundus perversus,* a topsy-turvy world, as in the *First Philippic:*

> If anyone asked you, "Are you at peace, Athenians?" you would reply, "Certainly not; we are at war with Philip." But have you not been electing from among yourselves leaders



Demosthenes; statue discovered in the eighteenth century at Campania (Ny Carlsberg Glyptothek, Copenhagen, I.N. 2782)

and a couple of cavalry-commanders? And what, pray, are those officers doing?: With the exception of the solitary one whom you dispatch to the seat of war, they are all busy helping the state-sacrificers to marshal your processions. You are like the men who model the clay puppets; you choose your brigadiers and cavalry-commanders for the marketplace, not for the field." (translated by Vince)

The speech *On the Fraudulent Embassy* (not, strictly speaking, one of the *Philippics* yet certainly related to them by subject) uses as its central metaphor a lengthy quotation from Solon's famous fifth-century B.C. elegy *Eunomia*. These aesthetic characteristics, combined with the other aspects of Demosthenes' mature style, amply justify his position as a major literary as well as political figure.

Although his political enemies attempted to have him convicted at Athens for the defeat at Chaeronea, the majority of the Athenians continued to hold Demosthenes in high esteem. Philip spared his life but met his own death by assassination less than two years after Chaeronea; in 336 Demosthenes attempted to rally the Greeks against Philip's successor, Alexander; but the latter promptly led the Macedonian army once more into Boeotia, destroyed the city of Thebes, and sent a demand to Athens for the surrender of Demosthenes and seven other Athenian leaders. Demosthenes and the others were spared by the intercession of Demades, an Athenian politician in good favor with the Macedonians. In 330, in an attempt to discredit Demosthenes, Aeschines brought Ctesiphon to trial for proposing that Athens confer a golden crown upon Demosthenes in recognition of his public service. Demosthenes, who defended Ctesiphon but was really defending his record as a statesman, delivered his most famous speech, *On the Crown*. The trial proved to be a decisive vindication of Demosthenes. Aeschines' case did not even receive a fifth of the judges' votes; and Aeschines retired in exile to Rhodes.

Perhaps not as boldly as before, Demosthenes nevertheless remained a champion of Athenian independence long after it had ceased to exist as a fact. He led a deputation protesting Alexander's demand for the restoration of exiles and subsequently participated in the discussion at Athens about divine honors for Alexander. Perhaps in so active and so long a political career the stain of scandal was inevitable. In 323 the Athenians found Demosthenes guilty of appropriating 20 talents from the 700 talents with which Harpalus, Alexander's paymaster in Babylon, had absconded to Athens. Other anti-Macedonian politicians were also convicted of taking some of Harpalus's stolen funds. Unable to pay the fine of 50 talents, Demosthenes went into exile but was recalled upon Alexander's death, when Athens confronted Antipater in the Lamian War. Letters 1–4 date to the times of the Harpalus affair. They combine appeals to the Athenians for restoration, intercession for others, refutation of slander, and advice about Greek unity against Macedonia. After

Athens's defeat in the Lamian War, Demosthenes fled the city under a decree of death. Agents of Antipater overtook him on Calauria (today known as the island of Poros); but Demosthenes committed suicide before they could execute him.

Although Demosthenes continued in politics for eight years after he delivered *On the Crown,* this oration stands as the supreme justification of his life and the culmination of his artistic development. It satisfies every criterion of stylistic excellence. In its language *On the Crown* encompasses the base epithets of comedy and the loftiest expressions of tragic poetry. Abstract and concrete words beautifully complement one another within the same contexts. The orator consistently maintains control of his extensive, wide-ranging vocabulary. The variety of his language adds depth and detail to recurrent ideas and characterizations. As in *On the Fraudulent Embassy* and the *First Philippic,* where Demosthenes creates aesthetic modes such as the elegiac or the satiric, in *On the Crown* he uses the comic mode to discredit Aeschines and the tragic mode to ennoble the defeat at Chaeronea. *On the Crown*'s compositional structures range from the complex and stately period of the opening prayer to the rapid succession of paratactic clauses describing Philip's capture of Elateia.

The speech also offers several of the best examples of the orator's remarkable figures of thought and figures of speech, such as the antithesis by which Demosthenes compares his own career to that of Aeschines:

> Compare the kind of lives each of us lived, calmly, Aeschines, not bitterly. Then ask these jurors whose luck each of them would choose. You taught school, I attended school. You initiated people, I was an initiate. You were a minor clerk, I was a member of the Assembly. You were a minor actor, I was a spectator. You were hissed off the stage, I joined in the hissing. Your policies supported our enemy, mine, our country. (translated by John J. Keaney)

And the famous climax by which he represents his perseverance in serving Athens:

> I did not speak, but fail to propose measures; I did not propose measures, but fail to serve as ambassador; I did not serve as ambassador, but fail to persuade the Thebans; from beginning to end I persevered and faced, without reserve, the dangers threatening the city. (translated by Keaney)

No place in the speech is without a figure of speech, and yet no figure of speech seems out of place. Finally, beneath the intricate play of images and ideas moves the equally intricate but complementary play of rhythms and sounds, the full effect of which contemporary ears cannot experience, although it can certainly be imagined by careful readers. As dazzling as the literary effects of *On the Crown* are, their purpose is neither to demonstrate Demosthenes' virtuosity nor even solely to secure his exoneration. Through them Demosthenes raised the issue in question above the claims of material necessity to the primacy of those values for which Athens stood, such as justice, independence, and honor. Perhaps for this reason Cicero, Demosthenes' only peer, says in *Orator,* referring to *On the Crown,* that no one could ask for greater eloquence than this.

The impression of Demosthenes that emerges from reading his speeches is that of a consistently serious, socially awkward, bookish individual to whom literature has greater importance than everyday life. His contemporaries, too, marked his differentness and seriousness, calling him *Batalus,* after a well-known, effeminate flute player, and Argas, either a poetic word for snake or the name of a contemporary poet of vitriolic verse. One must remember that the majority of his speeches deal with extremely serious issues; but a few of them suggest that Demosthenes had a sense of humor. In the speech *Against Callicles,* for example, he has his client expressing the fear that Callicles will force him to drink all the water that has flowed onto his property. Of course, Demosthenes' caricatures of adversaries such as Meidias and Aeschines and his satiric portrait of Athens in the *First Philippic* indicate an insight into the nature of humor; the insight, however, appears to derive more from literature than from social interaction. His political adversaries, doubtless attempting to discredit him, poked fun at his seriousness; but ancient biographers such as Plutarch, in his *Parallel Lives,* relate that the great orator sometimes found the apt retort. Moreover, he generously contributed from his own purse to the state, ransoming Athenian hostages and paying for the repair of the fortifications; and in his speeches and letters he gave the Athenians many assurances of his devotion. They reciprocated both during his life and after his death by conferring upon him extraordinary honors.

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Diogenes Laertius

(circa A.D. 200)

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MAJOR WORK: *Compendium of the Lives and Opinions of Philosophers* (circa third century A.D.).

Editio princeps: *Diogenis Laertij De vitis, decretis et responsis celebrium philosophorum Libri decem,* edited by H. Frobenius and N. Episcopius (Basel: Frobenius, 1533).

Standard editions: *Diogenis Laertii De Vitis, Dogmatibus et Apophthegmatibus Clarorum Philosophorum, Libri X. Graece et Latine 1–2,* edited by M. Meibomius (Amsterdam: Wetstein, 1692); *Diogenes Laertius,* edited and translated by R. D. Hicks, Loeb Classical Library (London & New York: Heinemann, 1925); *Diogenis Laertii Vitae Philosophorum 1–2,* edited by H. S. Long, in *Scriptorum Classicorum Bibliotheca Oxoniensis* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964).

Diogenes Laertius is the author of the only preserved example of an ancient "history of philosophy." The title of his book varies in surviving manuscripts but seems most likely to have been *Compendium of the Lives and Opinions of Philosophers* (circa third century A.D.). From the Renaissance until about 1800, this collection of biographies of philosophers was the principal model for the historiography of philosophy. In addition to his treatise, Diogenes composed a collection of poems; this work has been lost, but Diogenes quotes many of his poems in his *Lives and Opinions.*

Diogenes Laertius is known solely from his preserved book, and information about his life is virtually nonexistent. His date can be fixed only by the dates of the latest historic figures mentioned in his text (second century A.D.) and by the fact that he seems to have written before Neoplatonism became influential (circa A.D. 250). His name presumably alludes to the Laertes in Homer's *Odyssey,* who is the father of Odysseus. The text of Diogenes' work gives no indication as to where he was born, nor does it make clear what his own philosophical affiliation may have been, although the *Lives and Opinions* is dedicated to a woman who was interested in Platonism. Diogenes' work belongs to a type of literature that was called Successions of Philosophers; the title refers to the way the material was arranged. In these works the lives of various philosophers appear to have been ordered in a series of biographies so that a teacher and then his student followed one another within each major philosophical school.

Diogenes' *Compendium of the Lives and Opinions of Philosophers* is divided into ten books. Book 1 contains the introduction and describes the lives of various wise men. Book 2 through book 7 concern the Ionian tradition in Greek philosophy. Book 2 specifically deals with the Ionian physicists, Socrates, and the minor Socratic schools down to the early third century B.C. Book 3 focuses entirely on the life and teachings of Plato. Book 4 explores the lives and works of members of the Academy down to Clitomachus (late second century B.C.). Book 5 deals with Aristotle and the Peripatetics, continuing to the time of Lyco (late third century B.C.). Book 6 is about Antisthenes and the Cynics; it covers the period to the end of the third century B.C. Book 7 treats Zeno and the Stoics down to at least Chrysippus (late third century B.C.); from a list of Stoics preserved in one manuscript it seems as if the missing end of the book may have continued to the first century A.D. The last three books of the *Lives and Opinions* concern the Italic tradition in Greek philosophy. Book 8 studies Pythagoras and his early successors as well as Empedocles. Book 9 focuses on Heraclitus, the Eleatics, Leucippus, Democritus, Protagoras, Diogenes of Apollonia, and Pyrrho. Book 10 deals exclusively with the philosopher Epicurus.

Although Diogenes only offers biographies of the founders of Pyrrhonism and Epicureanism, he mentions other members of these schools; and in the case of the skeptics, he mentions members even as late as the second century A.D., the *termi-*

Liber Primus

Laertii Diogenis uitæ & ſententriæ eorum qui in philoſophia probati fuerunt.

PHiloſophiam a barbaris initia ſumpſiſſe pleriq; au tumant. Namq; apud Perſas claruiſſe Magos: Babi/loniis ſiue aſſyriis eius rei pricipes fuiſſe Chaldæos: Gymnoſophiſtas Indis. Celtis ſeu Gallis Druidas & qui Semnothei appellabant: qui ut ait Ariſtoteles i Magico & Sotion in uigeſimotertio ſucceſſionis li/bro: q; diuini humaniq; iuris peritiſſimi: ac præte/rea religiõi maxie dediti fuerunt: Semnothei quoq; appellati ſunt: Phœnicẽ iſup fuiſſe Ochum & thra/ca Zamolxim: Libycũq; Atlátem. Ad hæc Egyptii Nili filiũ fuiſſe Vulcanũ: eumq; ipſũ philoſophiæ aperuiſſe pricipia. Porro ipſius rei Antiſtites Sacer/dotes ac prophetas appellari ſolitos. Ab hoc autem ad Alexãdrũ Macedonũ regẽ fluxiſſe annos quadragita & octo milia octingẽtos ſexagintatres. Quo toto tẽpore ſolis defectus contigiſſe trecẽtos ſeptuagintatres: Lunæ aũt octigẽtos trigitaduos. Enimuero a Magis quoq; pricipẽ fuiſſe Zozoa/ſtrem Perſen memoriæ proditũ eſt: Hermodotus quidẽ Platonicus in libro de diſciplinis uſq; ad excidiũ Troiæ annos qnq; milia cõputat: Xáthus uero Lydius a Zozoaſtre uſq; ad Xerxis tranſitũ ſexcẽtos enumerat annos: Poſt eum autẽ ma gos plurimos ſibi inuicẽ ſucceſſiſſe Hoſtanas: Aſtropſychos: Gobryas atq; paza/tas: donec ab Alexãdro euerſũ eſt Perſaq; regnũ. Sed hi pfecto dũ neſciũt græcoq; recte facta inuẽtaq; Barbaris applicant. Ab iis nẽpe non ſolũ philoſophia: uerum idipſũ quoq; hominũ genus initio manauit. Deniq; Muſæo Athenæ: Thæbæ Li no inclytæ ſunt. Horũ alterũ Eumolpi filiũ aſſerunt primũ deorũ generationẽ tradidiſſe: ſphærãq; iueniſſe: & ex uno fieri atq; in idipſum reſolui omnia dixiſſe. Hunc Phaleris obiſſe diem ibiq; ſepultum eſſe: inſcriptumq; ipſius tumulo Epi/gramma & genus illius & locum in quo ſepultus fuerit teſtari.

Eumolpi exanimem muſæum terra Phalerum
Continet hoc tumulo pignora cara patris.

Porro muſæi pater Eumolpidis apud athenienſes cognomen dedit. Linũ uero Mercurio: Muſaq; Vrania genitũ affirmãt: ſcripſiſſe aũt mũdi generationẽ: Solis item & Lunæ curſus: animaliũq; ac fructuũ generatiões notauiſſe. Deniq; in pri/mo ſtatim uerſu operis ſui initia reꝝ altius repetẽs cũcta ſimul nata memorauit. Quẽ ſecutus Anaxagoras: & ipſe ſimul facta oĩa aſſeruit: eaq; mente accedẽte cõ poſita. Linũ aũt in Euboia occubuiſſe ſagitta ab Apolline trãſfixum: Thæbiſq; ex urania muſa progenitũ: ipſumq; itidẽ eius tumulo inciſum elogiũ indicio eſt.

Candida purpureis redimitæ tempora ſertis
Thæbanum uraniæ continet urna linum.

Ita philoſophia nõ a Barbaris ſed a Græcis initiũ habuit: cuius & ipſum nomen Barbarã oĩno refugit appellationẽ. Qui aũt illius iuentionem Barbaris aſſignãt: Orpheũ quoq; Thraca in mediũ adducũt philoſophũ fuiſſe & eſſe antiquiſſimũ

a iii

Page from De uita & moribus philosophorum *(1490), an early Latin translation of Diogenes Laertius's* Compendium of the Lives and Opinions of Philosophers *(courtesy of the Lilly Library, Indiana University)*

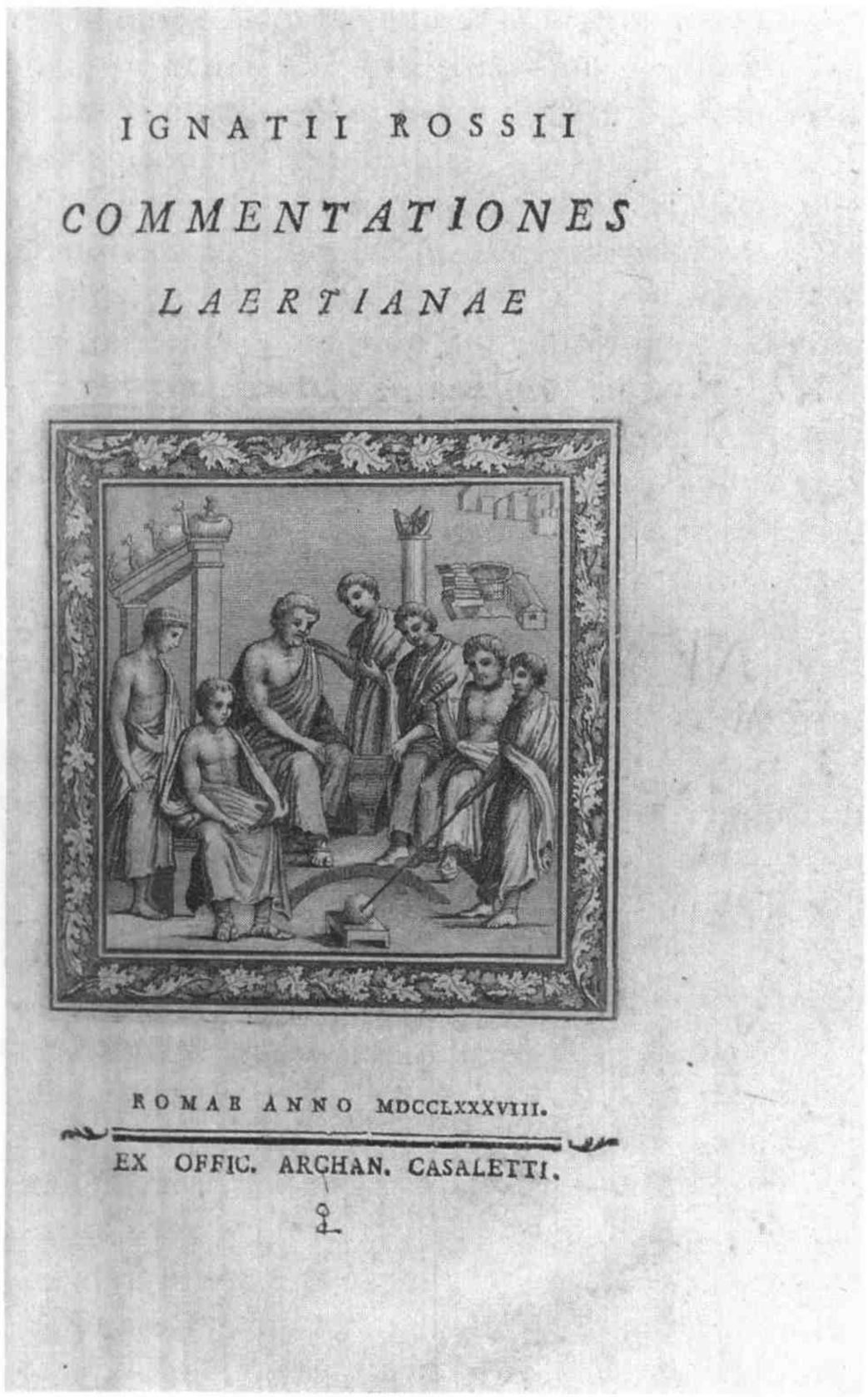
nus post quem for his work. In general his work deals with the Greek philosophers from Thales in the sixth century B.C. to those in the mid first century B.C. Because Diogenes considers philosophy a specifically Greek accomplishment, he grants neither Roman nor barbarian wisdom any significance.

Diogenes' *Lives and Opinions* is basically a compilation of excerpts from many sources, and the structure and content of his biographies are primarily determined by the availability of his sources. Diogenes, in fact, is unique among ancient biographers in quoting so many sources by name. In many cases he offers several conflicting versions of the same event or piece of information, and, despite scattered instances of voicing his criticism of a source, he is generally satisfied to let the divergent versions stand side by side. In the biographical sections Diogenes often relates which sources he is using, while in the philosophical sections generally he gives no indications about his sources. Since the few sources referred to in the so-called doxographical sections that deal with the philosophers' opinions are different from those mentioned in the biographical parts of the work, the doxographies seem unlikely to be based upon Diogenes' biographical sources.

Diogenes' biographies are in no way literary masterpieces and cannot compare with the artistry of the biographies of Plutarch or Suetonius. They are, however, important because of the information they offer and the texts of biographical or philosophical documents preserved in them, many of which are not known from other sources. Thus, Diogenes includes a series of passages from Middle Comedy about Plato and two poems written by Aristotle; and it was Diogenes who preserved in his work the text of the indictment of Socrates, still to be found in the state archives of Athens in the second century A.D. This is not to say that Diogenes carried out extensive original research on the lives of the philosophers; however, because all the biographical sources to which he refers have been lost, it is difficult to evaluate what his scholarly contributions may have been. Diogenes' many and often randomly selected sources allow one to form an impression of the Hellenistic tradition of philosophical biography. He seems to have known and used most of the Hellenistic authors who wrote about literary and biographical matters. It may be precisely because he has excerpted and epitomized so much of the Hellenistic tradition that his work was considered worth preserving by medieval scribes and scholars, while the earlier sources were lost.

The quality and structure of Diogenes' *Lives and Opinions* is uneven; each book has its own structure and its own set of references to sources. Thus, in book 4, and only there, Diogenes' main source seems to have been Antigonus of Carystus's memoirs about Academic philosophers (third century B.C.). Some of the lives contain both biographical and philosophical material, but others have no biographical data and consist mostly of anecdotes and aphorisms (as in, for example, the cases of Thales and Polemon). Still other biographies are mainly doxographical and contain little about the philosophers' lives (as, for example, in the case of Leucippus). Some of the lives have long, detailed sections on philosophy (as, for example, in book 3 on Plato and book 7 on Zeno the Stoic); others have short, inadequate doxographical sections, like the section on Aristotle in book 5. Diogenes shows few signs of having read the actual works of the philosophers whose lives he describes and whose doctrines he reports. But in book 10 he has preserved four long original writings by the third-century philosopher Epicurus that constitute the most important evidence for Epicurus's philosophy from before the period of Cicero. In many biographies Diogenes quotes from letters that must have been attributed to the philosophers but in fact are literary inventions from the Hellenistic or early Roman period; because he also seems to have had a predilection for old documents, he has preserved the wills of Plato, Epicurus, and four Peripatetics (Aristotle, Theophrastus, Strato, and Lyco), and many catalogues of the books written by philosophers, which otherwise would have been lost.

Most of Diogenes' biographies include several basic categories of information (*topoi,* or rubrics), although not all these categories appear in each life. The longer biographies, usually of the founder of a philosophical school, have all of the following rubrics: first, the subject's origins, including his nationality and genealogy; second, his education, in particular the names of the philosophers with whom the subject studied; third, his relation to other philosophers and to other members of the same school, in particular to his students (a list of whom is often given); fourth, his physical appearance and personal characteristics or lifestyle; fifth, the circumstances of his philosophical activity, including the place and method of his teaching; and sixth, his political activities. A seventh rubric generally contains chronological information, most often about the philosopher's floruit, which was, by convention, the fortieth year



Title page for an eighteenth-century commentary on Diogenes' Lives, *which was the primary model for the historiography of philosophy from the Renaissance until the nineteenth century*

of the subject's life, identified by an Olympiad or the corresponding year of an Athenian archon. This date is no more than an approximation. Moreover, in many cases Diogenes also tells the age of the philosopher at the time of death but rarely gives the date of birth. This rubric also gives information about the manner of the subject's death, often giving several versions described according to various sources. In this section Diogenes often quotes his own poems.

The eighth rubric includes the philosopher's list of writings; the ninth rubric describes the doctrines and teaching of the philosopher. These reports about major doctrines are reserved for the founders of a school, but often some striking idea is mentioned briefly in connection with other philosophers. In many cases Diogenes makes a special reference to an idea, a topic, or an expression that he claims was invented or introduced by the philosopher in question – an example of the so-called *prôtos heuretês topos* (inventions), some of which are described, for instance, in book 3 on Plato. A tenth rubric collects the particular philosopher's personal documents, including letters (written by or to the philosopher) or wills and testaments. Finally, there is an eleventh rubric that contains a list of homonyms, or namesakes.

Although there is a tendency for the first rubrics to occur early in a biography and for the list of homonyms to come at the end, there is no fixed order in which these items are presented. Diogenes' biographies are neither chronological expositions, like Plutarch's, nor systematic accounts in which a brief description of a person's life develops into a series of separate topics, like Suetonius's *Lives of the Caesars* (second century A.D.). Diogenes is more interested in describing the lives of the philosophers than their doctrines (note, for instance, his remark in 3.47), and he adheres to the principle expressed by Plutarch in his *Life of Alexander the Great:* "It is not Histories that I am writing, but Lives; and in the most illustrious deeds there is not always a manifestation of virtue or vice, nay, a slight thing like a phrase or a jest often makes a greater revelation of character than battles where thousands fall" (translation by B. Perrin from Plutarch's *Lives,* 1919).

Thus, if one looks at Diogenes' Life of Zeno the Eleatic, a philosopher whose philosophical arguments otherwise were the subject of intense discussion in the works of Plato and Aristotle and later among the Aristotelian commentators, it seems evident that Diogenes' prime interest is to present Zeno as a man who was "very noble both in his philosophy and in politics." The major part of this biography deals with Zeno's behavior toward a tyrant whom he had tried to remove from power through a conspiracy; when he was arrested and subjected to torture, he denounced all the friends of the tyrant and finished by pretending to wish to whisper more names into the ear of the tyrant, while he in fact put his teeth into his ear and was killed when he would not let go. Diogenes offers five different versions of this incident, and this incident as well as most of the rest of this biography adds up to a portrait of Zeno that is indeed memorable. In contrast to this concern for Zeno's character, Diogenes presents only a brief exposition of Zeno's philosophy, one that does not explore the major issues of Zeno's philosophy and, in fact, seems rather to refer to Empedocles. Diogenes obviously wants his readers to benefit from reading about how illustrious philosophers have lived, and his personal remarks on the subjects

of his biographies most often appear when he is describing their manner of life or their character or when he is writing poems on their death. One striking example is Diogenes' long poem on Bion of Borysthenes, whom he attacks because Bion was an atheist but resorted to all kinds of superstitious practices at the end of his life, when he was afraid of dying.

The dominating elements in all the biographies are the anecdotes and apothegms that Diogenes uses to characterize the subject of his biography. Sometimes Diogenes even relates the same anecdote or saying in more than one life; thus, he tells that Anaxagoras, when the death of his sons was reported to him, said: "I knew they were mortal from the moment they were born." Diogenes adds that some sources claim that it was Solon who spoke this remark (though Diogenes does not refer to this incident in his biography of Solon) and that others claim that Xenophon said it. Diogenes repeats this apothegm in his biography of Xenophon, and obviously this anecdote is in both cases meant to illustrate a characteristic feature of their personalities. Sometimes these topical elements are made part of Diogenes' biographical account; sometimes they are placed in isolated sections, with no attempt to integrate them into the life of the philosopher (as is evident, for example, in 4.47–51). Even if it is impossible to determine to what extent these anecdotes and sayings may apply to any individual philosopher, they convey, in any case, what the later tradition regarded as the main personal traits of each philosopher.

Diogenes' use of anecdotes is not surprising, because in antiquity it was difficult to find documentary evidence concerning a deceased person, unless that person was a well-known public figure or had left written works from which it was possible to extract biographical information. Literary works were often exploited for such information without regard for the fact that the content of a fictional work rarely applied directly to the life of its author. How desperate the search for biographical information could be is clear from Tiberius's astrologer Thrasyllus, who attempted to extract information about Democritus from a pseudo-Platonic dialogue: "If the *Rivals* really is by Plato, Democritus must be the unnamed person present, one of the followers of Oinopides and Anaxagoras, talking about philosophy during the conversation with Socrates; Socrates likened him to a pentathlon." Diogenes quotes this passage with approval and has thus preserved an important example of his predecessor's literary and biographical efforts.

Most philosophical treatises are unlikely to have offered much biographical material, although Diogenes or his source manages to create a lively impression of Heraclitus by excerpting statements from his work; in this, as in other cases, Diogenes uses a philosopher's text as a source of biographical information rather than as a source for determining his philosophical thinking. In the case of Xenophon, for whom there is no surviving biography prior to Diogenes, it is obvious that Diogenes put his Life together by combining autobiographical remarks in Xenophon's *Anabasis* and *Symposium* (where Diogenes' reference, in fact, concerns not Xenophon, but Critobolus) with excerpts from Demetrius of Magnes' *On Poets and Writers of the Same Name* (first century B.C.), and from the orator Dinarchus's late-fourth-century-B.C. *The Desertion of Xenophon,* which must have been written many years after the death of Xenophon. Diogenes' factual information is, as is the case in most ancient biographies, not based on documentary evidence and must always be viewed with some skepticism; there are many obvious mistakes.

Diogenes' sense of chronology is often weak: he can suggest, on the basis of different sources, both that Xenophanes was a student of Archelaus (who lived a century later than Xenophanes) and that he was contemporary with Anaximander, without any indication as to what is finally correct. Similarly, Diogenes leaves undecided whether or not some lines from Euripides refer to the death of Socrates, though he does refer to one source that points out that Euripides died before Socrates. It is certainly questionable to change the transmitted text in passages where one knows the chronology to be erroneous. Most of the dates Diogenes offers derive from Apollodorus's second-century-B.C. poem *Chronica* and not from documentary evidence. Apollodorus worked in the second century B.C. and wrote a synopsis of the main events of the history of Greece from the fall of Troy (1184–1183 B.C.) down to circa 120 B.C. Apollodorus's main method was to identify the floruit (Greek *acmê*), that is, the fortieth year of a person's life, with a major event that took place in the middle of that person's life; thus, since the Sophist Protagoras was said to have given the laws of the Athenian colony Thurii, which was established in Southern Italy in 444–443 B.C., Apollodorus identified this year as Protagoras' floruit. Also, Empedocles' floruit was placed in this year, even though both men seem to have been somewhat older. The relationship between two philosophers who were supposed to be connected as teacher and student, or who succeeded one an-

other, was also described within this framework. A student was usually considered forty years younger than his teacher, although other intervals also occur; thus, Anaximander seems to have been considered sixty-four years old when his successor Anaximenes was forty and Pythagoras was twenty-five years old. These synchronisms must always be accepted with some skepticism, and alternative dates in ancient sources should only be rejected after careful examination. Thus, Diogenes was able to suggest an alternative date for Democritus because he had access to Thrasyllus's *Introduction to the Reading of Democritus' Works* (early first century A.D.). Both Apollodorus and Thrasyllus seem to have based their calculations on something Democritus said in one of his treatises, and Diogenes had the sense to present Thrasyllus's argumentation.

Diogenes devotes considerable space to presentations of the doctrines of the major philosophical schools. The discussion of the philosophy of the Cyrenaics in book 2 gives more information than any other ancient source. Book 3 is a general introduction to the study of the *Corpus Platonicum* and gives in chapters 48 to 67 a clear impression of the study of the Platonic dialogues in the first centuries A.D. As an account of Plato's philosophy Diogenes' exposition may be inadequate, but it bears many similarities to other Platonic writings of the second century A.D. The section on Aristotelian philosophy in the fifth book is far less satisfying, but in this case it is significant that all three parts seem to date back to the Hellenistic period. Book 7 is the most comprehensive account of Stoic philosophy that exists from antiquity, and the section on logic is particularly important. The survey of the skeptic tropes is shorter than the one given by Diogenes' contemporary Sextus Empiricus but is otherwise comparable. The Epicurean letters and Epicurus's forty *Principal Doctrines* in book 10 are invaluable because no other sources preserve so much authentic material from the period prior to Cicero. When placing Epicurus's aphorisms at the end of his work, Diogenes admits that he considers them a culmination of philosophical wisdom.

For the pre-Socratic philosophers Diogenes used a source for their teachings that provides information similar to that in other accounts by Aëtius, Hippolytus, and several other authors in late antiquity; ultimately, this material derives from Aristotle and Theophrastus, although it was modified repeatedly during the Hellenistic and Roman periods. In the case of Pythagoras, Diogenes presents an excerpt from Aristotle and an excerpt from Alexander Polyhistor (first century B.C.), thus preserving a much earlier, Hellenistic expression of Pythagoreanism than that found in other sources of the second century A.D. or later. In general, the philosophical sections of Diogenes' book vary as much in quality and comprehensiveness as his biographical chapters.

On the basis of remarks in book 1, one infers that Diogenes must have written his poetry before publishing his *Lives and Opinions*. The title of his collection of poems, or at least of its first book, was *Pammetros,* that is, a book of poems in many different meters. The poems deal mainly with how remarkable persons died, as is evident from Diogenes' use of his own poems in his biographies (although one poem on Xenophon, one on Plato, and three on Pythagoras treat other matters). Most of the poems are flat and do nothing more than versify a prose description of a philosopher's death, perhaps with the addition of a not-so-elegant joke. The poems are usually based on an excerpt reported earlier in the biography of the person in question. Diogenes used, as is indicated by the title of his collection of poetry, an extraordinarily large number of different meters, many of which do not appear in other Greek poetry. He must have had a predilection for rare Greek words, but otherwise the style and the themes of his poetry fall squarely within the Hellenistic tradition. Diogenes was a skilled versifier and obviously interested in poetry, as the many quotations of other poets preserved in his work also indicate.

Diogenes voices his own views about the personalities of the Greek philosophers mainly in these poems; no other ancient biographer included his own poems in his work. From these poems and from several passages in his work, it is possible to give a sketch of the personality of the author of the *Lives and Opinions,* even if nothing is definitely known about Diogenes' life. It seems likely that his detailed descriptions of how philosophers died reflect his own apprehensions about life and religion. Diogenes was primarily interested in depicting the personalities and lives of individual philosophers, although he also included accounts of the philosophy of each of the major philosophical schools. This combination of biography and philosophy seems unusual; only in the case of the Cynics and Pythagoras does one find a similar attempt to establish a connection between biography and intellectual views. Along with Diogenes' conviction that philosophy is essentially a Greek phenomenon runs his concern

to point out the "inventions" of the philosophers, as well as his concern to describe what constituted a school of philosophy.

Diogenes had a passion for classification and enumeration; he was a collector of stories, sayings, bibliographies, and poetry, and he had a strong antiquarian and philological interest. Many of the author's remarks in the book deal with ancient monuments, books, and customs, and Diogenes often points out that these are still to be seen or found in his own time. He sometimes points out that he happened to find a piece of information in a less common source. There can be little doubt that Diogenes' work represents what an individual interested in philosophy in the second or third centuries A.D. could accomplish by studiously collecting and excerpting the available sources. Diogenes may not have been a great writer, and there were obviously better philosophical minds writing in this period; but the enthusiasm and industry that he poured into his *Lives and Opinions* have preserved much about the history of Greek philosophy that otherwise would have been lost.

Diogenes is rarely mentioned by later authors, and he seems to have had no influence in antiquity; but in the Middle Ages much of his biographical information was excerpted in the lexicon called the *Suda* (circa 1000), and his poetry was later included by the editor of the *Palatine Anthology* (circa 917). In the West he has been known since Walter Burley's early-fourteenth-century *On the Life and Manners of the Philosophers* and the Latin translation by Ambrosius Traversarius (1432). The editio princeps of the Greek text was not printed until 1533, but since then Diogenes has been the most important single source for the lives and often for the doctrines of ancient philosophers. The great essayist Michel Eyquem de Montaigne praised him highly, and the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche began his career with several studies of Diogenes and the ancient historiography of philosophy that is revealed in Diogenes' work.

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Empedocles

(fifth century B.C.)

Joel Wilcox
Providence College

MAJOR WORKS: *On Nature;*
Purifications.

Editio princeps: *Carmina,* in *Poesis Philosophica,* edited by H. Stephanus (Geneva: H. Stephanus, 1573).

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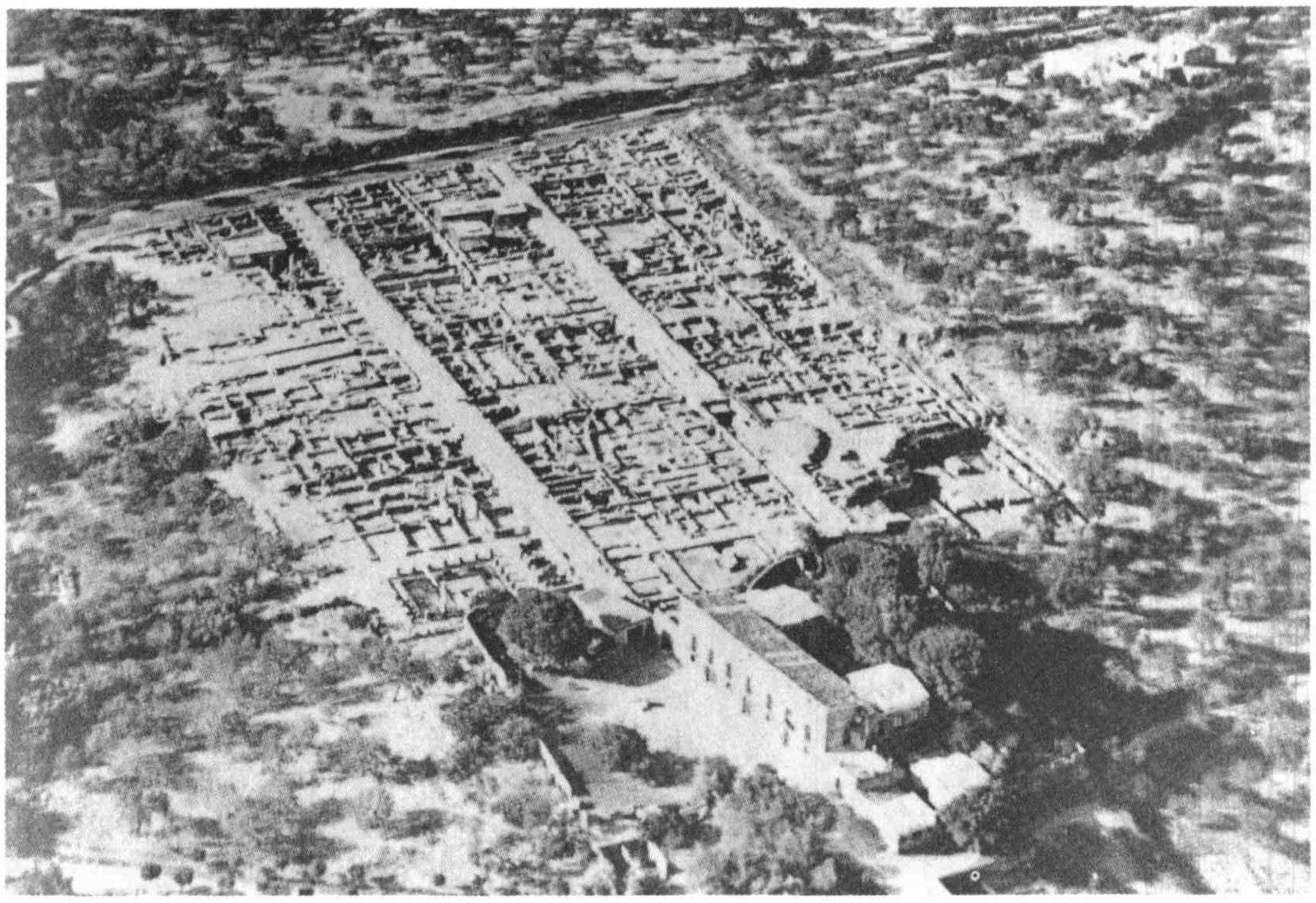
Empedocles is regarded as a pre-Socratic philosopher, although his lifetime overlaps that of Socrates. He is notable for propounding both an ingenious naturalistic view of the cosmos and an extravagantly nonnaturalistic doctrine involving the survival and reincarnation of the soul (*psyche*). Speaking as a naturalist, Empedocles offers both a response to Parmenides' denial of the reality of change and a novel, cyclic conception of the cosmos. As a religious *illuminatus,* Empedocles speaks within the tradition of Orphic and Pythagorean mysticism.

Not much is known about Empedocles' life. There is little reason to doubt Diogenes Laertius's reports that he was from Akragas, in southwestern Sicily, and that he was active in the city's government. His father was probably named Meton, and his grandfather is said to have been an Olympic victor in horse racing. If so, the family was a rich and noble one, able to maintain a team of prize horses. Diogenes reports that Empedocles migrated to Thurii, a Panhellenic colony in southern Italy, soon after it was founded. Since Thurii was founded circa 443 B.C. and Empedocles would have immigrated there as an adult, his lifetime falls within the fifth century B.C. This inference is consistent with the nature of his philosophical views, which clearly represent a transitional stage between Parmenides and Plato. That Empedocles was well known as a healer is evidenced by references to him in later Greek medical writings.

Aside from these facts there are many imaginative reports about Empedocles' life. Aristotle regards him as the father of rhetoric, and, as such, he was taken to be the teacher of the famous Sophist and rhetorician Gorgias. Other reports have Empedocles renouncing the kingship of his city, studying under Pythagoras, living to extreme old age, working miracles, and committing suicide by diving into the volcanic interior of Mount Etna. Perhaps what such reports show above all is that Empedocles was a remarkable figure about whom people thought it worthwhile to conjecture long after his death.

Scholars are on firmer ground with respect to Empedocles' writings, since quite substantial fragments are known. It is commonly accepted that he authored two long poems, *On Nature* (*Peri physeos*) and *Purifications* (*Catharmoi*), of which the former deals with the physical character of the cosmos and the latter with ethical and religious matters. Empedocles wrote his poems in dactylic hexameter, Homer's epic meter. The poems present a serious problem for interpreters, however, in that their respective contents appear to be incompatible. In particular, *On Nature* seems to propound a naturalistic vision of the cosmos that precludes survival of the individual soul, while *Purifications* propounds doctrines of immortality and reincarnation. Suggestions that Empedocles wrote only one poem have the virtue of sidestepping controversies concerning to which of the alleged pair of poems particular fragments of text belong. However, they do not resolve the main



Excavated quarter of Akragas, the hometown of Empedocles according to Diogenes Laertius's Compendium of the Lives and Opinions of Philosophers *(circa A.D. 200)*

problem. Whether Empedocles wrote two poems whose views seem inconsistent or one seemingly inconsistent poem, the problem of interpreting his views as a coherent whole remains. The present article follows convention in assuming that there are two poems.

Empedocles' *On Nature* would have been untitled by him; *On Nature* was a generic title applied by later writers to many pre-Socratic works on the cosmos, whose authors were known, just as generically, as "naturalists." In this poem Empedocles develops an ingenious theory of change in an attempt to counter Parmenides' seeming proof that change could be no more than an illusion. He premises his view on that of Parmenides quite explicitly, writing about "Fools . . . *who fancy that that which formerly was not can come* into being or that anything can perish and be utterly destroyed. For coming into being from that which in no way is is inconceivable, and it is impossible and unheard-of that that which is should be destroyed" (this translation and those that follow are by G. Kirk and J. Raven, *The Presocratic Philosophers* [1957]). Thus, Empedocles accepts Parmenides' view that nothing that exists can cease to exist, and that nothing can come to be from a state of nonexistence. However, he rejects the latter's conclusion that only one single, homogenous thing exists; in its place, he posits four primary existents: "Hear first the four roots of all things; shining Zeus, life-bringing Hera, Aidoneus and Nestis who with her tears fills mortals' springs with water."

Thus, Empedocles assumes that there are four "roots" that underlie all other things. The mythological names correspond to the basic materials of fire (Zeus), air (Hera), earth (Aidoneus), and water (Nestis). As the "roots of all things" they are eternal; they do not come into being but have always existed. It is as though Empedocles has accepted Parmenides' notion of true Being as necessarily eternal but has pluralized it, so that there are really four distinct instances of the kind of thing Parmenides was describing. Empedocles' elevation of the basic materials – fire, air, earth, and water – to the status of Parmenidean Being represents the earliest Western appeal to elements in the modern sense, as particular kinds of matter that cannot cease to exist and cannot change into anything else. Whereas earlier pre-Socratics, Heraclitus, for example, had assumed that the basic materials actually change into one another, Empedocles denies that this kind of change occurs. For him the only kind of change that can occur is the combination and recombination of the elements:

> From these things [the elements] arose all things that were and are and will be, trees and men and women, and beasts and birds and water-bred fishes, and the

> long lived gods too, most mighty. . . . For there are these things alone, and running through one another they become many other things; change results from their mixing.

Empedocles' view that the elements "continually shift" honors the common Greek assumption that the sublunary world is thoroughly changing, unstable, and ephemeral. However, he is highly original in maintaining that even the gods themselves are composed of fire, air, earth, and water, so that, by implication, they are not eternal. Because for any Greek the only genuine deity is one that cannot cease to exist, this view assumes an abstract conception of deity – that is to say, as the elements and related forces – that rejects popular anthropomorphic conceptions. Empedocles' view is certainly indebted to Parmenides, and probably to Xenophanes' radical criticism of anthropomorphism in religious thought.

The "related forces" mentioned above are forces of attraction and repulsion, which are called, respectively, Love and Strife: "And these things [the elements] never cease from continual shifting, at one time all coming together, through Love, into one, at another each borne apart from the others through Strife." Thus, there are six basic components in Empedocles' cosmos: the four elements and the two forces. With these components Empedocles is able to account for a large share of ordinary experience of the sort that Parmenides had denied; namely, experience of change, origin, and destruction. Everything that is not an element is composed of some combination of elements. A thing comes to be when the elements constituting it commingle under the influence of Love and Strife, and it ceases to be when its constitutive elements separate. In this way Empedocles is able to justify the commonsense view of the world that Parmenides had denied by providing, in effect, limited reality to the ordinary things that come and go. Thus, contrary to Parmenides, the phenomenal world is not completely illusory. However, insofar as it is composed of ephemera, neither is it completely real.

In parallel fashion Empedocles holds, again contra Parmenides, that the senses – which register experience of the quasi-real phenomenal world – are not delusive. In this connection he invokes the principle of "like-to-like," according to which only relevantly similar things can interact: "For with earth do we see earth, with water water, with air bright air, with fire consuming fire; with Love do we see Love, with Strife dread Strife." The senses are composed (like everything else) of the four elements, and "effluvia" drifting off the surfaces of things are homeopathically registered by the appropriate senses. Such protoscientific empiricism is occasionally carried to a striking degree, as in a passage containing what has been called, with significant exaggeration, "the first modern experiment." Empedocles observes that the open tubes of a musical instrument known as the *klepsydra* will not fill with water upon being submerged if the main opening at the other end is stopped, and he uses the observed mechanism as a model for respiration: there are tiny channels all over the body that fill with air when the blood recedes and expel air when the blood advances.

Just as other pre-Socratic philosophers had posited comprehensive regulative principles that govern the entire cosmos – for example, Time in Anaximander and the Logos (reason, order) in Heraclitus – Empedocles assumes that the six components of his cosmos interact according to a necessary, regular pattern in which first one of the basic forces and then another becomes dominant. Since there is no evidence in the extant fragments that Empedocles recognized an overarching seventh principle to which Love and Strife must conform, it seems likely that the pattern for Empedoclean change is somehow immanent within Love and Strife. The result is the most picturesque cosmology in Greek thought, one in which the cosmos forever oscillates between states wherein Love and Strife are respectively dominant:

> A double tale will I tell: at one time it grew to be one only from many, at another it divided again to be many from one. There is a double coming into being of mortal things and a double passing away. One is brought about, and again destroyed, by the coming together of all things, the other grows up and is scattered as things are again divided.

The precise details of this cyclical conception are mysterious, as is suggested by Empedocles' remark that he is stating a "double truth." In general, however, it is clear that there are two polar states of the cosmos that change into one another through intermediate stages characterized by the increasing influence of either Love or Strife.

The polar state at which "it [the cosmos] grew one from many" exemplifies the dominance of Love. At this stage "all things come together through Love" to form a sphere composed of a uniform mixture of the four elements: "Here are distinguished neither the swift limbs of the sun nor the shaggy might of the earth nor the sea; but rather equal from every side . . . he stays fast in the close

Relief, circa 470–450 B.C., of Hera and Zeus, who represent air and fire in Empedocles' On Nature *(from the Temple of Hera in Selinus [Palermo])*

covering of harmony, a rounded sphere rejoicing in his circular solitude." This mixture of elements is perhaps a sophisticated recollection of Anaximander's *to apeiron* (the boundless or the indefinite) which, *qua* nothing in particular, is potentially anything. The sphericity of Empedocles' cosmos is derived from Parmenides and from Xenophanes, for whom the cosmos was also a conscious being, and it persists throughout the entire cycle of changes.

The perfect, static uniformity of this stage is disturbed by an influx of Strife, which engenders a vortex, or whirlpool-like motion. This causes the elements to separate from the center of rotation in proportion to their lightness or density. The details of this process are reported variously, but the process essentially issues in the traditional Greek cosmos, in which earth is surrounded by water and surmounted by air, which is surmounted in turn by fire. Empedocles' appeal to the vortex as a mechanism for cosmogenesis recalls Anaxagoras, and possibly Anaximander, and parallels contemporary Atomism.

The polar state at which "it [the cosmos] divided again to be many from one" exemplifies the dominance of Strife. At this stage the four elements have apparently – there is no explicit textual evidence – been dispersed into a chaos of tiny bits of matter. This state is disturbed by an influx of Love, which causes the bits of matter to coalesce into greater and greater unities. The result is a developmental theory that is as clever as it is bizarre: "Here sprang up many faces without necks, arms wandered without shoulders, unattached, and eyes strayed alone, in need of foreheads." As these random body parts continue to come together, a world of strange creatures arises: "Many creatures were born with faces and breasts on both sides, man-faced ox-progeny, while others again sprang forth as ox-headed offspring of man, creatures compounded partly of

male, partly of the nature of female." The "wholeness" of these Janus-type and androgynous beings suggests that Love has now attained its maximal influence.

After the apogee of Love, Strife sets in and kills off the maladapted organisms. The result is the world of Empedocles, a world in which "things have fallen apart" in a variety of ways. Strife is increasing and will achieve a state of maximal influence, after which the cycle will begin again with the introjection of Love. This, intuitively, is Empedocles' cosmic cycle. There are problems, however, in trying to conceptualize this cycle in detail. For example, Empedocles seems to assume two different states of maximal Love, one in which all elements are combined into an undifferentiated unity and one in which particular living beings display a strange wholeness.

Whatever the precise nature of the cosmic cycle, it seems to preclude immortality. Empedocles identifies consciousness with the blood: "the blood around men's hearts is their thought." However, Theophrastus correctly observes in *De Sensu* (third century B.C.) that, for Empedocles, and "in the blood above all other parts the elements are blended." Since every compound of elements is temporary, immortality seems to be impossible. The fact, then, that Empedocles explicitly maintains a doctrine of immortality in his other poem, *Purifications,* presents a serious problem for interpreters.

The content of *Purifications* is Orphic and Pythagorean. According to these traditions the human soul is a prisoner in the body and is compelled to undergo many rebirths before achieving sufficient purity – by way of ritual practices and the acquisition of esoteric knowledge – to escape rebirth by joining the realm of the gods. Orphism is well attested in and around Akragas, and Empedocles would have been exposed to Pythagoras's teachings no later than his move to Thurii.

Purifications relates the story of the fall of human beings from an original state in which "Kupris [Love] ruled as queen without other gods," Ares in particular. Since Ares, the god of war, represents Strife, this original state corresponds to the stage of maximal Love in Empedocles' cosmic cycle. There are many other parallels between the cosmic cycle of *On Nature* and the cycle of purification and transmigration in *Purifications,* which show that Empedocles viewed the two cycles as closely related. Even so, a point-by-point isomorphism does not seem possible.

The golden age of the rule of Love is disrupted, predictably, by Strife, which begins to take command of people's lives. Under Strife's influence the monstrously evil practice of sacrificing and eating animals develops: "Father lifts up his own dear son, his form changed, and, praying, slays him – witless fool; . . . and he, deaf to its cries, slays it and makes ready in his halls an evil feast. And likewise son seizes father, and children their mother, and, tearing out the life, eat the flesh of their dear ones." This quotation assumes transmigration, the transmission of personal identity from one body to another. That is, the "dear son whose form has changed" is an animal, so that for Empedocles conventional religious sacrifices – which frequently involved animal sacrifice – are simply acts of murder, followed by cannibalism.

Such practices produce horrific pollution within the agent, which, according to Empedocles, requires thirty thousand reincarnations to remove. Empedocles himself has undergone the cycle: "For already have I been a boy and a girl, a bush and a bird and a dumb sea fish." In fact, *Purifications* is written during Empedocles' final incarnation, so that he can say: "friends . . . I go about among you all an immortal god, mortal no more." It is not highly unusual for a Greek to consider himself a god; Xenophanes, for example, implies as much when he lays confident claim to knowledge which, as he stresses, is unavailable to "mortals." The challenge for interpreters is to reconcile Empedocles' claim to immortality with the essential transitoriness of all things in *On Nature.*

Some interpreters think that no such reconciliation is possible, so that Empedocles is simply (and egregiously) inconsistent. In support of this view one may invoke the fragment designated B-17 in H. Diehls and W. Kahn's *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (The Fragments of the Pre-Socratics) [1952]; in their fragment the gods themselves are held to be impermanent. Others distinguish two kinds of soul, one of which dies with the body, while the other, the *daimon* (spirit), somehow survives. Survival of the *daimon* would seem to commit Empedocles to a strict dualism between the phenomenal person, whose body and soul are entirely constituted from the elements, and a nonphenomenal, immaterial *daimon.* This conception is certainly possible, considering that the Eleatic Melissus had developed a conception of immaterial being at or slightly before the time of Empedocles. In this view immortality might consist in one's *daimon* merging with the (immaterial) pattern of origin and destruc-

tion – the only thing in Empedocles' worldview that is truly eternal – to which not only the elements, but also Love and Strife, must conform. However, such immortality would be impersonal, and Empedocles does seem to imply personal immortality at times.

Thus, one is ultimately left with questions about the exact nature of Empedocles' views, though not about the genius of their author. Empedocles' response to Parmenides inaugurates a new era of philosophy, in which the relation of the dynamic, phenomenal world to divine actualities is spelled out with greater and greater precision, culminating in the views of Plato and Aristotle.

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Epictetus

(circa A.D. 55 – circa A.D. 125–130)

Michele Valerie Ronnick
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MAJOR WORK: *Diatribes* [*Discourses*] (late first century/early second century A.D.).

Editio princeps: *Epicteti stoici Enchiridion* (Leipzig: Jacob Thanner, 1521).

Standard editions: *Epictoti dissertationes,* 2 volumes, edited by Heinrich Schenkl (Leipzig: Teubner, 1894); *Epictetus,* edited by W. A. Oldfather (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1925–1928);

Translation in English: *The Discourses of Epictetus with the Encheiridion and Fragments,* translated by George Long (London: Bell, 1877).

A slave who lived for many years in Rome, Epictetus was also a Stoic philosopher who taught that wisdom consisted in achieving independence from external circumstances and in learning to meet adversity with patience and fortitude. In a manner that perhaps too openly parallels the life of Socrates, whom he deeply admired, Epictetus left behind no writings. The words that are credited to him to him in the *Diatribes,* better known in English as the *Discourses* (late first century/early second century A.D.) are actually sections from the notes made by his student Arrian, who later became the noted historian of Alexander the Great. Around A.D. 108 Arrian attended a school that Epictetus conducted in the town of Nicopolis. In a letter to a friend that prefaces the extant text, Arrian claims that he wrote down Epictetus's words as they were actually spoken and avoided any effort to embellish or otherwise polish his notes.

Arrian assures his readers, moreover, that Epictetus would not have cared what anyone thought of his words in written form, because his sole concern was an immediate one of stimulating the listeners of his audience, then and there, to think about the best and highest things and embark on the path to wisdom. Scholarly consensus has not yet been achieved regarding the validity of Arrian's claim. Some look to internal evidence, such as Arrian's deliberate use of Koine Greek, the common dialect, rather than the more literary Attic Greek, for proof of the pristine status of the recorded words of Epictetus. Others consider Arrian's prefatory comments a commonplace often used in informal philosophical style. Some go so far as to say that one's intellectual focus should not be on Epictetus's so-called *Discourses* at all, but rather on Arrian's *Discourses of Epictetus.*

In any case Arrian's schoolboy enthusiasm for his teacher provided him with the basic materials for what was perhaps his own first work, the *Discourses,* and later a summation of the major points of that work, the *Encheiridion,* which is known by two additional titles, *The Manual* and *The Handbook.* Their contents were taken from the lectures Arrian had originally attended along with other young men from families who possessed the means to support long periods of study. What proportion of these youths came from families in the eastern or the western empire cannot be determined, but that they were destined to fill positions of responsibility and leadership in later life is clear from various descriptions and explanations given by Epictetus. Of the notebooks that Arrian published, one-third to one-half are extant.

Epictetus was born around A.D. 55 in Hierapolis, a small town in an area known as Phrygia on the mainland of Asia Minor. Neither the names of his parents nor those of any of his other relatives are known. His mother is thought to have been a slave, and it is as a slave that Epictetus first appears in the historical records at Rome. There he served the emperor Nero's rich and powerful administrative secretary Epaphroditus, who himself had once been enslaved.

At some point during this period of servitude, Epictetus was allowed, for reasons that are not clear, to study with Musonius Rufus, a Stoic philosopher who deeply influenced Epictetus. Rufus, as Epictetus called him, was the leading Stoic teacher and rhetorician of the time, one whose

own turbulent career was marked by periods of banishment from Rome. The first interdiction happened under the reign of Nero and the second under Vespasian. It was between these periods of banishment from Rome that Epictetus must have come under his tutelage. Sometime later during this same period, Epictetus was granted his freedom by Epaphroditus. Soon after receiving his manumission he began to lecture on Stoic philosophy in Rome.

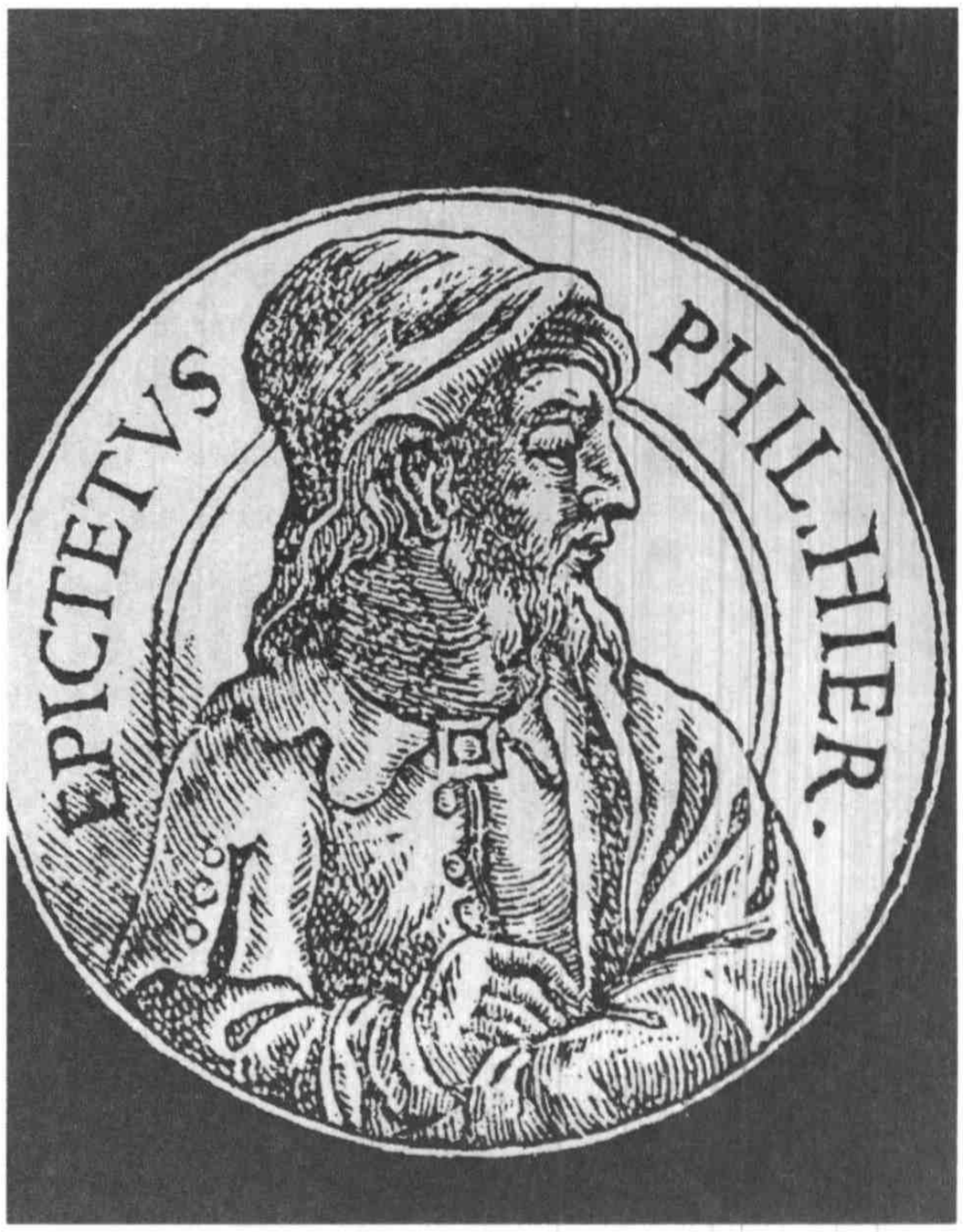
In addition to the admiration Epictetus felt for Musonius Rufus, he greatly admired Socrates and closely patterned his behavior upon his. Motivated by a similarly keen interest in moral philosophy, Epictetus endeavored to help his fellowman by bringing him to realize that true freedom depended upon the proper understanding of what was and what was not under his individual control. So urgent was his self-perceived mission that he would stop men in the street or marketplace to ask them questions. On one occasion, according to an account described by his pupil Arrian, his earnest query was answered with a blow to the head.

In many ways Epictetus's conduct of his life can rightly be called Cynic. Like Diogenes, he took pride in living simply. Indeed, a pronounced streak of antimaterialism can be seen throughout his entire career. He was said to have lived in Rome with unlocked doors and with no other accoutrements but a straw mat and pallet. The inexpensive terra-cotta lamp that he decided to use after his more valuable iron lamp had been stolen was later sold at an exceedingly high price to a buyer who hoped that it would "enlighten" him as much as it had Epictetus.

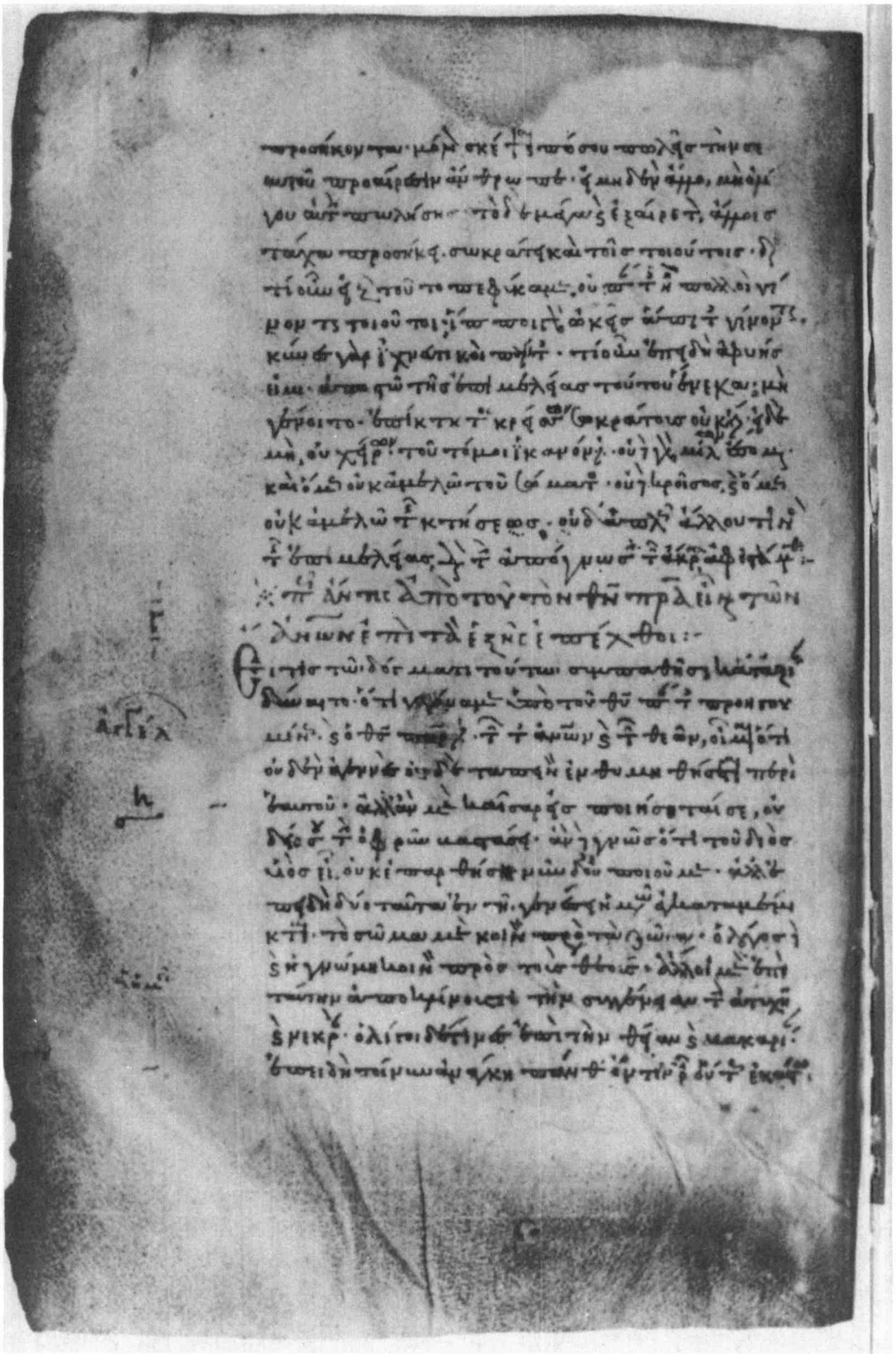
Epictetus was never robust in health. His chronic lameness has been attributed by some – such as the writers of the medieval *Suidas* (circa tenth century A.D.) or possibly an unknown Christian apologist whose zealotry led him to diminish the noble qualities of Epictetus's character – to a simple case of rheumatism. Others, like Celsus, Epictetus's younger contemporary, blamed the lameness upon the vicious actions of a former owner. According to an anecdote recorded by Origen, Epictetus calmly informed Epaphroditus with a smile that one of his legs that Epaphroditus was busily twisting in an act of torture was on the verge of breaking. When it did break, Epictetus scolded Epaphroditus by saying, "Did I not tell you that you were breaking it?"

His many references to children indicate a marked interest in them. He used examples of children and their play habits to illustrate his theory that life should be treated as a game. He noticed how they would gather up broken pieces, erect some structure with them, only to pull it down and build something else again. He was delighted to see how they, in contrast to adults, were always able to pass time pleasantly. Nevertheless, Epictetus remained single throughout his life and never fathered any offspring. He did, however, encourage his pupils to marry, avoid adultery, and raise children. In old age Epictetus is said to have interrupted his solitude by adopting the unwanted child of some destitute friends and then to have brought a woman into his house to act as the child's caretaker.

This small household was maintained in Nicopolis, a city on the east coast of northern Greece in an area known as Epirus, which had been founded by Augustus in 31 B.C. It was to Nicopolis that Epictetus had repaired around A.D. 93, after Domitian had driven all the philosophers out of Rome. There, displaying an inexplicable preference for Nicopolis to the many other cities in the East that were larger or more prominent, he established his school of Stoic philosophy. Perhaps, as some scholars think, the students would have found less to distract them in such a location.



Epictetus; sixteenth-century woodcut (Bibliothèque Nationale)



Page from the late-eleventh- or early-twelfth-century manuscript of Epictetus's works (Bodleian Library, Oxford)

The picture of Epictetus that emerges after reading the notebooks kept by his student Arrian is that of an intensely earnest yet humble man with a strong personality, a teacher whose own life story and special form of rough-hewn, earnest eloquence endeared him to his listeners. Unlike the early Stoics, Epictetus was interested in the common man and tried to teach all who listened to him the methods by which they could defend themselves from fortune's vagaries. He exhorted his pupils to be indifferent to death, pain, and disease by being mindful of his maxim "bear and forbear." All things in Epictetus's world happened according to divine Providence, a force no one could escape. Nevertheless, each person was entirely responsible for his actions and reactions to the things that Providence brought. In the final analysis everything hinged upon the attitude that a person assumed toward his external circumstances. "All of us," he directed his pupils, "should make beautiful our moral purpose, and eradicate our worthless opinions."

As a fervent moral activist Epictetus insisted upon rigorous and constant moral vigilance. He disdained theoretical studies in favor of his stringent ethical system, and he openly criticized Stoics who spent their time quibbling over petty details or living hypocritically by saying one thing and doing another. Underlying the seemingly submissive quality of Epictetus's thought, a quality for which so many of his critics fault him, are powerful, dynamic lessons for achieving dignity and self-possession in any situation. Epictetus's teachings repeatedly stress the importance of developing a sense of proper character, which is something that each person ultimately must achieve for himself. That the physical body counted for little and that the spirit was paramount can be seen in his declaration: "My leg you may fetter, but my moral purpose not even Zeus himself has the power to overcome."

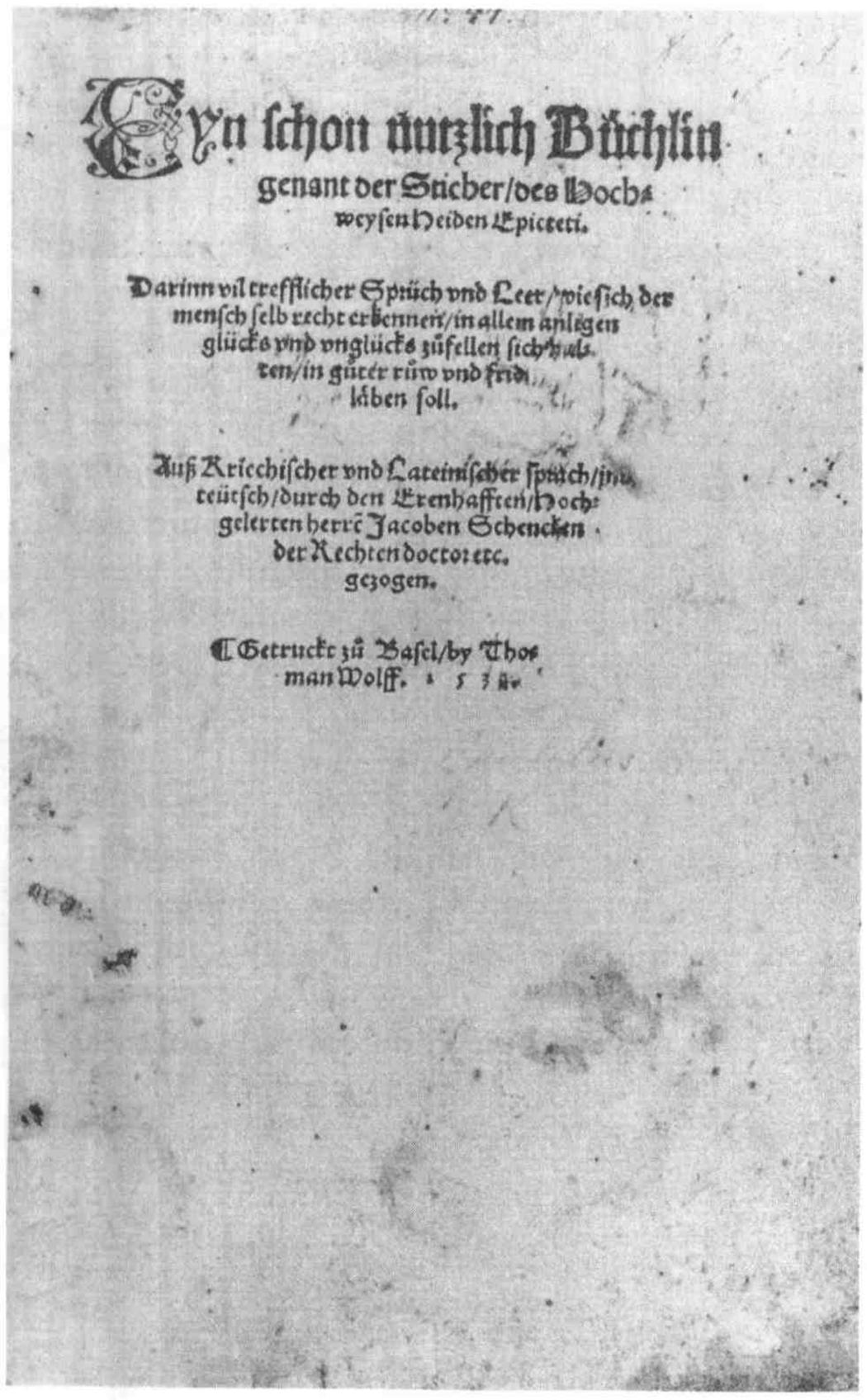
Images of pain and struggle are frequently found in Epictetus's thought, as are medical analogies. To him education was a painful procedure analogous to surgery. "Men," he said, "the lecture room is a hospital; you must not leave it in pleasure, but in pain. Indeed you are entering unwell." This attitude has its roots in the Stoic paradox that maintains that all fools are mad. Right thinking alone leads to right living, and this is the paramount achievement of a Stoic wise man, who alone is well.

The *Discourses* of Epictetus are unique among the literature of the Greco-Roman world. No other extant work so stringently and self-critically assesses the accepted values of rank and ambition that shaped society at the time. But because Epictetus played the role of the disenfranchised outsider in various ways throughout his life, his thought provides a valuable foil to the more complacent worldview of his contemporary from the senatorial class, Pliny the Younger.

Epictetus was widely admired at the time of his death. Lucian referred to him as a "marvelous old man," and Aulus Gellius deemed him the "greatest of philosophers." He was friends with the emperor Hadrian and was said to have met with him during a visit to Rome late in his life. Among Epictetus's most famous disciples was the emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, who valued him above all others. Aurelius's personal physician, Galen, admired him as well and wrote a special treatise about him.

Epictetus's apparent attitude of defiance, however, outraged many Christian readers, among them the French philosopher Blaise Pascal in the sixteenth century and Epictetus's eighteenth-century translator Elizabeth Carter, who published in 1756 *All the Works of Epictetus,* an eighteenth-century best-seller. The Stoic mandate to rely solely upon one's self seemed to the Christian mind to be the height of pagan arrogance. A Stoic like Epictetus neither repented nor sought pardon from God for his failings. Such idolatry of human nature was inexcusable, even blasphemous. To the Christians life was sacred; only God could end it. To Epictetus, life was not such a prison, but a banquet at which one ate and then left at will. He viewed suicide as the final form of human freedom. What was regarded by ancients as a noble and courageous system of thought was deemed by Christians to be, at least in part, an example of heathen ignorance and error.

Scholars have nevertheless used gallons of ink discussing Epictetus's relationship to the New Testament, a little less on tracing his influence among the early church fathers. At the present time, the former question is regarded as settled. Epictetus knew about the Christians and even went so far as to mention them but was in no way influenced by their writings. In regard to the second issue it is clear that, in spite of the reservations that the Christians had about Epictetus, many, such as Saint Gregory of Nazianzus, Saint John Chrysostom, Saint Augustine, and Origen (who rated him in some respects above Plato) held him in high regard because of his pronounced asceticism. Indeed, Epictetus's *Manual,* with a few minor adaptations that included changing the word *gods* to the singular *god,* was used as a guide to monastic life by several different groups.


Eyn schon nutzlich Büchlin
genant der Stieber/des Hochs
weysen Heiden Epicteti.

Darinn vil trefflicher Sprüch vnd Leer/wie sich der
mensch selb recht erkennen/in allem anligen
glücks vnd vnglücks zufellen sich halt-
ten/in gutter rüw vnd frid
läben soll.

Auß Kriechischer vnd Lateinischer sprach/in
teütsch/durch den Ernhafften/Hoch-
gelerten herrn Jacoben Schencken
der Rechten doctor etc.
gezogen.

Getruckt zů Basel/by Thos
man Wolff. 1537

Title page for the editio princeps of Epictetus's Enchiridion, *the summation of the major points of his* Discourses

During the third century A.D. there appeared a work that attests to Epictetus's emergence as a "mythologized" figure in popular culture. This is the *Altercatio,* or *Disputatio Hadriani Augusti et Epicteti Philosophi,* a work that has survived with the *Notitia Dignitatum* (circa A.D. 345). It is a series of seventy-three riddlelike questions proposed by the emperor Hadrian and answered by Epictetus. While the unknown author exhibits little that can be called genius, the form of his work greatly influenced the development of the medieval dialogue in general. In particular the *Altercatio* created the figure of the *enfant sage* out of Epictetus, a figure who appears as a precocious three-year-old child in Catalan, Spanish, French, Middle English, and Cymric accounts during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Later, in seventeenth-century France, this version of the dialogue was widely read, especially among the less educated classes.

Epictetus's influence after his death has not yet been thoroughly analyzed, but one can safely say that it was equal to, if not greater than, the influence that he exerted during his lifetime. Epictetus was the subject of an emblem designed by Andrea Alciati, whose text included in both Greek and Latin his maxim "bear and forbear." He also won high praise from the neo-Stoic Justus Lipsius, one of the leading scholars of his age. Lipsius wrote that he thought more of Epictetus every time he read him and felt that there was no one who better influenced and shaped a good mind. The philosopher Pascal spent considerable effort contemplating Epictetus, who is mentioned many times in his *Pensées* (1670). Although Pascal came to the conclusion that there were "seeds of diabolical pride" in Epictetus's failure to acknowledge man's impotence, his more favorable thoughts about Epictetus are also preserved in the philosophical dialogue known as *Entretien avec M. de Saci,* based on a dialogue that took place in Port-Royal des Champs in 1655.

During the eighteenth century Voltaire told Frederick the Great in a letter dated 9 December 1776 that it was "[not] surprising that the Marcus Aurelius of our age should pity this old Epictetus." In 1819 Thomas Jefferson wrote in a letter to a friend that "Epictetus, indeed has given us what was good of the Stoics. . . . I have sometimes thought of translating Epictetus (for he has never been tolerably translated into English)." About this time Sir Sidney Colvin, the biographer of the English writer Walter Savage Landor, said that Landor's "ambition was to walk with Epicurus on the right hand and Epictetus on the left." In 1829 Landor prepared a dialogue, "Epictetus and Seneca," for his *Imaginary Conversations* (1824–1829). Later that century the scholar R. W. Church, in his *Occasional Papers* (1897), devoted a twenty-six-page essay to Epictetus. There he noted that, according to Thomas Wentworth Higginson, who "on the return of peace in America exchanged the command of coloured troops in the civil war for the study of Epictetus," the Haitian leader Toussaint-Louverture "made the works of his fellow slave a favourite manual."

Still later, Russian playwright and short-story writer Anton Chekhov, in his short story "Ward Number Six," created characters who discuss Stoicism and quote directly from Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius. About the same time in the United States, the poet Walt Whitman declared that his "choice little Epictetus" was a "sacred book." Whitman was impressed by the ramifications of Epictetus's ethos upon a democratic system and said in later life that

Epictetus was "the one of my old cronies who has lasted to this day without cutting a diminished figure." In the contemporary period American writer J. D. Salinger has made some of his characters speak with words that echo Epictetus's own, as his characters do in the story "Teddy"; he also quotes directly from Epictetus in the story "Zooey."

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Epicurus

(342/341 B.C. – 271/270 B.C.)

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MAJOR WORKS – EXTANT: *Letter to Herodotus;*
Letter to Pythocles;
Letter to Menoecus;
Sovran Maxims, or *Principal Doctrines;*
Gnomologium Vaticanum, or "Vatican Sayings."

MAJOR WORK – FRAGMENTARY: *On Nature* (37 books).

Standard editions: *Epicurea*, edited by H. Usener (Leipzig: Teubner, 1887); *Epicuri epistulae tres et ratae sententiae,* edited by P. von der Mühll (Leipzig: Teubner, 1922); *Epicurus: The Extant Remains,* edited and translated by C. Bailey (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926); *Epicuri et Epicureorum scripta,* edited by A. Vogliano (Berolini, 1928); *Epikur: Briefe, Sprüche, Werkfragmente,* edited by H. W. Krautz (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1980).

Along with the teachings of Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics, Epicureanism, named for the philosopher Epicurus, was one of the most important and influential philosophical doctrines in existence during both the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Nevertheless, because of its frankly expressed doctrine of hedonism – as well as the almost cultlike secrecy that seemed to shroud the activities of the school – the teachings of Epicureanism were frequently maligned and misunderstood by the members of the rival movements. The fact that Epicurus himself had led a fairly ascetic life and had placed strict limits and qualifications upon the pursuit of pleasure, both for himself and his students, was generally ignored, with the result that the Stoics, in particular – as well as, later, the Christians – tended to denounce Epicurus as an immoral voluptuary. In spite of its many detractors, however, the doctrine of Epicureanism remained highly competitive in the heady marketplace of ideas that existed throughout the period of middle antiquity.

In the first century B.C. the Roman poet Lucretius offered the world an enthusiastic exposition of Epicurus's philosophy in his *De Rerum Natura (On the Nature of Things);* Cicero, the great Roman statesman, orator, and philosopher, although essentially opposed to Epicurus's teachings, nevertheless took them seriously enough to argue against them on many occasions in his own philosophical works. It was also during this period that the influential Philodemus of Gadara, some of whose works have now been discovered on papyrus, spread the message of Epicureanism to his students at Herculaneum and Naples. In the following century the avowedly Stoic philosopher Seneca frequently quotes Epicurus with approval, especially in the *Moral Epistles* (circa A.D. 60) that he composed near the end of his life. Later still, the lengthy inscription commissioned by Diogenes of Oenoanda and the highly sympathetic account by the second-century A.D. biographer Diogenes Laertius, who refers to Epicurus's detractors as "madmen" in his *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers,* both demonstrate that Epicurus continued to enjoy a favorable readership at least into the second century A.D.

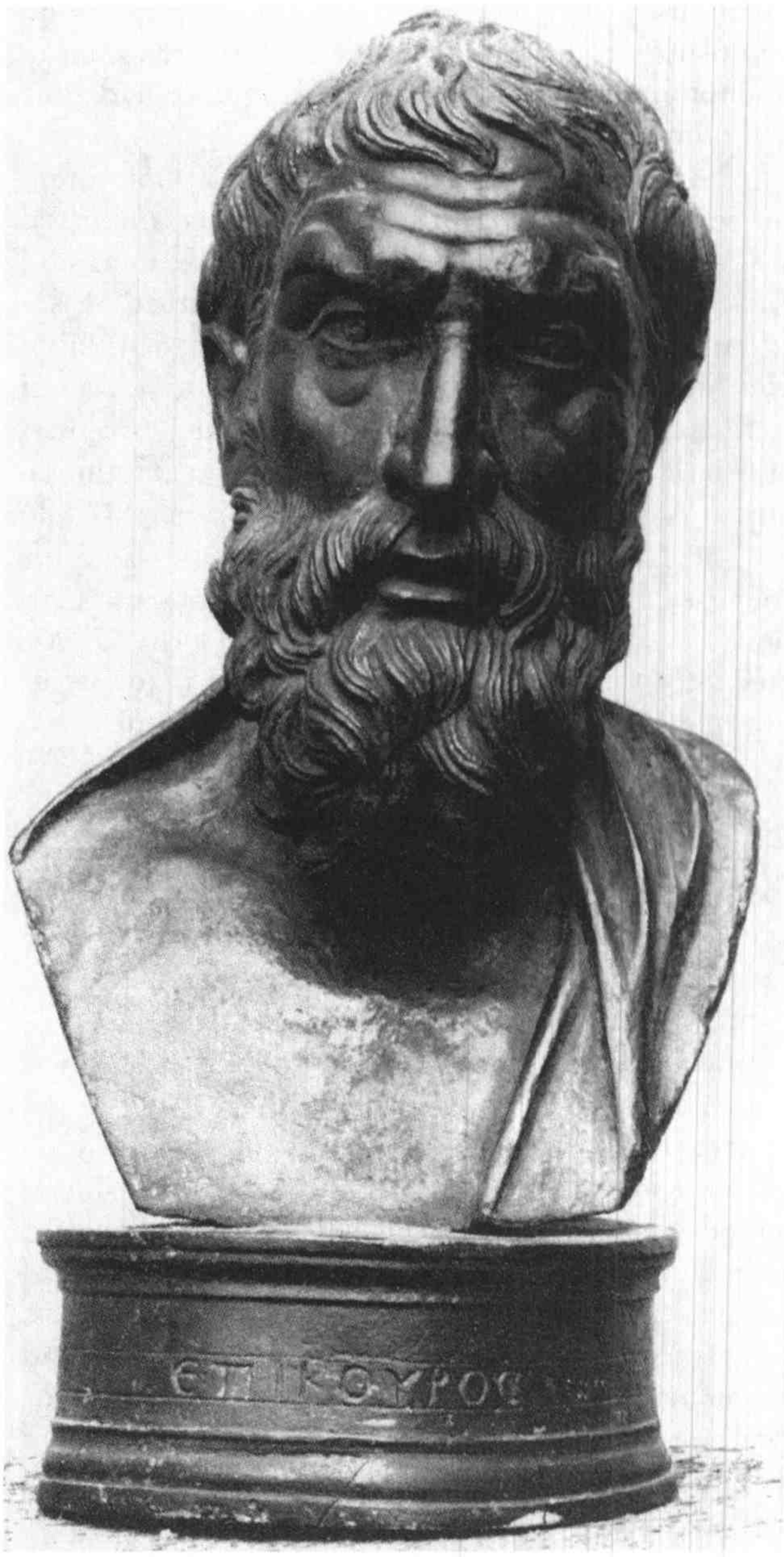
Epicurus was a prolific writer whose output, according to Diogenes Laertius in his *Lives and Opinions,* amounted to three hundred rolls of papyrus – an output greater, Diogenes maintains, than that of any previous philosophical writer. Unfortunately, most of the work of Epicurus has been lost. Of his five complete works that are extant, no less than four were preserved by Diogenes Laertius, who lived nearly five hundred years after Epicurus. These four works of Epicurus are the *Letter to Herodotus,* which offers a summary of the Epicurean philosophy of nature; the *Letter to Pythocles,* dealing with celestial phenomena and their possible causes; the *Letter to Menoecus,* which treats the subject of morality; and the *Sovran Maxims,* or *Principal Doctrines* (Κυριαι Δοξαι), which are also primarily con-

cerned with moral issues. A fifth work, the so-called *Gnomologium Vaticanum*, or "Vatican Sayings," was discovered in a fourteenth-century manuscript in the Vatican Library by C. Wotke in 1888 and, like the *Sovran Maxims,* presents a summary of the moral teachings of Epicurus. Of what appears to have been Epicurus's longest work, the thirty-seven books (papyrus rolls) of *On Nature,* only quotations in later authors and some fragmentary papyri discovered at Herculaneum remain.

In addition to the work *On Nature,* the titles of some forty other now-lost treatises are known: *Of Atoms and Void of Love; Epitome of Objections to the Physicists Against the Megarians; Problems; Of Choice and Avoidance; Of the End; Of the Standard, or The Canon; Chaeredemus; Of the Gods; Of Piety; Hegesianax; Of Human Life* (four papyrus rolls), *Of Just Dealing; Neocles: dedicated to Themista; Symposium; Eurylochus: dedicated to Metrodorus; Of Vision; Of the Angle of the Atom; Of Touch; Of Fate; Opinions Regarding Sensations – against Timocrates; Discovery of the Future (Prognosticon); Introduction to Philosophy (Protreptikos); Of Images; Of Presentation; Aristobulus; Of Music; Of Justice and the Other Virtues; Of Benefits and Gratitude; Polymedes; Timocrates* (three papyrus rolls), *Metrodorus* (five papyrus rolls); *Antidorus* (two papyrus rolls); *Opinions about Diseases and Death: dedicated to Mithras; Callistolas; Of Kingship; Anaximenes;* and *Letters* (some four of which are preserved, as noted above). These, with the addition of the *Sovran Maxims,* are said by Diogenes Laertius (*Lives and Opinions,* 10.27–28) to have been "the best" of Epicurus's works.

Most of what is known about Epicurus's personal life is found in the account by Diogenes in *Lives and Opinions,* which, despite Diogenes' own relatively late date, nevertheless contains much genuine material from the period prior to the lifetimes of Cicero and Lucretius, and can thus be regarded as the single most important source for Epicurus's career and teachings. This account occupies the entire tenth and last book of Diogenes' compendium.

Diogenes records in *Lives* that Epicurus was born "seven years after the death of Plato," that he was an Athenian citizen of the deme of Gargettus, and that his father was Neocles, of the family of the Phliadae, and his mother was Chaerestrate. Epicurus's parents were Athenian colonists (or *cleruchs*) on the island of Samos, which had continued to form a part of the diminished sphere of influence commanded by Athens even after its defeat by the Macedonian king Philip II at the battle of Chaeronea in 338 B.C. – three years after Epicurus was born. At the news of the death of Alexander the Great, Philip's son and successor, in 323 B.C., the



Epicurus; bronze bust found in 1753 at Herculaneum (National Museum, Naples, inv. 5465)

Athenians rebelled against Macedonian control in the disastrous Lamian War (323–322 B.C.), which resulted in the utter defeat of Athens and the expulsion of Athenian colonists from Samos by Alexander's successor, Perdiccas. Epicurus himself, at the age of eighteen, had already left Samos only a short time before to perform his two-year term of compulsory military service (or *ephebeia*) in Athens. The famous comic poet Menander also served as an ephebe at this time, and Epicurus would presumably have made his acquaintance during this period. Xenocrates was head of the Academy at this time (339–314 B.C.), and Aristotle, now nearing the end

of his long life, was lecturing in Chalchis. Upon completion of his military service, Epicurus went to Colophon in Asia Minor, where his father had gone after the loss of Samos.

According to Diogenes, it was in Colophon, during his early twenties, that Epicurus convinced his three brothers, Neocles, Chaeredemus, and Aristobulus – as well as a slave of his named Mys – to pursue the study of philosophy along with him. He does not seem to have opened his own school until some years later, when he was thirty-two, first at Mitylene on the island of Lesbos, then at Lampsacus in Asia Minor, and then finally (circa 307/306 B.C.) in Athens itself. In Athens he purchased, for the price of eighty minae, a house (the famous "Garden" or κῆπος) which, like Plato's Academy, Aristotle's Lyceum, and Zeno's "Porch" (or stoa), became closely associated with the philosophy that was taught there.

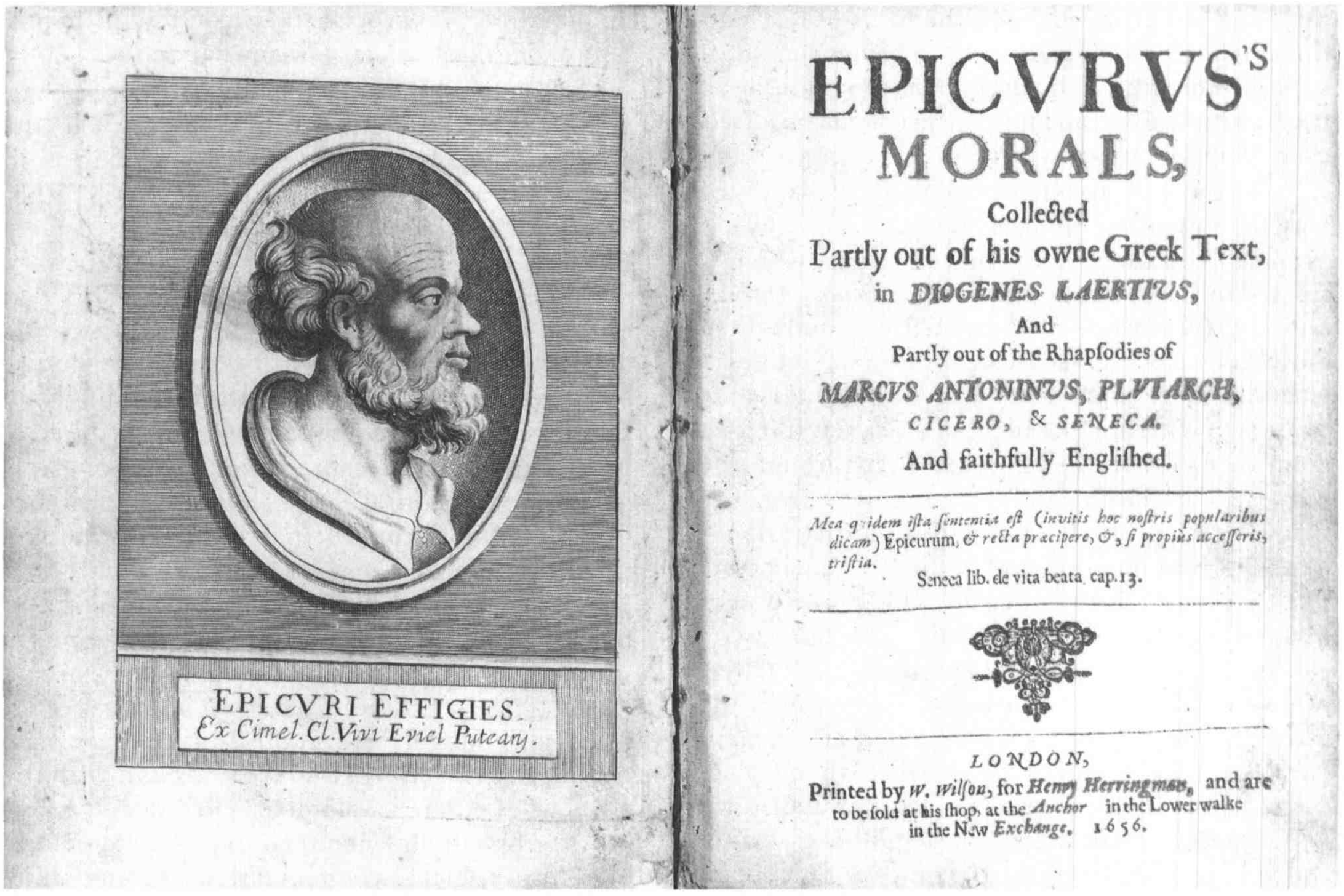
It was here, in Athens, that Epicurus spent the rest of his life, with the exception of some brief trips to Asia Minor; and it was here that he died at the age of seventy-two, after a fourteen-day bout with kidney stones. The terms of his last will and testament, which Diogenes preserves (*Lives,* 10.16–22), provide, among other things, for the continuation of his school under the leadership of his pupil Hermarchus, who inherited all of the master's books, and the manumission of several of his slaves, including Mys. Many of his most important pupils, according to Diogenes, were natives either of Lampsacus (these included Metrodorus, Polyaenus, Leonteus and his wife Themista, Colotes, and Idomeneus) or Mitylene (in particular, his successor Hermarchus), which had been the seat of his earlier teaching activities. Since his designated successor Hermarchus was not an Athenian citizen, Epicurus left the Garden to a certain Amynomachus, with the stipulation that he place it at the disposal of Hermarchus and his disciples "to spend time in according to the dictates of philosophy."

Diogenes Laertius records that Epicurus first became interested in the study of philosophy at the age of fourteen, when he became disgusted by the schoolmasters who could not tell him the meaning of the word *chaos* in the works of the poet Hesiod. Having once planned to become a schoolmaster himself, Epicurus decided against this course only upon reading the works of the atomist philosopher Democritus, whose ideas were to have a considerable influence on his own. Later, Anaxagoras and Archelaus, the teacher of Socrates, are said to have been his favorites among his philosophical predecessors. His teachers seem to have included the atomist Nausiphanes of Teos and the Peripatetic Praxiphanes, as well as the Platonists Pamphilus and Xenocrates – though in his now-lost "Letter to Eurylochus" he claimed to have been entirely self-taught.

The letters and maxims preserved by Diogenes Laertius explicitly for the purpose of summarizing the master's teachings hardly bear out Diogenes' claim that Epicurus was a remarkably clear writer who used only ordinary words to describe things. On the contrary, most modern critics find his prose exceedingly dry, repetitive, and full of jargon. Nevertheless, these writings – as supplemented by the accounts of other writers such as Cicero, Lucretius, Diogenes of Oenoanda, and Diogenes Laertius himself – allow one to reconstruct the basic tenets of Epicurus's philosophy.

In its broadest outline Epicurus's doctrine involved a division of philosophical inquiry into three basic fields. In ascending order of importance, these fields were: epistemology, or "Canonic"; physics; and ethics. The Canonic formed the introduction to Epicurus's system and was handled, according to Diogenes Laertius, in a single, now-lost work titled *The Canon* (the "ruler," or "straight edge"; Latin, *norma*). Knowledge of Epicurus's epistemology therefore is derived primarily from portions of his *Letter to Herodotus* and the fourth book of Lucretius's poem, *On the Nature of Things*. The basic proposition of Epicurus's epistemology was that physical sense perception is wholly reliable and infallible, the result of collisions among the atoms of the soul and the atoms of physical objects. Vision in particular was explained as the result of the constant emission of fine films of atoms (ειδωλα, or "images") from the surface of all objects at all times. Thus, the senses can never err, except in the matter of appearance, when the mind mistakenly judges a single or flawed image to possess the same truth value as a constant stream of unimpaired images from a given object. Error is restricted to the faculty of judgment alone, which can, in turn, be improved by the study of philosophy.

Epicurean physics – handled in both the *Letter to Herodotus* (10.35–83) and the *Letter to Pythocles* (10.84–116) – was based upon the Atomist theories of Democritus, whereby small particles of matter, or "atoms" (literally "indivisibles"), move about, unchanging and indestructible, in empty space (or "void"). These atoms, which are far too small to be seen individually, possess only the primary characteristics of matter, such as size and weight. Secondary characteristics, such as color, taste, and smell, are only the result of combinations of atoms in the



Frontispiece and title page for one of the earliest editions of the four extant works of Epicurus. A fifth was discovered in the Vatican Library in 1888 (courtesy of the Lilly Library, Indiana University).

form of larger objects. Individual atoms, since they do possess weight, are naturally disposed to fall downward at a constant rate of speed through the void until they collide with other atoms, thus producing larger objects through their combination. Since no collisions would ever have occurred if all atoms had fallen straight down at an equal rate of speed from the beginning of time, Epicurus devised the theory of the "swerve" (Latin *clinamen*) to explain both atomic combination (Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things,* 2.216–250) and free will, or spontaneous action, in both humans and animals (Lucretius, 2.251–293; Cicero, *De Fato* [*Of Fate*] 22–23, *De Natura Deorum* [*The Nature of the Gods*] 1.69).

It is one of the salient features of Epicurean physics that its author was willing both to accept and to offer multiple, divergent explanations, particularly for those celestial phenomena that are beyond direct powers of controlled observation. Indeed, Epicurus forcefully states that, "to lay down as assured a single explanation of these phenomena is worthy of those who seek to dazzle the multitude with marvels." Only mythological explanations are to be rejected out of hand as unscientific.

According to Epicurus the cosmos itself and everything in it can be explained in terms of the combination, rearrangement, and separation of atoms. The world we inhabit was formed as the result of purely chance combinations of atoms at a certain time and will likewise be destroyed by the separation of those atoms at yet another time. It is merely one of an infinite number of other worlds that either have been or will be both created and destroyed by atomic collisions and separations in a wholly mechanical fashion (subject, of course, to the vagaries of swerve). The living creatures, including human beings, who inhabit this cosmos are likewise said to have been created through random atomic combination. Once formed, the primitive representatives of plant and animal life were subjected to a rigorous process of natural selection, whereby there eventually remained only those species capable of surviving in the world as it was formed. The gods, whose existence Epicurus affirms, play no active role in the organization of the cosmos. They lead an ideal life wholly untroubled by care – whether for human or cosmological events – and the notion of expecting rewards or

punishments from them on the basis of one's actions is decried as absurd. Human beings should, at most, honor and admire the gods as providing a pattern for the Epicurean moral ideal of *ataraxia* ("freedom from disturbance or care").

Just as Epicurean epistemology prepared the way for Epicurean physics, so Epicurean physics prepares the way for Epicurean ethics, which is treated in the *Letter to Menoecus,* the *Sovran Maxims,* and the *Gnomologium Vaticanum.* Even more than Stoicism, Epicureanism was a philosophy of quietism with its primary focus fixed on the moral life of the individual. The ideal of ataraxia, freedom from care, was to be achieved first through the pursuit of an obscure life, far removed from the turmoils of politics and civil administration – hence, the famous Epicurean dictum "Escape notice in living" (λάθε βιώσας). This maxim was better suited to life under the despotic bureaucracies of the vast Hellenistic kingdoms (and, later, of imperial Rome) than it would have been to the active political participation expected of Athenian citizens in the democracy that died when Epicurus was still young. It was, in fact, this avoidance of competitive interaction in the political and social spheres that freed the devotees of Epicureanism to pursue the summum bonum (or "highest good") of their philosophy: pleasure (ἡδονή). In Epicurus's own words (*Lives,* 10.131–132):

> When we say that pleasure is the end or aim [*telos*] of life, we do not mean the pleasures of the dissolute or those that consist in wantonness and depravity, as some persons, whether ignorant and full of disagreement, or ill-disposed towards us, affirm, but rather the absence of bodily pain and mental disturbance.

The absence of mental disturbance arising from the fear of death in particular was handled by a strict belief in the mortality of the soul, which, being composed of atoms, is dissolved and dispersed upon the death of the individual. This doctrine effectively relegated the notion of an afterlife in Hades, with its concomitant horrors, to the realm of myth, and enabled the good Epicurean to affirm that "death is nothing to us," since one will not exist when he is dead. (This argument may seem to many modern readers to offer little comfort in the face of utter annihilation; but it must be remembered that, throughout most of antiquity, avoidance of the terrors of Hades was thought to be obtainable only through membership and participation in highly exclusive mystery cults, cults that persons of modest financial means and relatively low social status could hope to join only under extraordinary circumstances.)

In spite of the superficially hedonistic character of his philosophy, Epicurus understood "the absence of bodily pain and mental disturbance" in a way that was compatible with an ascetic rather than with a profligate existence. In limited cases Epicurus was willing to assert: "Even on the rack the wise man is happy." Pleasures were divided into physical and mental varieties, of which the mental variety was said to be superior. Bodily pleasures were limited to the satisfaction of "natural" appetites (that is, the removal of pain). Active pursuit of bodily pleasure beyond this point was held to be "unnatural" and self-defeating, because it involved upsetting the passive state of having the body's natural desires satisfied, a state that equals "pleasure," by Epicurus's definition. Of mental pleasures, the study of philosophy – which constantly aimed at the pursuit of ataraxia – was held to be the highest. With the fear of death and unexplained natural phenomena having been removed from their minds and with the turmoils of politics scrupulously avoided, the devotees of Epicureanism hoped to enjoy a quiet life of philosophical contemplation among like-minded friends who were devoted to one another and to their founder (whose birthday was regularly celebrated in the manner of a religious feast by the members of his school).

In *On the Nature of Things* (5.8–12) Lucretius said of Epicurus, "He was a god, a god . . . who first discovered that understanding of life which is now called 'wisdom,' and who, through his skill, removed life itself from such great tempests and shadows and placed it in such tranquillity and in so clear a light." Many others in antiquity seem to have agreed. Nevertheless, Epicureanism was overshadowed during this period by the more powerful intellectual forces of Stoicism, Aristotelianism, and, later, Neoplatonism. In particular, the great influence of Aristotle's cosmological theories during the Middle Ages meant that Epicureanism ceased to be a viable philosophical alternative until the rise of the "mechanical philosophy" and the scientific method championed by Francis Bacon and others in the early seventeenth century. After all, Epicurus contradicted Aristotle by asserting an infinite universe, a plurality of worlds, the perishable nature of the existing world, the existence of void or empty space, the finite divisibility of matter ("atomic theory"), and the evolution of species. He further contradicted Aristotle's ideas by rejecting a divine first cause, the

notion of an "interested" deity, and of final causes in general. But so great has been the success of the seventeenth century's fundamentally anti-Aristotelian intellectual revolution that it is now possible to see, in almost every point on which Epicurus's doctrine contradicted that of Aristotle, the germ of ideas commonly accepted as true in the modern era – a fact that in many ways renders Epicurus an early modern, rather than a purely ancient, intellectual figure.

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Euripides

(circa 484 B.C. – 407/406 B.C.)

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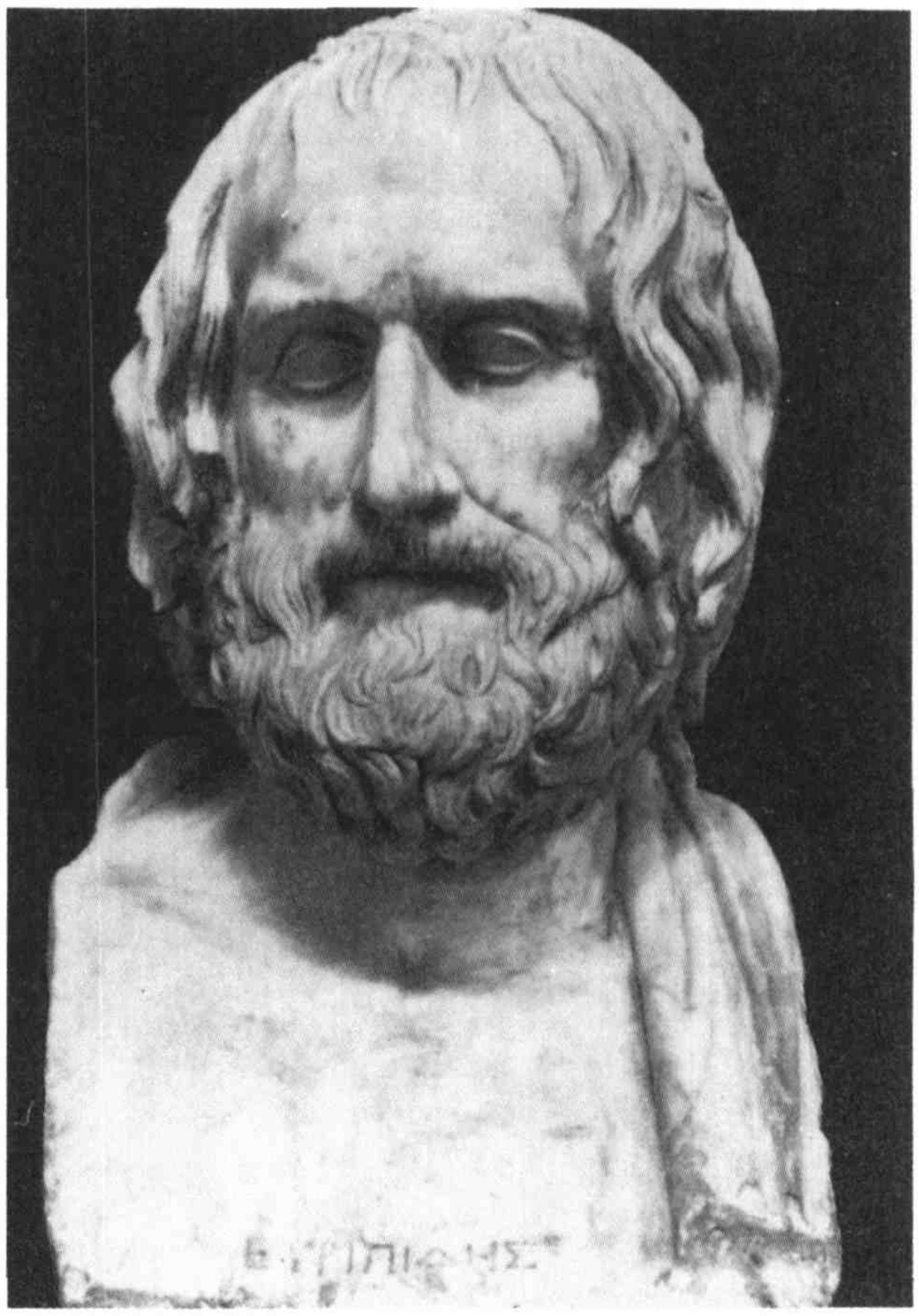
MAJOR WORKS–EXTANT: *Alcestis* (438 B.C.);
Medea (431 B.C.);
Children of Heracles (circa 430 B.C.);
Hippolytus with a Garland (428 B.C.);
Andromache (circa 425 B.C.);
Hecuba (circa 424 B.C.);
Suppliant Women (circa 424 B.C.);
Electra (circa 420 B.C.);
Heracles (circa 416 B.C.);
Trojan Women (415 B.C.);
Iphigenia among the Taurians (circa 414 B.C.);
Ion (circa 413 B.C.);
Helen (412 B.C.);
Phoenician Women (410 or 409 B.C.);
Orestes (408 B.C.);
Iphigenia at Aulis (after 406 B.C.);
Bacchae (after 406 B.C.);
Cyclops (date unknown).
Spurious work: *Rhesus* (date unknown).

MAJOR WORKS–NONEXTANT or FRAGMENTARY:
Daughters of Pelias (455 B.C.);
Cretan Women (438 B.C.);
Alcmaeon in Psophis (438 B.C.);
Telephus (438 B.C.);
Philoctetes (431 B.C.);
Dictys (431 B.C.);
Reapers (431 B.C.);
Hippolytus Veiled (before 428 B.C.);
Alexandros (415 B.C.);
Palamedes (415 B.C.);
Erechtheus (circa 423 B.C.);
Sisyphus (415 B.C.);
Andromeda (412 B.C.);
Archelaus (circa 407 B.C.);
Alcmaeon in Corinth (after 406 B.C.).



Euripides (National Museum, Naples, inv. 6135)

Editiones principes: *Medea, Hippolytus, Alcestis, Andromache,* edited by Ianus Lascaris (Florence: L. P. de Alopa, 1494); *Euripidis tragoediae septendecim* (includes all plays except *Electra*), edited by Marcus Musurus (Venice: Aldus Manutius, 1503); *Euripidis Electra* (Rome: Petrus Victorius, 1545).

Standard editions: *Tragicorum Graecorum Fragmenta,* second edition, edited by August Nauck, with a supplement by B. Snell (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1964); *Euripidis Fabulae,* edited by J. Diggle, 3 volumes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981–1994); *Euripides with an English Translation,* 5 volumes, edited by David Kovacs (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1994–).
Commentaries: Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, *Herakles,* 3 volumes (Berlin: Weidmann, 1895; reprinted,

Darmstadt Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1959); Denys L. Page, *Medea* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938); M. Platnauer, *Iphigenia in Tauris* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1938); J. D. Denniston, *Electra* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939); A. S. Owen, *Ion* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1939); A. M. Dale, *Alcestis* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954); E. R. Dodds, *Bacchae* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960); W. S. Barrett, *Hippolytos* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1964); Dale, *Helen* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967); Richard Kannicht, *Helen* (Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1969); P. T. Stevens, *Andromache* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971); Christopher Collard, *Supplices,* 2 volumes (Groningen: Bouma's Boekhuis, 1975); K. H. Lee, *Troades* (Basingstoke & London: Macmillan, 1976); Godfrey W. Bond, *Heracles* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981); Richard Seaford, *Cyclops* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984); C. W. Willink, *Orestes* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986); Walter Stockert, *Iphigenie in Aulis* (Vienna: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1992); John Wilkins, *Heraclidae* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993); Donald J. Mastronarde, *Phoenissae* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

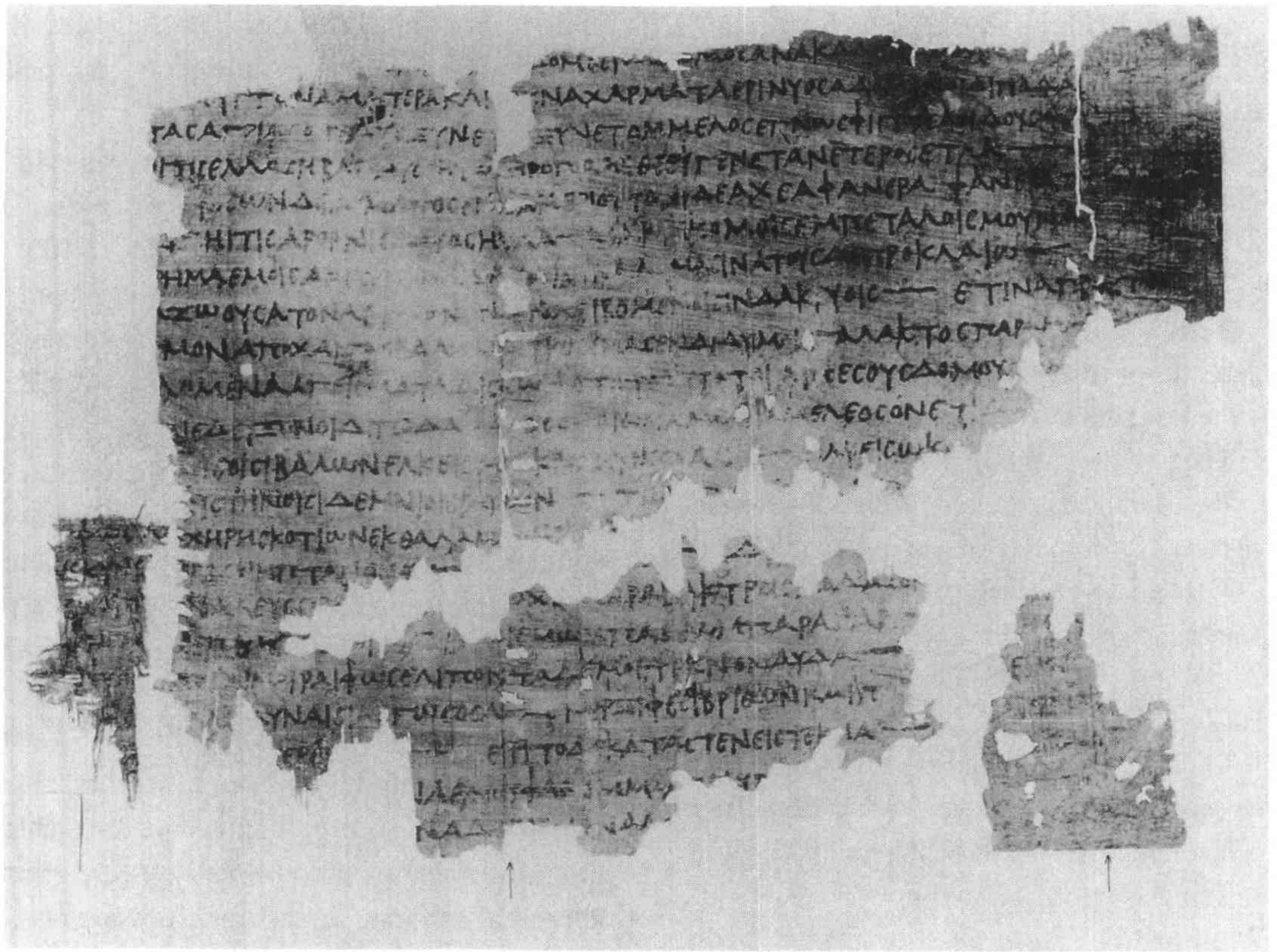
Of the three poets of Greek tragedy whose work survives, Euripides is the one whose plays survive in the largest number (eighteen, in contrast to seven each for Aeschylus and Sophocles). His plays are notable for containing both tragic pathos and the nimble play of ideas. In antiquity, at least from the time shortly after his death about 407 or 406 B.C., Euripides was immensely popular and his dramas were performed wherever theatres existed. His influence continued through later antiquity and into the Renaissance and beyond, shaping French, German, Italian, and English literature until well into the twentieth century.

For the biography of Euripides, as for those of most ancient writers, reliable evidence is in short supply. By the time curiosity about the poet's life developed, almost all the means to satisfy it had disappeared. The biographical tradition passes on conjectures based both on Euripides' plays and on his portrayal in Aristophanes' and other comic poets; it also hands down transparently mythical stories with only a few scraps of information that cannot be immediately unmasked as invention. (The *testimonia,* or ancient notices, about Euripides' life are collected and translated in David Kovacs's *Euripidea,* 1994.) Furthermore, it is only occasionally that the poet's work can be related to anything known about his life or to the public events of Athens's history. Thus, little about the life of Euripedes can be said with any assurance.

Euripides was born about the year 484 B.C. His father was Mnesarchus (or Mnesarchides). Despite a repeated joke in Aristophanes' *Frogs* (405 B.C.) that Euripides' mother, Cleito, was a vegetable seller, reliable evidence shows that she came from a noble family. Euripides grew up in the deme, or village, of Phlya, north of Mount Hymettus in northern Attica. An inscription there, recorded by Theophrastus, commemorates his serving as wine pourer for the sons of leading families who danced in honor of Apollo Delios. Another notice makes him torchbearer in a procession in honor of Apollo Zosterios. Both these positions suggest that Euripides came from a prominent family. Nothing about his education is known: tradition gives him a variety of philosophers as teachers, but the connections are mostly impossible on chronological grounds. None of the notices connecting him personally with Socrates, Protagoras, Anaxagoras, and other such figures survives scrutiny. His plays, however, demonstrate his familiarity with contemporary philosophical speculation.

Euripides began to enter his plays in the tragic competitions at Athens in 455, when he was in his late twenties. At the City Dionysia in the spring of each year, three poets were allowed to compete with three tragedies followed by a mythological burlesque called a satyr play. One of the four plays he produced in 455 was *Daughters of Pelias,* the story of Medea's revenge on Jason's wicked uncle. Euripides came in third. He won a first prize for the first time in 442 (play unknown), one of only five during a career in which he entered some twenty-two times in the tragic competitions.

At some time between 428 and 408, as one learns from a glancing reference in Aristotle's *Rhetoric* (circa 334 B.C.), Euripides was involved in a lawsuit with a man called Hygiainon. At issue was the question whether it was Euripides' or Hygiainon's turn to serve as financial sponsor for some piece of public expenditure, as rich men were required to do in Athens. At some point Hygiainon accused Euripides of impiety on the grounds that a line in *Hippolytus with a Garland* (428), "My tongue swore, but my mind is unsworn," encouraged perjury. Euripides' reply was to remind Hygiainon that the Athenian people had already passed judgment on this play (it had re-



Fragment of a third-century B.C. papyrus anthology of lyric passages from Euripides' tragedies (Landesbibliothek zu Strassburg Pap. W.G. 307 fr.A)

ceived a first prize), and if Hygiainon continued this line of attack, they would do so again in their capacity as jurors.

A short time after he staged his drama *Orestes* in 408, Euripides went to Macedonia to the court of King Archelaus. Some have called this a self-imposed exile and have alleged that Euripides despaired of his city or was disgusted at the treatment he received as a poet. This, however, is mere speculation: several artists, including Timotheus the lyric poet, Zeuxis the sculptor, and Agathon the tragic poet, accepted invitations from Archelaus at about this time. Euripides died and was buried in Macedonia in 407–406. He is said either to have been killed by hunting dogs, either accidentally let loose on him or deliberately set on him by enemies or rivals, or to have been torn apart by women. Such a death is possible but cannot be deemed likely. When the news of Euripides' death was brought to Athens, Sophocles donned mourning robes and introduced his chorus at the Dionysia without the customary garlands.

Soon after his death Euripides became by far the most popular and widely performed of the tragic poets, and his works were produced throughout the Greek-speaking world. The plays that have survived to the present day came down in two different streams. Sometime after A.D. 250 a group of ten plays, now called the "select plays," were chosen, perhaps for school use, and increasingly only these plays were copied. By fortunate chance, however, one or two volumes of the *Collected Works,* containing nine plays beginning with the letters epsilon, eta, iota, and kappa, survived into the Byzantine period and were copied onto a single manuscript now in Florence. The "alphabetic plays," as they are called, are thus a chance cross section of Euripides' work, and the fact that many of them, such as *Heracles* (circa 416), *Ion* (circa 413), and *Iphigenia among the Taurians* (circa 414), are so well written suggests that the general level of Euripides' dramas must have been high.

Much of the biographical tradition represents Euripides as an unpopular outsider and a friend of Sophists and philosophers, antitraditionalist in his art and skeptical or atheistic in his religious views. On this basis the nineteenth-century philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche thought that Euripides and Socrates were friends, and that these two rationalists collaborated to murder tragedy by destroying its religious foundations. Later scholars, taking their cue from Nietzsche, have with considerable subtlety in-

terpreted Euripides' plays as challenges to the artistic and religious ideals of Aeschylus and Sophocles. It is likely, however, that this view of the poet derives in the last analysis from Aristophanes and other poets of what is called Old Comedy. Prima facie, this evidence, practically the only contemporary evidence that exists, ought to count for a great deal to modern readers of the plays, because it could well show how Euripides' first audiences reacted to his work. But when Old Comedy is carefully examined in cases where its witness can be checked, it becomes apparent that any critic who uses Aristophanes to guide his own readings of Euripides' plays is leaning on a broken reed.

The amount of truth in a comic portrait can be extremely minimal: there need be only a slight resemblance between the actual person and his comic representation. A certain Cleisthenes, for example, because he had a skimpy beard, was pilloried for twenty years, first as a eunuch and then as an effeminate person. Socrates, because he was an intellectual at a time when intellectuals typically engaged in scientific speculation or taught skill in speaking, was portrayed as a quack scientist and teacher of dishonest rhetoric. Aristophanes presents Euripides in two of his plays as a misogynist, which there is good reason to doubt that he was. These examples show clearly how Old Comedy works: it is a joke to say that Cleisthenes is a eunuch, Socrates a physicist, or Euripides a misogynist, not because the claim is true, but because it is comically *colorable.* Cleisthenes' skimpy beard, Socrates' intellectualism, the presence in Euripides' plays of several characters who make unfavorable comments about women – all provide the comic justification. When one comes to charges such as Euripides' atheism, which modern scholars have taken seriously, one must reckon with the certainty that comic poets, like writers of lapidary inscriptions, are "not upon oath"; and also with the possibility that the relation between the comic portrait and the real-life person portrayed might be just as distant in the one case as in the other. For particulars of Aristophanes' portrait, one may consult the "Introduction" to the Loeb Classical Library's volumes on Euripides, in which Kovacs discusses the possibility that Euripides really was perceived by his audience as a subverter of religion, morality, and tragic decorum and defends the conclusion that agnosticism is the most certain verdict the evidence allows.

The earliest of Euripides' extant plays is the *Alcestis* of 438. This drama was the fourth play of a series of four, a position usually occupied by a satyr play. But *Alcestis* is no satyr play, and despite its happy ending, it is fully tragic in its themes. Its premise is the fairy-tale motif of receiving a special privilege not accorded to other mortals, like the three magical wishes or the golden touch. Typically such a story serves to show that, however much one might wish that the ordinary rules of mortality could be suspended, it is just as well that they are not. Admetus, king of Pherae in Thessaly, is given the chance to escape the early death that has been fated for him. The god who won this privilege for him was Apollo, who had been forced to serve a year as servant to Admetus, because he and his son Asclepius, who raised the dead, had rebelled against the order of Zeus, an order that insists strongly on the distinction between god and mortal. Apollo had been treated kindly by his master Admetus, and so in gratitude he tricked the Fates into allowing Admetus to live beyond his destined time – provided that he could find someone among his own kin willing to die in his place. Only Admetus's wife, Alcestis, was willing. Apollo tells Death at the beginning of the play that Alcestis will be brought back to Admetus by Heracles, who is coming to Thessaly on his way to fetch the Thracian mares of Diomedes.

Admetus will thus get the benefit of Apollo's boon, and Heracles will restore the wife who gave herself in his stead. A happy ending is assured, but Apollo, though right about the facts, has no idea, since he has never been a mortal, what it will be like in the interval for Admetus to lose his wife. The paradox of the situation is this, that a woman who would die for her husband would be a wonderful wife, indeed, but the loss of such a woman would render the life she gave her husband utterly desolate. Admetus suffers terribly from the loss of his wife, and in addition he cuts a sorry figure when he quarrels with his father, who had refused to sacrifice his life for his son. The nadir of his fortunes is reached when he returns to his empty house after the funeral and realizes that his wife is better off than he is. The ending restores to Admetus not only his wife but a new sense of the joy of life lived under the usual conditions of mortality.

Medea was presented in 431, a few weeks before the outbreak of the Peloponnesian War. It came in third, defeated not only by the phenomenally successful Sophocles (who took second place), but also by Aeschylus's son Euphorion. Medea, a princess from the far-off land of Colchis, had fallen in love with Jason when he came to Colchis in quest of the Golden Fleece. She helped him overcome the deadly obstacles in his way and ran away with him to Greece, relying on his oath to her that he would

Medea murdering one of her children; vase painting, circa 330–320 B.C. (Louvre, K300)

never abandon her. In Euripides' play, Jason, now in exile in Corinth, has seized the chance offered him of marrying the daughter of Creon, the king of Corinth. Jason thinks he is marrying in the best interest of everyone, Medea included, but she regards his marriage as base treachery and determines to have revenge. Her situation is made more desperate by the decree of exile that Creon has just pronounced against her, and she has only a day in which to punish Jason. She also notes that she has no place to go afterward and decides to see if anyone will turn up to give her refuge. By a coincidence that was criticized by Aristotle in his *Poetics* (circa 334 B.C.) Aegeus, king of Athens, is passing through Corinth on his way from Delphi, where he has consulted the oracle about his childlessness. He promises Medea a place of refuge. Medea then announces to the chorus her revised plan of revenge. She will kill Jason's new bride and then, instead of killing Jason himself, she will kill her two sons by Jason, condemning him to the childless fate that had so distressed Aegeus. As part of a pretended reconciliation with Jason, she sends the boys with gifts for Creon's daughter, a gown and a diadem, surpassingly beautiful but smeared with a poison that bursts into flames and consumes the unlucky woman. Then, after two soliloquies in which she wrestles with her own very real maternal feelings, she stabs her sons to death. When Jason arrives he finds that they are dead by their mother's hand and that she is aloft in a magic chariot that will take her out of harm's way to Athens. After mutual recriminations Medea departs. The Chorus offers concluding reflections on the unexpected things Zeus and the other gods have in store for mortals.

The play, as all readers and audiences who experience it know, has searing emotional power. Among the themes critics have noted are the strains and tensions between men and women; the contrast between the smugness and perfidy of the Greek and the moral outrage of the trusting barbarian he has wronged; and the ability of passion to overcome reason. One should also note, as critics by and large have not, the theological dimension of the drama, emphasized time and again throughout the play and most prominently in its last five lines. Jason has broken his oath, and the gods punish perjurers, as everyone in antiquity knew, by the destruction of the perjurer's line, his descendants. This is precisely what Medea's revenge accomplishes, a revenge abetted by the chance appearance of Aegeus, the providential character of which is hinted at by Medea the moment he is out of earshot. On no human estimate of the probabilities could anyone have guessed that a woman, without family or friends and under sentence of exile, could have worked such a stunning revenge. The impotence of human understanding in the face of the gods is an important traditional theme of Greek literature, and its relevance to this play is clear.

Hippolytus with a Garland was produced in 428 and won a first prize. Euripides had produced an earlier and unsuccessful version of this story, but the work that survives is arguably the best of his extant plays. It is the story of the revenge taken by Aphrodite against Hippolytus, illegitimate son of Theseus by an Amazon woman. Hippolytus is the special favorite of Artemis. He lives a life of chastity, hunting in the wilds with the goddess, and calls Aphrodite the basest of divinities. To avenge this slight to her honor, Aphrodite uses her power as goddess of love to cause his death. She causes Theseus's wife, Phaedra, to fall in love with her stepson. Phaedra intends to starve herself in silence rather than be guilty of any disgraceful act, but her secret is wormed from her by her old nurse, who, though shocked by the revelation of this quasi-

incestuous love, yet determines to save Phaedra's life by helping her gratify her passion. Though she is under strict instructions not to tell Hippolytus, the nurse goes to him and, after putting him under oath not to reveal to anyone what she is about to say, tells him of Phaedra's love for him and urges him to become her lover. Hippolytus, under the impression that Phaedra has sent the nurse, denounces his stepmother in the harshest terms but, after an initial quibble about its validity, promises to keep his oath. Phaedra, afraid that her secret will be found out in the world at large, decides to hang herself and to leave a note accusing Hippolytus of raping her. When Theseus returns, he finds his wife dead and reads the note. Theseus' father is Poseidon, and he has granted him three curses.

Theseus at once calls upon Poseidon to grant him one of these curses by killing Hippolytus. To make his assurance certain, he exiles his son. On his way into exile Hippolytus is fatally hurt in a chariot wreck caused by a miraculous bull from the sea that frightens Hippolytus's horses, driving him onto the rocks. He is brought back in excruciating pain and at the point of death. Before he dies, however, Artemis comes to tell Theseus the truth about both his wife and his son. Their good name is restored to both, and father and son are reconciled. Artemis promises revenge on Aphrodite (she will kill the love goddess's favorite mortal) and posthumous honors for Hippolytus.

The gods of this play, though repellent to modern taste, are the traditional divinities of Greek polytheism, who reward their personal favorites and punish their personal enemies in ways that often have little to do with justice. In the world of myth such divinities exist, and since they know more than mortals and are more powerful, they can manipulate their enemies in ways that wreak havoc with ordinary human reasoning about the past, present, or future. Aphrodite uses the excellences of Phaedra and Hippolytus and the wholly forgivable misapprehension of Theseus to work her vengeance. Hippolytus denounces Phaedra for a proposal she did not authorize; Phaedra slanders Hippolytus in order to discredit an accusation he will never make. Hippolytus, bound by his oath, can say in reply to his father's accusation only things that make the suspicion against him all the deeper. Artemis speaks the truth when she remarks, "When the gods so ordain, it is to be expected that mortals will commit disastrous mistakes." It is Aphrodite's desire for revenge, not anything in the character of either of her antagonists, that accounts for the devastation seen by the end of the play; and Artemis's comments on the nobility of the two mortals' lives is surely meant to be the final judgment.

Two plays written about 425 and 424 have plots that combine two separate stories and are both set in the aftermath of the Trojan War. In *Andromache* the action takes place in Phthia, the home of Neoptolemus, son of Achilles and grandson of Peleus. Neoptolemus has returned home from Troy with Andromache, Hector's widow, as his spear prize and mistress, and she has borne him a son. But subsequently he marries Menelaus's daughter Hermione. When Neoptolemus is away from home, Hermione, who has no children because Neoptolemus cannot stand his beautiful but arrogant wife, attempts to murder her rival, Andromache, and her son by Neoptolemus. Her father, Menelaus, has come from Sparta to help her. The murder is all but accomplished when Peleus appears in response to Andromache's plea for help and drives Menelaus away. Hermione, afraid of facing her husband without the backing of her father, is then on the point of killing herself, when her cousin Orestes appears. He claims at first to be merely passing through, but when he has heard Hermione's story, he reveals that he has heard of the strife between her and Andromache and has come to take Hermione away to be his wife, as she was originally promised to be. Orestes then reveals that he has set in motion a plot to murder Neoptolemus at Delphi, where he has gone to offer amends to Apollo for his earlier demand of satisfaction for the death of Achilles, his father. A messenger arrives bringing the news of Neoptolemus' murder to Peleus, who is crushed by the death of the only son of his only son. Then his divine wife, Thetis, appears and tells him that all this was fated to be but that a happy future awaits him: he will become a god and live with her. His line is not extinct, because the boy whose life he so gallantly saved is his great-grandson, and he will rule over the Molossians and carry on the lineage of Peleus and of the Trojan royal house, both of which are in the gods' care. The two stories of triangular love – the strife of Andromache and Hermione in regard to Neoptolemus and of Orestes and Neoptolemus in regard to Hermione – are made to fit together in a single play, one that is packed with reversals of fortune that are revealed by the end of the drama to be part of a divine plan.

Hecuba (circa 424) also combines two stories that take place after the Trojan War. Hecuba, the

queen of Troy, is a captive on her way to Greece. The ghost of Achilles, after reproaching the departing Greek army for leaving without giving him a prize of honor, asks that Polyxena, Hecuba's daughter, be sacrificed at his tomb. The Greeks are persuaded by the amoral Odysseus to honor the request. When Odysseus comes to take Polyxena away, Hecuba pleads with him to spare her daughter, just as Hecuba had once spared his life; when he refuses, Hecuba asks her daughter to plead. But Polyxena, instead of pleading for her life, declares that death is preferable to her ruined circumstances; and when she is taken to Achilles' tomb, she bravely bares her neck and chest to the blade of Neoptolemus, who is officiating at the sacrifice to his father. Hecuba, though crushed by the report of her daughter's death, finds her grief lessened by the nobility with which Polyxena died.

But when Hecuba sends a servant to fetch water to wash her daughter's body for burial, the servant returns with the corpse of Hecuba's son Polydorus, whose ghost had opened the play with the prediction that his body would be found. As a young boy before the war, Polydorus had been sent, with a large amount of gold, to the safekeeping of Priam's guest-friend Polymestor, king of Thrace. After Troy fell Polymestor killed his young charge and seized his gold, throwing Polydorus's body into the sea without a burial. Aided by a dream that Hecuba had about her son, she divines the identity of the murderer. She then persuades the Greek king, Agamemnon, to allow her to send a message to Polymestor to entice him and his sons into the Greek camp, where she can take vengeance on him. Hecuba conceals from Polymestor that she knows her son is dead and tricks him into entering the tent by telling him there is gold hidden there. In the tent the Trojan captives kill Polymestor's sons and blind Polymestor. When he calls upon Agamemnon to punish Hecuba, Agamemnon replies that he, Polymestor, has been justly punished. In the final lines of the play Polymestor turns prophet and predicts the death of Agamemnon at the hands of his wife, Clytemnestra, and the transformation of Hecuba into a dog, the Bitch of Cynossema, a landmark that sailors use to chart their course.

Written within about six years of one another are two dramas in which the city of Athens plays a central role. In *Children of Heracles,* produced about 430, the sons and daughters of the hero Heracles, persecuted by their father's great enemy, Eurystheus, seek refuge in Marathon in Attica, where they are protected by Demophon and Acamas, the sons of Theseus. In battle Eurystheus is routed, in part because of the bravery of one of Heracles' daughters, who agrees to be sacrificed to secure the success of the Athenian army. At the end of the play, Eurystheus prophesies that he will be buried on Attic soil and will cause harm to the later descendants of Heracles (the Spartans) when they attack Athens, forgetful of the city's former kindness to them. In *Suppliant Women,* produced about 424, the Argive king, Adrastus, leader of the disastrous expedition of the Seven Against Thebes, begs Theseus to help him return the bodies of the leaders, whom the Thebans will not surrender for burial. Theseus at first refuses, but, urged by his mother to adopt for his city a policy of studied vigor, he goes to war and recovers the bodies. Both plays are much influenced by the political issues of Euripides' own time.

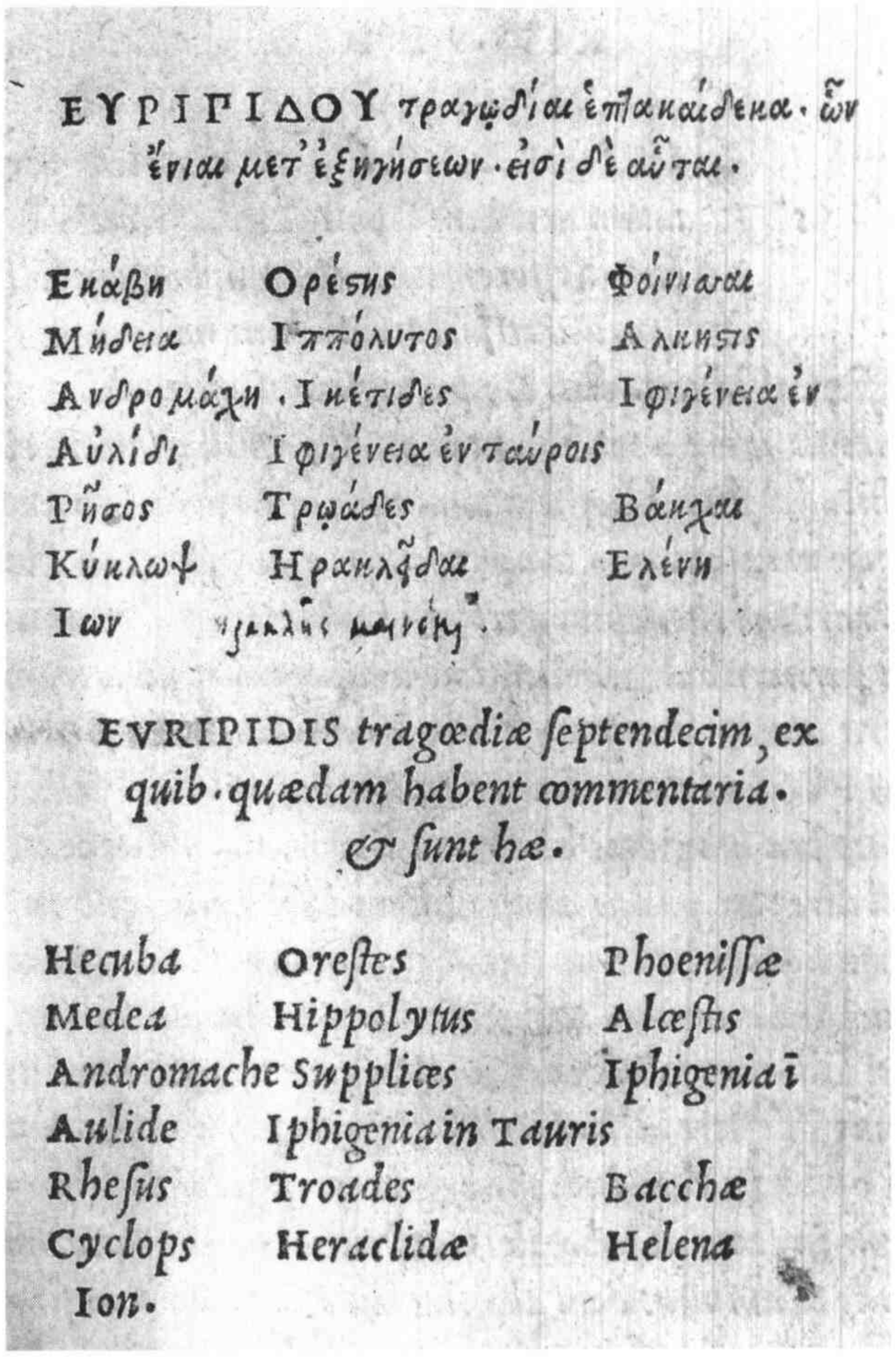
Electra, probably staged about 420, retells the story of Orestes' and Electra's revenge on their mother, Clytemnestra, and her lover, Aegisthus. The play makes notable innovations in the story: Electra does not live in the palace at Argos, as in Aeschylus's *Libation Bearers* (458), but has been married off by Aegisthus to a poor farmer and lives in poverty. Her ragged clothing and the hut she lives in increase the bitterness of her hatred against her mother. The Orestes of this play is less resolute than Aeschylus's Orestes, and his sister must steel him to kill their mother. The murders take place in the countryside, with a loyal old retainer of Agamemnon playing an important role. The atmosphere is less elevated than in other treatments of the story, and one is reminded of the last half of Homer's *Odyssey* (circa eighth century B.C.), with its loyal swineherd and rustic hospitality.

Staged in about 416, *Heracles,* like *Andromache* and *Hecuba,* is composed of two separate stories. In the first half Heracles is presumed to be dead (Eurystheus had sent him to the Underworld to fetch Cerberus), and his family is being persecuted by a Theban usurper named Lycus. Heracles returns in the nick of time, rescues his father, wife, and children, and kills Lycus. But immediately after the joyful choral ode celebrating the justice of the gods, the minor divinities Iris and Lyssa (Madness) descend on Heracles' house, sent by Hera, Heracles' implacable enemy. Iris orders Lyssa to bring a fit of madness on Heracles so that he will kill his own children. This Lyssa does, and Heracles kills not only his children but his wife as well, and almost kills his father. When he recovers from the fit and learns the truth, he determines to kill himself. Theseus, whom he had rescued from the Underworld, comes with an army to rescue Thebes from the usurper Lycus, and when he finds Heracles amid the corpses of his

family, he persuades him to give up his intention to kill himself and go with him to Athens. The sharp juxtaposition of these two actions, one ending in joy, the other in misery, emphasizes the theme of mutability.

For quite some time scholars connected Euripides' *Trojan Women* of 415 with the Athenians' massacre of the Melians in the waning months of 416. The prevailing view, until recently universal, was that the play was a sort of *pièce à clef,* so that in the Greeks, who have taken Troy and proceed to kill Astyanax, the young son of Hector, the audience is meant to see the Athenians, while the Trojans stand in for the Melians. It was further held that the play expresses Euripides' revulsion at his city's treatment of Melos. But the adherents of this view have a few embarrassing facts to deal with. First, there was not enough time between the fall of Melos and the City Dionysia for Euripides to have planned, written, and rehearsed a play on this theme, as A. Maria van Erp Taalman Kip demonstrated in *Mnemosyne* in 1987. Second, the *Trojan Women* is part of a connected trilogy in which the first two plays are the lost *Alexandros* and *Palamedes.* The surviving fragments of *Alexandros* make it plain that the fall of Troy is to be seen against a divine backdrop, and that it was the gods who, in the last analysis, destroyed Troy, with the Greeks as their instrument, a theme also prominent in *Trojan Women.* This view of the fall of Troy would be unsuitable, to say the least, in a play intended to reproach Athens for destroying Melos. Third, however successfully it has been staged in modern times as a play of protest against war, *Trojan Women* contains several scenes and choral odes–notably the scene where Helen is on trial and the ode on the gods' abandonment of Troy–that work counter to the supposed purpose of the play. Most embarrassing of all, the chorus of Trojan captives, in a choral ode speculating on where they will be sent as slaves, go out of their way to pray that they may be sent to blessed Athens and not to hateful Sparta, something hard to explain if Euripides is trying to tell his countrymen how criminal Athens has been in its prosecution of the war against Sparta. It is prudent to look at the play without the a priori assumption of allegory.

Of all Euripides' extant plays, *Trojan Women* is the most oddly constructed. There is no peripeteia (swift change of fortune) at all: the Trojan women are miserable at the beginning of the play and scarcely more so at the end: only the death of Astyanax makes any objective change in their situation. The play consists of four scenes revolving around Cassandra, Andromache, Helen, and Hecuba, preceded by a prologue involving Poseidon and Athena. Yet diverse as they are in other respects, all five of these scenes can be



ΕΥΡΙΠΙΔΟΥ τραγῳδίαι ἑπτακαίδεκα. ὧν ἔνιαι μετ' ἐξηγήσεων· εἰσὶ δὲ αὗται.

Ἑκάβη Ὀρέστης Φοίνισσαι
Μήδεια Ἱππόλυτος Ἄλκηστις
Ἀνδρομάχη Ἱκέτιδες Ἰφιγένεια ἐν
Αὐλίδι Ἰφιγένεια ἐν ταύροις
Ῥῆσος Τρῳάδες Βάκχαι
Κύκλωψ Ἡρακλεῖδαι Ἑλένη
Ἰων

EVRIPIDIS tragœdiæ ſeptendecim, ex quib. quædam habent commentaria. & ſunt hæ.

Hecuba Oreſtes Phoeniſſæ
Medea Hippolytus Alceſtis
Andromache Supplices Iphigeniaī
Aulide Iphigeniain Tauris
Rheſus Troades Bacchæ
Cyclops Heraclidæ Helena
Ion.

Title page for the editio princeps (1503) of Euripides' tragedies (courtesy of the Lilly Library, Indiana University)

seen as meditations on the archaic Greek themes of the deceptiveness of appearances, the impotence of human judgment, and the power of the gods.

The next three of Euripides' extant plays have happy endings and are sometimes referred to as tragicomedies. Both *Iphigenia among the Taurians* of about 414 and the *Helen* of 412 are plays set in far-off places (the Crimea and Egypt, respectively) and involve Greeks who manage to outwit and escape from their barbarian captors. In *Iphigenia* the heroine, after her apparent sacrifice at Aulis, is in reality still alive, having been spirited away by Artemis to the Crimea. Here Iphigenia is priestess of Artemis and is expected to oversee the sacrifice of any foreigners who come to Tauria. Her brother Orestes, whom she has not seen since he was a baby, is sent by Apollo (along with his friend Pylades) to steal the statue of Artemis from the Taurians and give it a home in Greece. The two men are captured, and

Iphigenia nearly sacrifices her own brother unwittingly before she recognizes him. The two then form a plot to escape with the statue. In *Helen* Euripides uses a version of the story of Helen invented by the sixth-century poet Stesichorus: the real Helen was innocent of the elopement with Paris, because it was a phantom made by the gods who went to Troy. In Euripides' play, the real Helen is in Egypt when her husband Menelaus returns from Troy with the phantom Helen. The phantom disappears; he learns that the woman he finds in Egypt is the real Helen; and together they plot their escape from King Theoclymenus, who wants to marry Helen and would certainly kill Menelaus if he could. Their trick succeeds, and they make their escape.

Ion of about 413 is a foundling story with a happy ending. Ion is the son of the Athenian princess Creusa, who was raped by Apollo. She gave birth in secret and exposed her son to die, but Apollo rescued him, raised him as a temple servant in Delphi, and now means to restore him to the throne of Athens. Creusa and her husband, Xuthus, are childless and have come to Delphi to ask the god how they may bear children. Apollo's oracle tells Xuthus that the first person he meets on leaving the temple will be his son. (This is false, but the audience is perhaps meant to think that the prophecy was ambiguously expressed.) Xuthus thinks Ion, who meets him outside the temple, is his child by some earlier affair and proposes to take him back to Athens, with a view to making him his heir. He means to conceal the boy's supposed parentage from Creusa, who would be distressed that it was not her son but only Xuthus's who was heir to the throne. (Creusa is of the Athenian royal family, and Xuthus is a foreigner, so if Ion is no son of hers, the royal line of Athens would be replaced by a foreign dynasty.)

But Creusa learns of the oracle and the meeting of the supposed father and son and determines with a loyal retainer to poison Ion before he can usurp the throne of her father. The plot is detected (Apollo foils it), and Ion sets out to punish Creusa, who takes refuge at an altar. Mother has almost killed son, and son, mother, when the priestess of Apollo, prompted by the god, brings out the cradle in which Ion had been exposed. This leads to the recognition: Creusa is the mother Ion has longed to see and Ion the baby Creusa thought dead. When Athena appears to explain the past and predict the future (Ion is destined to found the Ionian race), Creusa can see the hand of Apollo in all that has gone before and forgives the god for the rape he committed years earlier. Mutability of fortune, human ignorance, and divine power are all themes unmistakably present here – in this case, to bring about blessing.

Phoenician Women of 410 or 409 is a retelling of the story of the Seven against Thebes, the struggle of Oedipus's sons, Eteocles and Polynices, for the throne. It is perhaps the most varied in incident of Euripides' plays; it contains a scene where Antigone in a tower learns the names of all the attacking champions, a debate about justice between Eteocles and Polynices, the voluntary self-sacrifice of Creon's son Menoeceus, and a scene in which the blind Oedipus appears. The women of the title are the chorus, which consists of women of Tyre in Phoenicia on their way to serve Apollo in Delphi.

Orestes of 408 is a wonderfully inventive sequel to the story of the murder of Clytemnestra. Orestes lies sick in bed, given to fits of madness brought on by the Erinyes, who pursue him for killing his mother. In addition, the people of Argos are putting him on trial for murder. Apollo, it seems, has abandoned Orestes after ordering him to exact vengeance from his father's murderers. When Menelaus appears, Orestes appeals to him for help, but at the trial Menelaus does nothing. After Orestes and Electra are condemned, they decide in one last desperate act to kill Menelaus's wife, Helen, and his daughter, Hermione. The murder of Helen miscarries when she is spirited away toward heaven, and Orestes is just about to cut Hermione's throat and set the house on fire when Apollo appears and sets things once more in order.

In 408, as noted earlier, Euripides went to Macedonia to the court of Archelaus. There he died, and among his effects were three tragedies, *Bacchae, Iphigenia at Aulis,* and a third tragedy now lost, that were put on for the first time after the poet's death and crowned with a first prize. In *Bacchae* the god Dionysus, who is the son of Zeus by the Theban princess Semele, returns with his female Asian worshipers, the Bacchants, to Thebes. There the new worship of Dionysus has encountered the resistance of Pentheus, king of Thebes. Dionysus is disguised as the Bacchants' mortal leader, and Pentheus imprisons him, believing that the new religion is mere imposture and an excuse for lascivious behavior by women; Pentheus, however, is finally persuaded by the god to disguise himself as a woman and spy on the Theban women whom Dionysus has caused to roam the mountains. The women catch Pentheus and, imagining in their deluded state that he is a wild animal, tear him limb from limb. Pentheus's mother, Agave, was one of those who dismembered him, and she returns to Thebes with

Pentheus's head impaled on her Bacchic wand. The god Dionysus then appears and justifies the terrible revenge he has taken.

Euripides apparently left his *Iphigenia at Aulis* incomplete at the time of his death, because there is much in the play that is not Euripidean. His son, who was his literary executor, may have completed the play for its first performance, but other hands, some much later, have been at work as well. The original ending seems to have been lost, and the ending that survives commits grave sins against the metrical laws of Euripides' day. The plot concerns the sacrifice of Iphigenia, Agamemnon's daughter, to appease the anger of Artemis and allow the Greek expedition against Troy to sail. Only the commander's daughter's death will appease the goddess, and he tricks his wife, Clytemnestra, into bringing the girl to Aulis on the pretext that she is to marry Achilles. Achilles has not been informed that his name is being used in this way. Clytemnestra and Achilles meet in a scene worthy of a comedy–she speaking familiarly to the man she thinks to be her future son-in-law, he interpreting this as forward behavior from another man's wife. Once their cross-purposes are sorted out, both are angry at the deception. Achilles decides to take up arms to defend the young woman his name has helped to entrap, but Iphigenia, realizing the hopelessness of the situation and changing from her earlier fearfulness, resolves to offer herself willingly to the Greek cause. She is led off to sacrifice, but at the last moment Artemis substitutes a hind and spirits the "real" Iphigenia away to safety.

The eighteen extant plays of Euripides have proved endlessly fascinating to readers, theater audiences, and critics alike, as well as to other poets and playwrights. And the testimony to the power of Euripides' work has a long history. Aristotle claimed in the *Poetics,* his analysis of Greek drama, that Euripides committed certain faults as a playwright, but he praised him, nevertheless, as "the most tragic of dramatists."

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Galen of Pergamon

(September A.D. 129 – after 210)

John Scarborough
University of Wisconsin

MAJOR WORKS (all from mid to late second century A.D.):

Affected Parts;
Against Lycus and Against Julian;
Anatomical Procedures;
Anatomy of Muscles for Beginners;
Anatomy of Nerves;
Anatomy of the Uterus;
Anatomy of Veins and Arteries;
Antidotes;
Best Sect;
Black Bile;
Blendings;
Blood in the Arteries;
Bloodletting Tracts (*Venesection against the Erasistrateans in Rome, Venesection against Erasistratus,* and *Treatment by Venesection*);
The Body's Best Constitution;
Bones for Beginners;
Cancer;
Causes of Breathing;
Cohesive Causes (preserved only in Arabic);
Commentary on Hippocrates' Airs Waters Places (preserved only in Arabic and in a Hebrew summary);
Commentary on Hippocrates' At the Clinic (preserved only in Arabic);
Commentary on Hippocrates' Epidemics I;
Commentary on Hippocrates' Epidemics II (preserved only in Arabic);
Commentary on Hippocrates' Epidemics III;
Commentary on Hippocrates' Epidemics VI;
Commentary on Hippocrates' Lethargies (or *Comas*);
Commentary on Hippocrates' Nature of Man;
Commentary on Hippocrates' Prognostics;
Commentary on Hippocrates' Prorrhetics I;
Commentary on Hippocrates' Regimen in Acute Diseases (preserved in Greek and Arabic);
Commentary on Hippocrates' Treatment of Acute Diseases;
Commentary on Plato's Timaeus;
Compound Drugs Arranged by Kind;
Compound Drugs Arranged by Location;
Crises;
Detection of Malingerers;
Diagnosis and Cure of the Soul's Errors;
Diagnosis and Cure of the Soul's Passions;
Differences among Homogeneous Parts of the Body (preserved only in Arabic);
Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato;
Dreams;
Empiricism;
Epileptic Boy;
Exercise with a Small Ball;
Good and Bad Humors;
Habits;
Hulled Barley, or *Barley Meal;*
Hygiene, or *Maintenance of Health;*
Introduction to Logic;
Language and Ambiguity;
Marasmus;
Medical Experience (preserved only in Arabic);
Medical Terms (preserved only in Arabic);
Method of Healing (usually cited by its Latin title *De methodo medendi*);
Mixtures and Properties of Simples;
Movements of Muscles;
Natural Faculties;
On His Own Books;
On the Order of His Own Books;
Organ of Smelling;
Parts of Medicine (preserved only in Arabic);
Predisposing Causes (preserved only in Latin);
Prognosis;
Properties of Foods;
Protrepticus, or *Exhortation to the Study of the Arts;*
Recognition of the Best Doctors (preserved only in Arabic);
Sects for Beginners;
That the Best Doctor Is also a Philosopher;
That the Mental Faculties Follow the Bodily Constitution;
Theriac for Piso;
Thinning Diet;
Tremor;
Tumors;

Use of Breathing;
Use of Parts;
Use of the Pulse.

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Galen, one of the most remarkable physicians in antiquity, was a prolific writer of medical treatises who exerted a profound influence on the development of Western medical thought. He was born in September A.D. 129, in the city of Pergamon (Turkish Bergama), a thriving commercial, intellectual, and cultural center in Roman Asia. The only son of Nicon, a highly placed engineer-architect, Galen spent his childhood, youth, and years of study with several teachers of philosophy, and the period of his work in medicine and allied intellectual pursuits in Greek-speaking Roman Asia Minor, mainland Greece, and Egypt (mainly in Alexandria and its environs). As a child he received his primary education from private tutors (either specially trained household slaves or teachers hired by his wealthy father).

In his autobiographical *On the Order of His Own Books* (circa A.D. 190), which he wrote in his sixties, Galen recalled how his father had drilled him in arithmetic, logic, and grammar as a boy. At age fourteen Galen began a serious study of philosophy and seemed destined for a career in that field, certainly a lively facet of a widespread revival of Hellenic learning in the A.D. 140s, a revival generally described as the Second Sophistic. In A.D. 145, however, Nicon had a dream in which Asclepius admonished him to have Galen take up the study of medicine, and shortly thereafter, his sixteen-year-old son began studying with local teachers of medical philosophy and anatomy. Galen's mother figures only once in his adult recollections; in fact, he never mentions her name, simply calling her a "Xanthippe" (the shrewish wife of Socrates), a woman whose sharp temper and volatile behavior were in marked contrast to his father's.

Galen remained devoted to philosophy, and his all-encompassing philosophical eclecticism continually gave blueprints for an equally eclectic medicine that incorporated aspects of a medical Hippocratism welded to facets of a Middle Roman Platonism, a sturdily logical Aristotelianism, and an adaptation of Stoic categories but firmly rejected any system that was materialistic – for example, a medical atomism. Upon launching into his medical education (it must be emphasized that there were no medical schools or teaching facilities in the Roman Empire), Galen studied in Pergamon for a time with Pelops and also with Satyrus. Pelops was a famous dogmatist and gifted controversialist, skilled in debate and devastating in argument; Satyrus was an anatomist and a student of the well-known Quintus. (Satyrus performed no dissections, however, but only gave lectures on terms and structures.) Having exhausted teaching resources in Pergamon, the young Galen traveled to Corinth, and then to Alexandria to study under Numisianus, Quintus's best student. Nicon died in 148 or 149, leaving Galen ample means, and he remained in Alexandria, occasionally journeying short distances from the city.

In 157 or 158 Galen returned to Pergamon, accepting a post as a chief priest at the gladiatorial games (that is, as attending physician), a position he retained until 161 or 162. In these years Galen

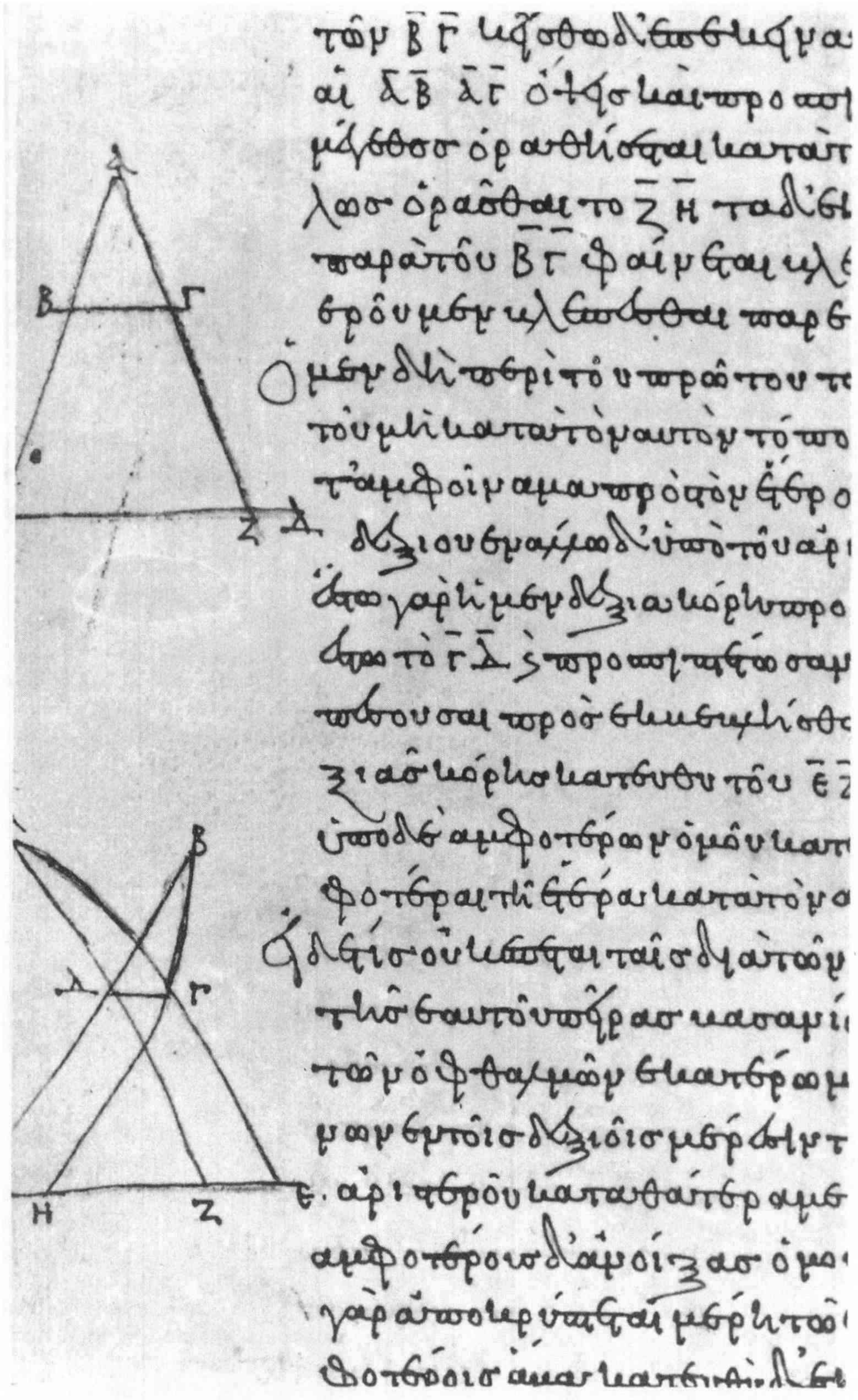
certainly learned much anatomy in the appropriate if frequently bloody and remorseless duties he performed. From 162 to 166 he was in Rome, leaving to avoid an outbreak of the plague, and it appears that Galen's public demonstrations of the function of the voice (vivisecting pigs in the process – recorded in the *Anatomical Procedures*) brought him wide attention before 166. By 169 he was back in Rome, traveling from Pergamon by way of Lemnos and Aquilea. The Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus asked him to accompany him on campaign against the Germans, an invitation politely declined by Galen. He remained as court physician attending to the needs of the empress and to those of Commodus, the heir apparent; Galen became physician to Commodus, upon his accession in 180.

Galen's *Prognosis* appeared circa 178, and it is from this tract that one garners many autobiographical details. After about 180 facts about his travels, professional contacts and personal rivalries, patrons and patronage, and his own personal life are scattered and often obscured. From *On the Order of His Own Books* and *On His Own Books,* one learns that he lost many of his works in a fire at the Temple of Peace in 192, and through allusions in *Antidotes* and elsewhere, it is clear that Galen became physician to Septimius Severus by 193. Insofar as can be discerned, Galen had no students. His death occurred after 210 (a fact now known thanks to shrewd research in the Greek texts, as well as some later Arabic works), but the exact date and place are unknown.

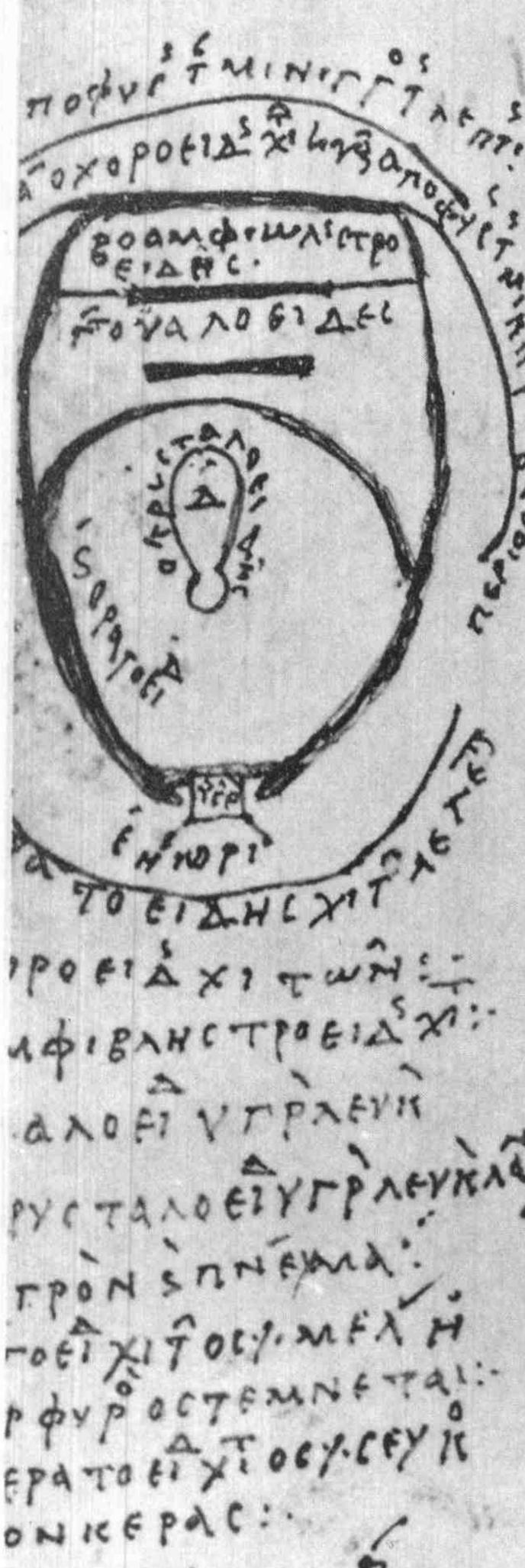
Because there is almost no evidence of Galen's career and fame in contemporary sources, one depends therefore upon Galen's own words (thus an autobiography of sorts) generally given as asides or remembered instances to illustrate points of diagnosis, prognosis, or therapies within particular works. *On His Own Books* and *On the Order of His Own Books,* Galen's anecdotal curriculum vitae of his own writings (written in response to the rampant plagiarism of his tracts, as well as to record treatises lost in the fire), are the most autobiographical of his works. But there is also a wealth of detail about personages, historical events, and occasional memories in the *Prognosis*. Although there have been many attempts to assemble the essential texts that might provide sequential details for a life of Galen, the most fruitful approach is one that assembles such texts within the fuller setting of his writings, as does Paul Moraux in his 1985 work *Galien de Pergame. Souvenirs d'un médecin* (Galen of Pergamon: Memories of a Doctor). Moraux collects what can function as a life of Galen in eight blocks of texts related to a basic chronology of his origins, career, professional activities, and associations with doctors, philosophers, emperors, and patients in the second half of the second century of the Roman Empire.

Although Galen wrote extremely important works on anatomy, he did not dissect human cadavers, even though he had the writings by his illustrious predecessors in Ptolemaic Alexandria, Herophilus and Erasistratus (circa 280 B.C. and 260 B.C., respectively), who did perform dissections on humans and who left a raft of details in treatises well known to Galen in the second century. Galen did know human osteology, and he gained his expertise on bones in his student days in Alexandria (before 158); his short *Bones for Beginners* reflects his recollection of a "jar of old bones" presumably kept for teaching purposes at the then-Roman Alexandrian Museum or Library.

Galen attached simian musculature to these human bones, a method of anatomy by analogy standard until undone by Andreas Vesalius with his publication in 1534 of his *De humani corporis fabrica*. Vesalius refuted Galenic anatomy, a comparative anatomy that had held sway as human anatomy since roughly A.D. 200, an anatomy based securely upon many dissections (and vivisections) of the Barbary ape (a close cousin of the well-known rhesus monkey of present-day experimental laboratories), pigs, dogs, and other animals, as revealed in Galen's *Anatomical Procedures*. The last books of this fundamental work have survived only in Arabic, with the initial books coming down to the present in Greek as well as Arabic, along with some useful Latin renditions. Within *Anatomical Procedures* are precise descriptions of muscles, nerves, veins, arteries, and the various parts and organs and the establishment of clear relationships among all parts and structures, as comparative anatomists at the Johns Hopkins University demonstrated in the 1940s when they employed a section of Galen's *Anatomical Procedures* to duplicate his dissections of the Barbary ape (the rhesus monkey). In their 1946 article in the *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* ("Galen's Dissection of the Liver and of the Muscles Moving the Forearm"), Oswei Temkin and William L. Straus Jr. noted: "The accuracy of Galen's description was demonstrated . . . by actual dissection of the muscles of the arm of a rhesus monkey, *Macaca mulatta,* a closely related species, where Galen's text was followed step by step." They also showed the brilliance of Galen as a



Pages from a manuscript text of Galen's On the Usefulness of the Parts, *with diagrams of the visual rays and the eye (Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana; Ms. Urbanas 69, Fol. 123 and 118)*



ταῦτ' αὐτὸ σημαίνει· ὁ οὖδας
γὰρ οὗτος τὸ ταὐτὸ μέρος τῆ
λίθῳ ἐστὶ καὶ οὗτος αὐτοῦ
μαλακώτερος· ἀποσαπτόμενον δὲ
ὑπὸ ὕδατος καὶ τοῦ
ἀέρος ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ
μέρη τινὰ τοῦ σώματος
χιτῶνος ἐστὶ τὰ μὲν
ἀραχνοειδῆ καλούμενα
σημαίνει τὰ δὲ
μέρος τοῦ ὑαλοειδοῦς τὰ
γὰρ κατὰ τοῦτο ἀμφίβλη-
στρον ἐστὶ καὶ τοῦ
κατόπτρου δοκοῦσιν ὁμοίως γὰρ
μέν τινων τοῦ σώματος
καὶ τὰ τοῦ ὑαλοειδοῦς
μίσγεται καὶ γὰρ δὴ καὶ
καὶ τοῦτο ἀραιότερόν
τοῦ λίθου μαλακώτητος
χροᾶς λαμπρότητι· καὶ
αὐτὸ σημαίνομεν· ἀφ' ὧν
ἐστὶ δῆλον ὅτι καὶ
ἀμφοῖν ἡμῖν ἐστὶν ἀρχὴ
τοῦ κατόπτρου· μέσον

Galen in concert with Hippocrates, Plato, and Aristotle; woodcut illustration from Symphorien Champier's Symphonia Platonis cum Aristotle, et Galeni cum Hyppocrate *(1516)*

comparative anatomist, a status assured for the Roman physician even in the middle of the twentieth century.

Occasional translations of other, shorter tracts on anatomy by Galen and his sarcastic refutations of the anatomy of Lycus of Macedonia (flourished circa 150) are extant, along with his acerbic condemnation of Julianus of Alexandria (flourished circa 160) for his insufficient knowledge of Hippocrates' works. Galen's venom is particularly telling against physicians who never bothered to study anatomy, let alone dissect or vivisect animals (in the venerated tradition of Aristotle's works). One of his absolute qualifications for being a good physician was the knowledge of a "living anatomy" (vivisection of monkeys, to be displayed in public demonstrations). The importance of this qualification is vividly reflected in Galen's *Recognition of the Best Doctors.*

Galen's writings also explore the physiology of the body. But the term *physiology* overdefines Galen's approaches, which combined an Aristotelian concept of parts (that is to say, parts *are* what they are intended to be) and, through a steely logic (with clear ancestry in Aristotle's fourth-century B.C. *Posterior Analytics* and similar works), perceived that parts of the body "feed themselves" through powers of attraction (with a previous necessity for food to be transformed into blood to nourish the parts by means of the veins). These powers of attraction were followed by powers of repletion or satiation specific for each part or organ and then a power of expulsion or repulsion that got rid of excess nourishment, as appropriate to each of the biologically functioning parts. All this Galen webbed securely within the fundamental notion of *krasis* (balance, or blending, or proportion). The term *krasis* refers to a balance in the body of the four elements (water, air, fire, and earth), the four qualities (the wet, the dry, the hot, and the cold), and the Hippocratic concept of the four humors (blood, yellow bile, black bile, and phlegm), this last derived from the fifth-century B.C. Hippocratic tract *Nature of Man.* An imbalance or bad proportion yielded *dyskrasia* – itself the state of disease – and the task of the physician was to restore the body to proper balance – or, to use the nineteenth-century word, gained directly from the Latin *temperamentum,* which is the same as krasis – to achieve the "blend" that promoted a healthy temperament.

Thus, physiology shades into Galen's humoral pathology, which, by definition, was a status characterized by an excess of any one of the humors (too much black bile, for example, gave the illness called melancholia). Accordingly, successful therapeutics (ranging from appropriate drugs to bloodletting) assumed a proper application of the means to restore the proper proportion of humors (and in turn the proper blending of the qualities and elements). Galen's brilliantly synthetic theory of how the healthy body functions thus fused Platonic, Aristotelian, Stoic, and Hippocratic (or what he deemed Hippocratic) theories into a cohesive whole. It was this system that underlay medical thinking well into the nineteenth century, when stomach acids were discovered that digested food.

To be sure, Galen's anatomy ceased to be accepted as human anatomy after Vesalius, and Galen's notions of veinous supply of food to body parts was abandoned after William Harvey's 1628 *Exercitatio anatomica: De motu cordis et sanguinis in animalibus* (On the Movement of the Heart and Blood in Animals, 1628), which demonstrated firmly the closed circulation of the blood. But Galen's humoral pathology was dominant well into the nineteenth century; the ancient concepts of the four elements and four qualities were canonical until Antoine Lavoisier showed how water could *not* be an element in a famous public demonstration in 1783.

In fact many physicians on the western front in World War I were still unimpressed by the "germ theory," even though most surgeons had absorbed high levels of technique through their training.

Galen's beliefs about digestion, coupled with his perceptions of humoral function in the human body, are lucidly set down in his *Natural Faculties,* the sole work by Galen among the more than 470 volumes in the Loeb Classical Library. A long-term debate among philosopher-physicians in Hellenistic and Roman times was whether there was anything other than a nonsubstance pneuma (breath or spirit) in the arteries of living animals, and to pneumatologists, pneuma was the stuff of life that disappeared from the body at death, an idea that followed in part the doctrines of Erasistratus. Galen recorded in his *Blood in the Arteries* that blood is, indeed, in the arteries; he demonstrated this observation by means of a simple, double-ligature experiment. How one received sensations of taste and odor is explained by Galen through adaptations of Platonic and Aristotelian notions, ascertained in his *Organ of Smelling.*

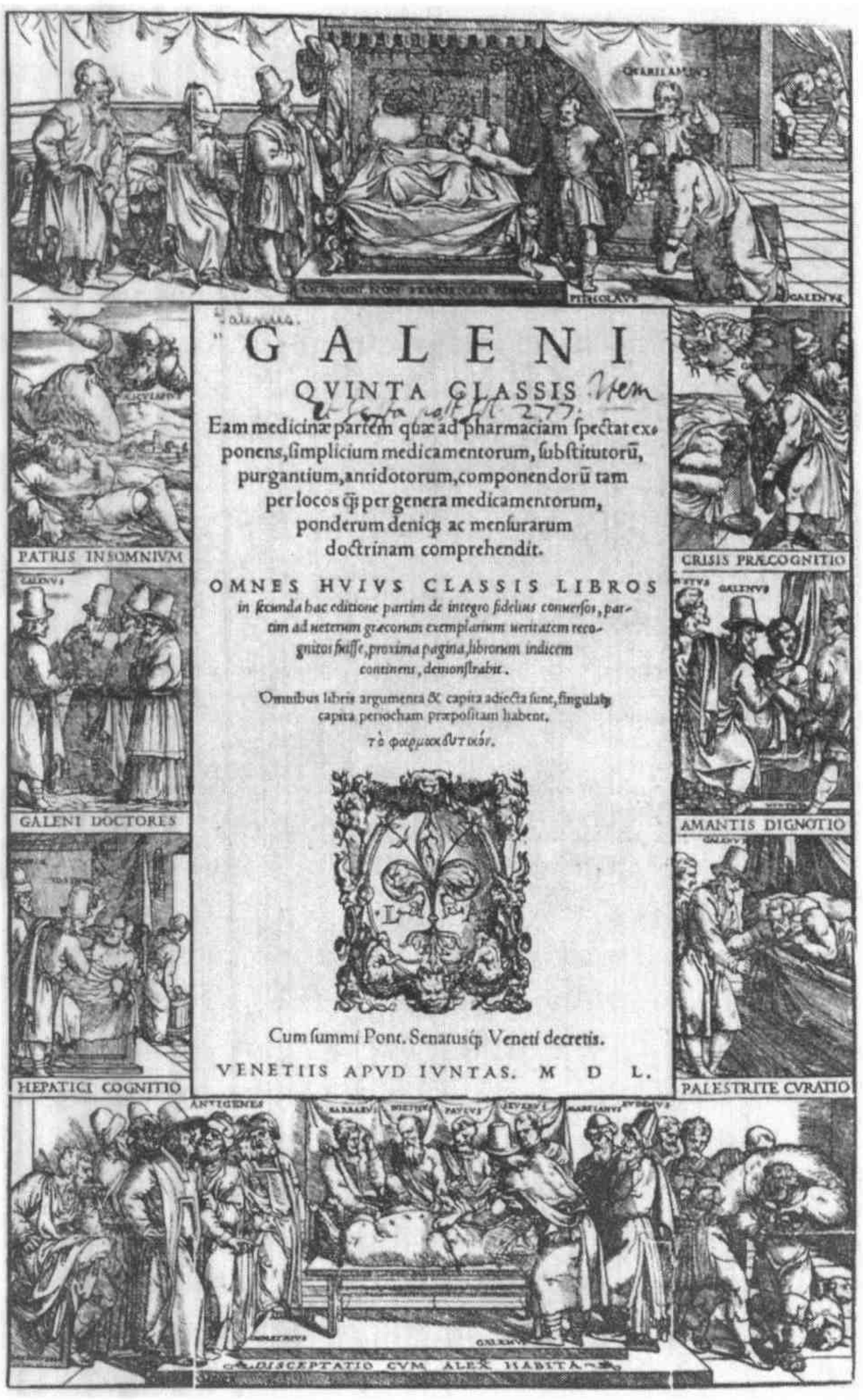
Basic in explaining "why parts are as they are, and why they function as they do" is Galen's ponderously influential *Use of Parts.* Galen's booklet *On Blendings* argues the essentials of how these balances work in the living body. Another work, Galen's *Black Bile,* is the ancestor of hundreds of tracts that assumed the cause of gloom to be an excess of this humor (thus melancholia [Greek *melan,* black, and *chole,* bile). This state resembles what modern doctors prefer to call mental illness, and, although there is no English translation of *Black Bile,* many of Galen's notions of how humoral imbalance engenders illness of the mind are found in *Passions and Errors of the Soul;* and one can confidently read the translation by Paul W. Harkins.

Promoting health, argues Galen, is achieved through proper regimen, a balanced diet, and avoidance of exercises that are too strenuous. Several of his works address these methods of preventing illness, including *Maintenance of Health* (or *Hygiene*), *Properties of Foods, Good and Bad Humors, Thinning Diet,* and *Hulled Barley* (or *Barley Meal*). Within *Maintenance of Health,* however, one finds information on the best Roman exercise theory, the good diet, some sage comments on massage, the causes of fatigue, the use of wines, water-and-honey drinks, vinegar-and-honey potions, and the like. Proper food and proper exercise suggest specifics of medicophilosophical theory and related particulars that buttress those theories, and Galen expounds on these subjects in *Habits, The Body's Best Constitution, Exercise with the Small Ball, That the Mental Faculties Follow the Body's Constitution,* and several others.

Basic to the prodigious mélange of Galenic medical theory is a firm substrata of philosophy, and frequently one cannot comprehend the manner and direction of Galen's ineluctable logic without first understanding the particulars of a philosophic school easily subsumed under diagnostics, prognostics, and therapies. Galen's great *Method of Healing* has yet to receive a full translation and commentary, but a remarkable beginning of this sizable task has been performed by R. J. Hankinson in his *Galen on the Therapeutic Method, Books I and II* (1991). Hankinson's detailed commentary delineates many strands of Galen's medical logic, including the methods and mechanics of Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics,* even though Galen's most frequently acknowledged indebtedness is to Plato.

Galen is an eclectic, so he asserts, and one discerns aspects of a Middle Roman Platonism, side by side with an acceptance (and refinement) of the Stoic categories of antecedent, preceding, and containing causes, sharpened by the Platonist distinction of the Final Cause associated with a creative Demiurge (emphasized repeatedly in the *Use of Parts*). The Aristotelian tradition bequeathed the Theory of the Four Causes, but Galen drew upon the Stoics to refine gradations within the class of Efficient Causation. Among modern commentators, Hankinson offers the most concise and well-written analysis of this continual interweaving of logic, epistemology, and the notions of Hippocrates, the Stoics, Plato, Aristotle, and the philosopher-physicians of a noncausal opinion (the usually rejected methodists), as well as other, lesser-known philosophic schools.

Hippocrates and Plato are Galen's two major authorities, and he set down a lengthy tract showing the basic agreement of Plato and Hippocrates, *Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato. Doctrines* is a mine of quotations from lost Stoics, including Posidonius, Chrysippus, and Diogenes of Babylon. Galen's eloquent assertions constantly recall his teleological approach to explanations in nature, best seen in *Use of Parts,* a hymn to Providence and to the ingenuity of a divine craftsman, and Galen's Creator is Plato's Demiurge, a reflected echo of Plato's *Timaeus* (mid fourth century B.C.). Galen had, indeed, written a full commentary of his own on the *Timaeus,* but the work is extant only in extended fragments as quoted in Greek, Latin, and Arabic. Galen's debt to Plato in psychological philosophy is also apparent in his shorter but extant tract *That the Mental Faculties Follow the Body's Constitution,* and the summary of his philosophical reasoning and use of syllogisms (fusing parts of Stoic with Platonic and latterly Peripatetic methods) is in the clipped treatise *Introduction to Logic,* discovered at Mount Athos in 1844 and known only from this single manuscript. This little



Title page for a sixteenth-century edition of Galen's works; the illustrations present scenes from his life

work by Galen is the sole surviving textbook of elementary logic from the Greco-Roman world, and as such it has intrigued philosophers and historians of philosophy since the middle of the nineteenth century.

It is in his *Sects for Beginners* that Galen gives reasoned guidance into the medical cum philosophical doctrines that competed for adherents among physicians (Galen, of course, belongs to no sect). Here are the empiricists, the methodists, and the loosely associated tenets of physicians known as the dogmatists (sometimes logicians, or rationalists). Roughly, empiricists believed that successful medicine derived from numerous experiences (both by the doctor and from the reports of others) and the testing of hypotheses (for example, chalky earth cures diarrhea) by means of further experiences; empiricists had three sources of successful therapies: chance, inspiration, and analogy, and the study of anatomy was deemed useful, if unnecessary.

Dogmatists thought that experiences alone were certainly not enough, and that the physician had to know the structures of the body as well as the exact natures of various pathologies; the dogmatic doctor therefore chose therapeutics by inference from signs and symptoms that are clear and discernible, as well as by inference from internal structures and conditions in the patient's body that are not apparent. Technically, this kind of medical logic carried the term *analogismos,* that is, inference from indications, *endeixeis.* Dogmatists thus treated diseases deduced by means of inference, and the deduced ailment was then wedded to a set of theoretical, pathological facts (that is, the hot, the wet, the cold, and the dry) and in turn coupled with basic axioms (for example, nothing happens without cause, or, opposites cure opposites), and, finally, a deduction was made to provide an appropriate therapy that would fit the particular illness in the particular patient. Galen has generally high regard for the dogmatists and somewhat less for the empiricists, and he often notes that both reason (*logos*) and experience (*empeiria*) can lead to the truth of a successful therapy, a viewpoint easily accepted by an eclectic like him, but not by empiricists or dogmatists. Galen has only scorn for the methodists: they have no theory of cause, no concept of bodily structures, and no notion of the nature of disease; Galen is also quite hostile to medical atomism (ultimately derived from Epicurus and espoused as a medical philosophy in the late Roman Republic by Asclepiades of Bithynia [flourished circa 120 B.C.]), a medical philosophy deprived of teleology and blatantly mechanistic.

Galen's work *Empiricism* is lost in Greek but is extant in a Latin translation of 1347 by Nicholas of Rhegium. Galen's *Best Sect,* long believed to be a pseudo-Galenic work, has been reedited and translated into Italian by Adelmo Barigazzi, who dates this brief tract to the 160s, noting that as Galen attacks the ridiculous skepticism of Favorinus of Arles (flourished circa 125), the would-be rhetorician-philosopher is already long deceased. *Best Sect* gives a glimpse of Galen's flat rejection of what historians of philosophy term Academic Skepticism (Favorinus had written a book, *On Fate,* showing skeptical implications). Galen's *Medical Experience* (in which he fuses multiple strands of medical logic into an eclectic whole) survives only in an Arabic translation by Ḥunain (probably in 863), the sole manuscript discovered in Istanbul's Aya Sofya in 1931. Finally, Galen has bequeathed two short synoptic essays, briefly showing why logic, mathematics, and the explicit skills in reasoning as taught by philoso-

phy are all central to the practice of medicine: *That the Best Doctor is also a Philosopher* and *Protrepticus,* or *Exhortation to the Study of the Arts. Exhortation* is particularly bilious and huffy regarding athletes: "There are in nature goods of the mind and goods of the body. Athletes enjoy none of the former, since they are too ignorant to appreciate even that they have a mind" ("Galen's Exhortation to the Study of the Arts, Especially Medicine," translated from *Scripta minora* by Joseph Walsh, 1930).

Before discussing Galen's writings about diagnosis, prognosis, and therapies, it may be observed that medical English still retains the basic meaning from the Greek *diagnôsis* (usually a distinction or means of discernment and the medical diagnosis first recorded in the fifth-century B.C. Hippocratic *Wounds in the Head*). The same is true for *prognosis* (foreknowledge), or perception beforehand, and thence the medical prognosis of the Hippocratic *Coan Prognostics,* where the skill of the physician in forecasting the course of a disease becomes paramount for both his own reputation and the aid to the patient). But the Greek *therapeia* can mean care, attendance, cultivation (of plants), maintenance, and repairing, along with its more strictly medical meaning, medical or surgical treatment or cure.

Thus, Greco-Roman medicine encompassed many nuances in a therapy, ranging from a simple caring for a patient to maintaining a desired status (good health) to cultivation of good habits, thereby providing in special medical contexts to repair in disease or treating by means of surgery or drugs or medical techniques, such as bloodletting. Then – when the philosopher-physician has fully comprehended pathological causes (that is, an etiology of disease) – to effect a cure by means of surgery, drugs, dietary modifications, or techniques like phlebotomy (which relieved an excess (*plethora*) of the humor, namely blood, which then restored the proper blending (*krasis*) of blood with the other three humors.

In Galen's works this humoral pathology (founded ultimately on the Hippocratic tract *Nature of Man*) is taken for granted, so that diagnosis frequently is a determination of what imbalance or bad blending (dyskrasia) is involved; prognosis becomes the prediction of what will happen if the disease runs a natural course; and therapies consist of restorations of kraseis among humors, qualities, and elements. Diagnosis depends upon precise command of a medical logic, leading through an intellectual ancestry traced back to Aristotle's *Posterior Analytics,* a template that mapped cleanly trimmed, self-sufficient sciences, yielding a limited quantity of postulates absolutely assured through rigorous deduction from fixed axioms.

Once such rigor and logical deduction were in place, then Galen could proceed into a set of predictions, most often based on a large number of case histories, the medical experiences that have verified original diagnoses. Therapies, in turn, derive from those experiences, cases of caring and curing in the sense of a physician having clinical experiences, sometimes buttressed by authoritative written texts (for Galen especially, those by Hippocrates, which will lead him, in turn, to compose detailed commentaries on Hippocratic works, since they are essential to diagnosis, prognosis, and therapies). But all such experiences by a doctor must also be grounded upon precision in basic anatomy (Galen's dissections and vivisections of animals) and what is now termed physiology (for example, the change of food into blood, the feeding of parts by means of this changed food).

Scattered among Galen's writings are those that take up many of these aspects of medical practice and thinking, welding logic, clinical experience, fulsome command of the best written authorities on medicine (Galen says, often enough, that his career is meant to complete that of Hippocrates), and detailed knowledge of structural anatomy, all into something like a cohesive whole, a manner of medical thinking quite in keeping with Galen's eclectic philosophy. Diagnosis and prognosis are married in how one perceives when the physician can forecast a crisis (*krisis*) of a disease – that is, whether it will peak and then cede its natural power, or whether it will crest yet remain as a pathological state within the body over a period of time, to recur later, or whether a crisis signals the imminent death of the patient. Galen's *Crises* adapts the Hippocratic notion of crisis as turning point in an illness (for better or worse), a concept set forth in the Hippocratic *Ancient Medicine.* Case histories are the fundamental in Galen's *Prognosis.* There are many personal reminiscences and descriptions of the imperial court in *Prognosis,* and such particulars are valuable in assembling something akin to a biography from these autobiographical details. *Affected Parts* is replete with case histories, and even in Rudolph E. Siegel's marred 1976 translation of the work, one can gain a rough notion of specifics.

Bulking large among Galen's writings are the great numbers of his commentaries on Hippocratic works, and in his exegesis of various Hippocratic treatises, Galen broadens his compass to include particulars of diagnosis, prognosis, and therapy as they would follow from remarks by Galen's author-

Galen as a scholastic teacher; decorative border from a 1500 edition of Galen's Therapeutica ad Glauconem

itative guide. Essential also is a physician's public conduct, both in terms of special display of technical skills (noted above in Galen's *Recognition of the Best Doctors*), as well as those skills in judging patients, their illnesses, and in the treatments provided in a clinical setting (especially that of correcting fractures, an injury frequently brought to Roman doctors). Galen's boasting about his own expertise in bonesetting is detailed in his *Commentary on Hippocrates' At the Clinic* (more like a doctor's stall in Greco-Roman antiquity), preserved in Arabic. Likewise surviving in an Arabic translation is Galen's *Commentary on Hippocrates' Treatment of Acute Diseases,* stuffed with Galenic food lore and outlines of precise medical logic. Preserved in Hebrew and Arabic is another of Galen's commentaries on Hippocrates, *Commentary on Hippocrates' Airs Waters Places;* here the long-term influence of Hippocratic pathology is correlated to climate, explaining seasonal variations in outbreaks of disease (for example, the cold and the wet of winter engendered such problems as pneumonia), a theoretical model fully supported by Galen and accepted in Western medicine well into the nineteenth century. An important skill in medical practice is the detection of faked illnesses, and Galen's clipped *Detection of Malingerers* specifies exactly how a schooled practitioner can weed out those who would waste his time and how ordinary common sense can elicit evidence that an illness is feigned.

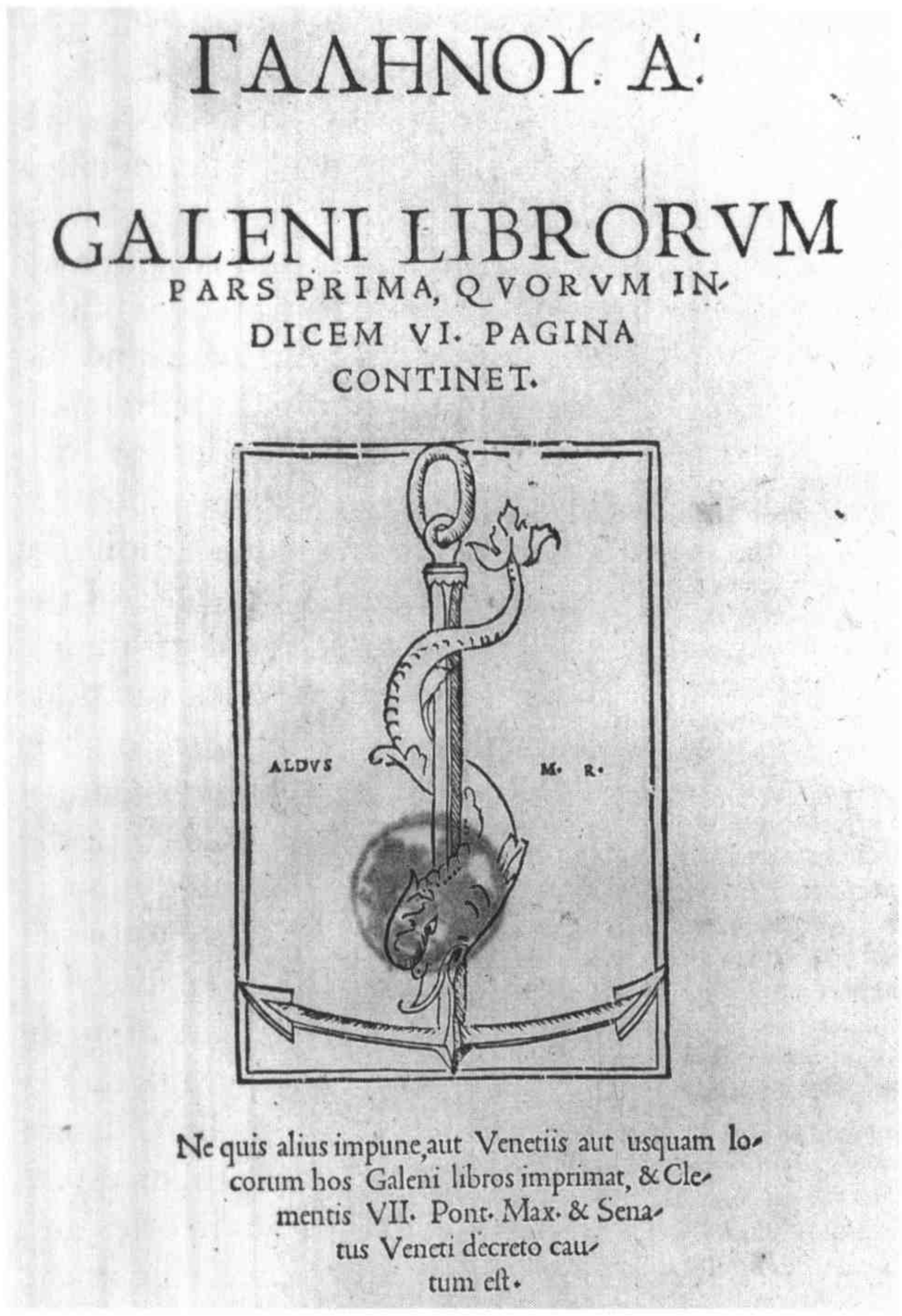
Nestled throughout his sundry disquisitions and the large number of commentaries on Hippocratic works are Galen's therapeutic directions for treatment of diseases, generally caused by one or another of the postulated bad blendings. But there are a few shorter discussions that give specifics for particular afflictions, for example, *Cancer,* and *Marasmus* (wasting away). Galen wrote a moving essay on epilepsy, or the Falling Sickness, to the father of a young victim; the essay is preserved in Greek as *Epileptic Boy*. And Galen's famed essays on bloodletting are now available in a good English translation with an excellent commentary by Peter Brain, a modern physician who gives the reader a secure understanding of these writings that enjoyed an erratic authority into the late nineteenth century. Brain does not accept as genuine Galen's little tract *Leeches, Counterirritation, Cupping-Glasses, and Cutting*

and Scarification, but there is a long history of leeching in medical therapeutics, a practice recently revived by plastic surgeons who wish the tiniest of capillaries to flow freely (the natural anticoagulant from leeches, hirudin, is the finest known in current hematology). Brain's commentary is in the form of six chapters on all aspects of phlebotomy in antiquity, and these stand out as the best summary presently available on this subject, accompanied by references to almost all of the relevant sources and texts. Galen's *Tumors* (*onkoi*), an essay mostly about terminologies for tumors, swellings, cancers, and the like, along with brief suggestions of commonly applied therapeutic measures, will interest modern oncologists.

Even though flawed by many corruptions, the Greek texts of Galen's works edited by C. G. Kühn remain the most frequently cited in the scholarly literature (the "Claudius" is a misreading of the abbreviation *Cl.* [*clarissimus*] from manuscripts). Well-edited texts, drawn from the best manuscript witnesses, have sporadically appeared to supplant Kühn's, especially in the German Corpus Medicorum Graecorum series, which includes Galenic works preserved only in Arabic, translated in the ninth century and later. There are many pseudo-Galen tracts in the Kühn volumes, and some are separately edited and published as deriving their formats and theory from Galen, whether they have survived in Greek, Latin, or Arabic. Moreover, Galen's compositional sequence often remains disputed, exemplified by the *Anatomical Procedures:* Galen set down an early version of books 1 and 2 in Rome (circa 164) but continued to revise and add details from dissections over the next three decades. In its final form *Anatomical Procedures* is in fifteen books and has reached the modern era partially in Greek (books 1–9) and partially in a magnificent Arabic translation (books 9–15) prepared first in a Syriac version in 850 by Ḥunain ibn Ish Hâq of Baghdad (A.D. 809– 873), later retranslated into Arabic by Ḥunain with the assistance of his nephew, Hubaish. Thus, precise dating of publications by Galen is fraught with intractable quandaries, in consequence of his repeated revisions of many books, as well as the normal method of publication in the Roman Empire – once delivered orally, sometimes as a set piece of arguments (as is certainly true of Galen's *On Semen*), then hand copied (one at a time) in an age long before the technologies of movable type and the printing press. There is also warranted caution about biographical details, since all such data come from Galen himself, so that the existing data is truly autobiographical, with the hyperbole and self-advertisement that might be expected in anyone's selective recollections.

Many good translations of Galen's works are available in English. The best of these offer detailed commentaries, so that a reader unacquainted with continual assumptions of Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy and logic, or with a repeatedly emphasized terminology of Hippocratic medicine and the application of a presumed Hippocratic approach in prognostic, diagnostics, and therapeutics, or with the quirky details of second-century Roman politics, culture, art, and imperial life and the position of a philosopher-physician within the social life of the Roman Empire – that reader may gain an understanding of how Galen's medical theories and practice functioned. Commentary is essential to comprehend the differences between late-twentieth-century medicine and the medical practice of a Galen in the second century, a time lacking a germ theory (or its coming successor of adaptationist theory, based upon host/parasite relationships to define disease), reliable anesthetics, and similar particulars of medical technology that are now taken for granted. Yet Roman medicine, represented at its best by Galen of Pergamon, did have strikingly good theories explaining health and disease, and these theories and medical assumptions were basic to medicine in the West well into the nineteenth century. Many of the works listed suggest aspects of that enormous influence, still felt today, for example, as a person mumbles about someone being melancholic, a modern way of saying someone is gloomy or (if Galen's humoral pathology is presumed), having an excess of black bile (which equals *melancholia* in Greek).

Except for the English translations of certain Arabic texts (as given above), few of the well-edited Greek texts of these important writings by Galen have been studied or translated; Galen's commentaries on Hippocrates demonstrate a Hippocratism that survived infused with a Galenism that embraced most of the important therapies and theories of Western medicine (Roman, Byzantine, Classical Arabic, Renaissance European) before Vesalius, Harvey, and Lavoisier. Some of these texts have been reedited, and form parts of the Corpus Medicorum Graecorum series. Merely reviewing the titles indicated that Galen's commentaries on Hippocrates cover an enormous scope in medical thinking and procedure, and they are rich lodes of information on drugs, therapies, opinions held by philosophers and less-than-obscure doctors in the history of Greek and Roman medicine through the second century, word lists, and similar essentials. And as vast as are Galen's drug books, little has


ΓΑΛΗΝΟΥ. Α.

GALENI LIBRORVM
PARS PRIMA, QVORVM IN-
DICEM VI. PAGINA
CONTINET.

ALDVS M. R.

Ne quis alius impune, aut Venetiis aut usquam lo-
corum hos Galeni libros imprimat, & Cle-
mentis VII. Pont. Max. & Sena-
tus Veneti decreto cau-
tum est.

Title page for the first edition in Greek (1525) of Galen's works (courtesy of the Lilly Library, Indiana University)

been done with them, and one must simply cite the poorly edited Greek texts of *Mixtures and Properties of Simples, Compound Drugs arranged by Location of Ailment, Compound Drugs Arranged by Kind, Antidotes,* and *Theriac for Piso (Theriac to Pamphilius* and *Easily Obtained Drugs* are spurious) that consume 3,072 pages in the Kühn text. Galen's pharmacology is founded upon a lengthy pharmaceutical doxography, and he quotes directly from dozens of earlier Hellenistic and Roman herbalists and pharmacists (including Dioscorides of Anazarbus, whose *Materia Medica,* circa 70, became the textbook on pharmacy from his day through the European Enlightenment). Generally, Galen's theory of drug action is based upon the degree of hot and cold, wet and dry, with subtle subclassifications known through the senses of taste, touch, and smell. Galen's use of Dioscorides' remarkable precision (and his rejection of Dioscorides' prescient drug affinity system) is summarized in John Scarborough and Vivian Nutton, editor and translator of "The Preface of Dioscorides' *Materia Medica:* Introduction, Translation, Commentary" in *Transactions and Studies of the College of Physicians of Philadelphia* (1982); within this work one will find many drugs used by both Dioscorides and Galen.

Galen was keenly interested in words and terminologies, always seeking precise nuances where few existed in the Greek of his day (he was certainly not the first to attempt nomenclatures in medicine: one of the outstanding term-coiners was the famous third-century B.C. Alexandrian anatomist and physician Herophilus. Galen's *Medical Terms* has survived only in an Arabic translation. Stoic logic sometimes led to fallacies in terminologies, as well as falsely perceived meanings of words, and Galen penned a short tract on the nature of language, *Language and Ambiguity,* a text chock-full of confused readings and even more confused "translations" into Latin. This small but important tract, firmly fixed within its proper matrix of valid and invalid arguments as employed by Platonists, Aristotelians, Stoics, and others, has been re-edited, translated into English, and provided with an extended commentary.

Often ignored in the consideration of Galen's social and intellectual context is the importance of dreams and dream lore in his era, an aspect of Roman imperial learning that had a personal impact on his choice of a career (as noted above, his father, Nicon, experienced a dream that caused him to set Galen on a medical track). Well after he became established as a prominent physician, Galen wrote a short work on dreams and diagnosis from dreams, and a fragment of this booklet is in the major work as edited by Kühn, now translated with a commentary by Steven M. Oberhelmen. Oberhelman leads one immediately into the relevant surviving texts on dream lore from the Roman Empire, and allows the modern student of the history of medicine to comprehend much more accurately the matrix of magic, astrology, and dream analysis that attracted so many well-educated individuals in the days of the Roman Empire.

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Gorgias of Leontini

(circa 485 B.C. – 376 B.C.)

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MAJOR WORKS – EXTANT: *Praise of Helen; Defence of Palamedes;* other brief fragments.

MAJOR WORK – NONEXTANT: *Concerning Nature or What is Not.*

Editio princeps: *Gorgias* in *Orationes horum rhetorum,* three volumes, edited by Aldus Manutius (Venice: Aldus Manutius and Andreas Asulanus, 1513).

Standard editions: *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker,* sixth edition, edited by W. Kranz (Berlin: Weidmann, 1951); *Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers: A Complete Translation of the Fragments in Diels' Fragmente der Vorsokratiker,* translated by Kathleen Freeman (Oxford: Blackwell, 1971).

Although Gorgias made major original contributions in the fields of philosophy and rhetoric, he is probably best known as the antagonist of Socrates' ideas in the Platonic dialogue titled *Gorgias* (circa 388 B.C.). He is indeed an appropriate, if outstanding, representative of the Sophists and rhetoricians of the ancient Greek world; and, in spite of the aura of disrepute often associated with those schools, much of Gorgias's thought appears strikingly modern, anticipating twentieth-century trends in literary theory and epistemology. His work that survives includes his speeches titled *Praise of Helen* and *Defence of Palamedes*. His book *Concerning Nature or What is Not* has been lost, but an account of it has been preserved by the second-century-A.D. writer Sextus Empiricus. As the philosopher and teacher known from both the fragmentary remains of his writings and his portrayal by Plato, Gorgias is significant for his provocative, skeptical challenges to conventional ideas of truth and poetry and for his positive construction of the role of art in a world of imperfect knowledge.

Born in Leontini in Sicily in about 485 B.C., Gorgias is said to have been a student of Empedocles; he doubtless began his career as a philosopher whose work included speculations on natural science. But Sicily in the late fifth century B.C. was the fountainhead of the new discipline of rhetoric, and Gorgias turned his attention to language at an early age. His teacher Empedocles is called the founder of rhetorical studies; Gorgias is also described as a student of Tisias, who had learned rhetoric from Corax, the man most often named as the first systematic rhetorician. The nihilistic theses in Gorgias's book *Concerning Nature or What is Not* may suggest that, having devastated scientific positivism, Gorgias abandoned the pursuit of ultimate truth as inaccessible and turned to oratory as an alternative field in which the unknowability of ultimate truth is not necessarily a defect.

In about 427 B.C. Gorgias, having journeyed to Athens as the leader of a delegation that was requesting military aid against the Syracusans, dazzled the local orators with his highly ornamented and rhythmic style of speaking. He was not only successful in persuading the Athenians to make an alliance with Leontini; he had made such an impression that he moved to Athens himself and took pupils, reputedly at high tuition. His flair for the spectacular persisted in his extremely poetic, almost incantatory style and in such gestures as his offering to speak extemporaneously on any subject proposed.

However, although he took an active part in political and religious affairs and a statue of him was erected in a temple of Apollo, his radical philosophical skepticism, his remunerative teaching, and a general respect for the deceptive powers of language made him an ideal target for attacks on the new sophistic movement. Many charges leveled unfairly against Socrates in Aristophanes' *Clouds* (423 B.C.), for instance, might with more justice have been directed at Gorgias. He traveled to other Greek cities as well, teaching and deliver-

The Pnyx in Athens, the meeting place of the Athenian Assembly, whom Gorgias persuaded to ally with Leontini in about 427 B.C.

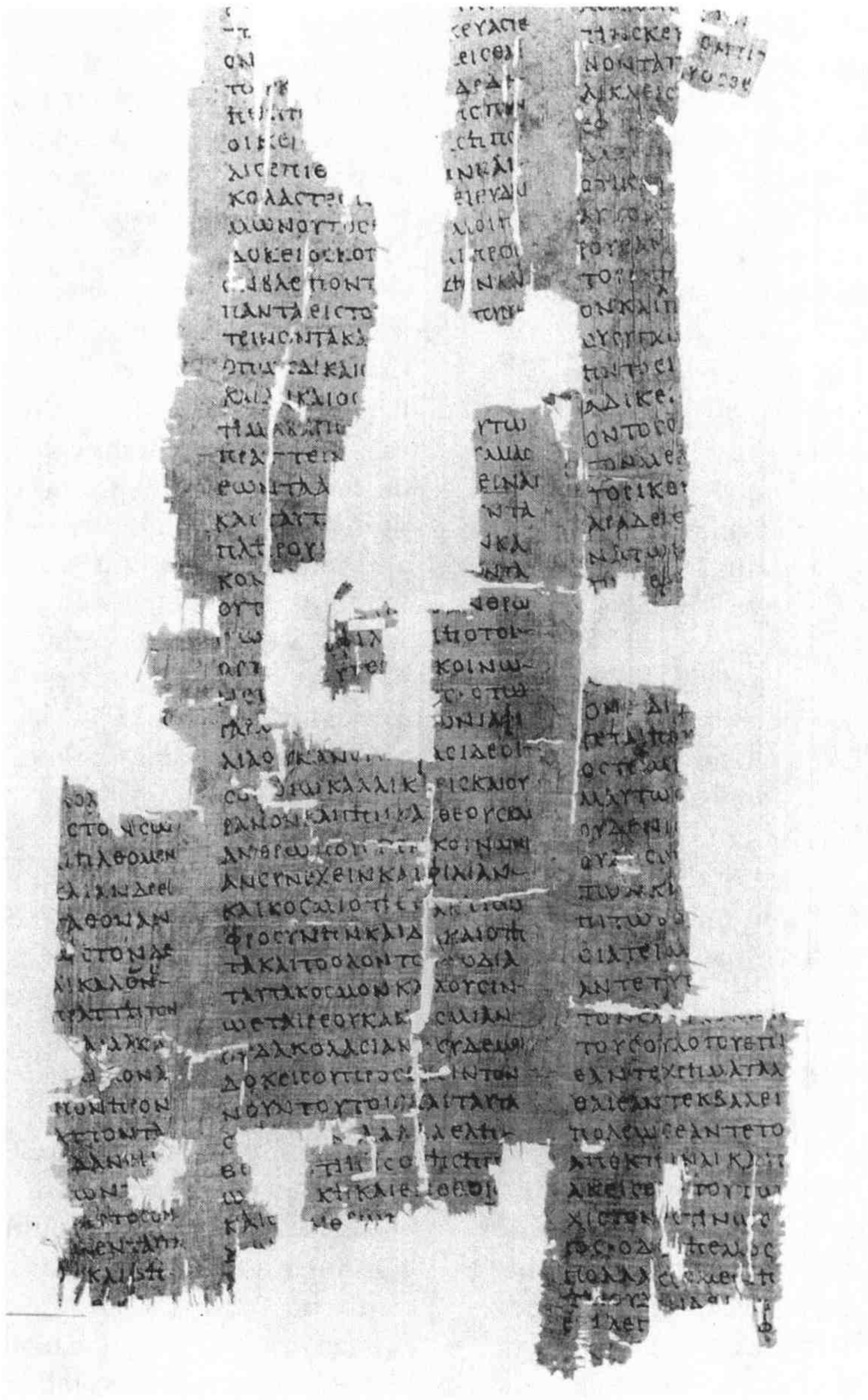
ing speeches. He is said to have maintained an abstemious lifestyle that included remaining a bachelor and refusing invitations to symposia. These austerities may have been healthy, because he is said to have lived well past his hundredth birthday.

The notorious series of propositions first set forth in his lost volume *Concerning Nature or What is Not* may be conceived as a riposte to Empedocles, who sometime in the fourth century B.C. had written a text titled *On Nature;* but Gorgias's ideas are thoroughly rooted in Eleatic philosophy. Basing himself on the work of Parmenides and Zeno while adding Protagoras's insights on the limitations of human knowledge, Gorgias declared, first, that nothing exists; second, that if anything did exist, it could not be known by human perception; and third, that if anything were known to a person, it could not be communicated to anyone else. Surely a more radical philosophic questioning is difficult to conceive.

While following earlier monistic theories of reality and earlier claims about the relative and limited nature of truth, Gorgias made a distinctly original contribution by extending these doctrines to include the inadequacy of language. Here he may be considered the earliest known analogue for such twentieth-century theoreticians as Ferdinand de Saussure, who argued the arbitrariness of words and insisted on the inevitable gap between signifier and signified, or Jacques Derrida, whose theory of deconstruction likewise radically questioned the capacity of language to bear meaning but who, like Gorgias, did not close the issue by committing himself to a genuine nihilism or barren agnosticism. While the accounts of *Concerning Nature or What is Not* preserved in Sextus Empiricus and in the anonymous *De Melisso, Xenophane, Gorgia* are almost altogether destructively skeptical (though brilliantly so, recalling Buddhist metaphysics in their uncompromising daring), nevertheless, Gorgias's *Defence of Palamedes* suggests certain positive principles.

After restating in the *Defence of Palamedes* the claims that truth is inaccessible to the human understanding and that Logos (mind or reason) could not in any event communicate it, Gorgias makes the surprising claim that this condition of things is, in fact, most appropriate. The irrational character of the human mind answers to the nature of the universal; the ambiguous, contradictory attributes of knowledge are then, in a deep sense, realistic; and the tragedy of life is therefore embodied in language. The "fallen" word, so to speak, is not merely adequate, but eloquent in a fallen world.

Praise of Helen, Gorgias's other extant work, elaborates much more fully on these enigmatic ideas. Although Gorgias referred to this speech as a *paignion* (jeu d'esprit), it contains a profoundly suggestive, even noble, theory of literature, one that in some critical points anticipates Aristotle in his *Poetics* (circa 335 B.C.). Both the authentic potential and the limitations of language are inherent in this attempt to exonerate Helen. She is innocent, Gorgias argues, if her leaving Menelaus for Paris is because



Fragment of a second-century papyrus text of Plato's Gorgias, *in which the orator criticizes the ideas of Socrates [Bodlean Library, Oxford, Ms. Gr. Class. c 54(p)V]*

of the will of the gods, to force, to love so great she could not have acted otherwise, or to Paris's powers of persuasion. It is, of course, this last possibility that most engages Gorgias.

He admits that language has the ability to deceive, to beguile (the Greek is *apatao*), but he insists that this power is not identical to fraud or lying. In fact, according to Gorgias, the "deceived" man may be wiser than the "undeceived." Some people, indeed, are too limited, too lacking in humanity to be "deceived." Indeed, tragedy, for example, creates a deception of a sort that is, according to Gorgias, closer to the truth of reality than normal perception is. This position suggests a subtle and novel response to an old question. When the poet Hesiod's muses, according to his story in the *Theogony* (circa eighth century B.C.), appeared to him, virtually the first words the muses spoke were "we know how to speak many false things as though they were true, but we know, when we want, how to utter truth." Plato's opposition to the poets was based on their equivocal relation to truth, although his opposition was balanced by a respect for their potentially divine inspiration; and Aristotle's claim in the *Poetics* that poetry is "more worthy of serious attention" than history indicates the importance of the prob-

lem for ancient literary theory. The question continues to be debated through Augustine's questioning, in the fourth century A.D., of literature as opposed to revelation, through medieval didacticism, through nineteenth-century realism, and up to such contemporary formulations as Umberto Eco's definition of the sign as that which may be used to lie and deconstruction's ambivalent attitude toward the truth of the word.

For Gorgias, in the speech *Helen,* Logos is "a great thing," divine, universal, the source of love for mankind; it is "potent like a drug" (this simile is richly ambiguous). Tragic knowledge, which for Gorgias as for Aristotle is the principal type of poetic knowledge, is clear and unclouded as contrasted with the seeming reality that constitutes daily human experience. The piece may then be read as a paean to poetry's powers for penetrating truth, though it is possible to involve this very text in the contradiction it discusses by stressing Gorgias's reportedly lighthearted comment on it and by reading it as a cynical exercise in manipulating an audience and vindicating an immoral wrongdoer by pleading the irrational domination of the soul by the same sort of artistic speech that constitutes the speech itself.

The same issues form the heart of Plato's dialogue titled *Gorgias* (circa 388 B.C.), though there the issue is viewed from the perspective of Platonic idealism that will finally allow little room for the aesthetic. Though Socrates treats Gorgias with respect, the skepticism that for him ennobles the role of art is given little expression, and his opinions are thus misrepresented and trivialized. The dialogue features Socrates and his disciple Chaerophon disputing with Gorgias, his pupil and admirer Polus, and Callicles, a politician who serves to take supposedly Gorgian ideas to greater lengths than could have been convincingly attached to the name of Gorgias himself. For Plato the principal object seems to have been to demonstrate the superiority of philosophy to rhetoric from a moral point of view and to insist on the primacy of justice above opportunism in words and deeds.

The dialogue opens when Chaerophon, at Socrates' insistence, asks Gorgias what he professes to be, thereby inquiring into the nature of rhetoric. Gorgias, whom Polus has called "one of the best" at the noblest of arts, says that rhetoric is great because it allows men the highest power, the ability to work their will in society. Nonetheless, when he attempts to define the art precisely, he relegates it to the sphere of persuasion, opening the way for Socrates to attack it as no art at all but only a "knack" acquired from experience of how best to manipulate an audience, a variety of flattery and an ignoble part of politics. Socrates further disparages rhetoric's pretensions by likening it to cookery, hardly an art but rather an experience that can sometimes give pleasure. It cannot qualify as an art, as it lacks theory and is essentially irrational. Finally, Socrates says that the relation between cooking and medicine is analogous to that between rhetoric and justice in that the former term of each pair aims at pleasing while the latter aims at the true good, in the one case physical and in the other moral. With high seriousness Socrates then proceeds to demonstrate that doing wrong is a greater evil than suffering wrong and that the worst misfortune would be to remain without punishment after having committed a wrong. Socrates then admits that rhetoric may serve in aiding one to expose his own errors and in asking for just punishment and, secondarily, in defending oneself or defending enemies unjustly accused.

At this point Callicles, the wholly amoral, cynical politician, asks in amazement whether Socrates can be serious. He then mounts a thorough and self-conscious exposition of the principle that might makes right and that the natural man is altogether selfish, seeking only his own interest in both the personal and social arenas. For Callicles law, morality, and social convention are merely for the weak, and a man of courage would pay them no heed and pursue only pleasure. Here Gorgias, like Epicurus, is associated with hedonism, although his own pleasures seem to have been quite refined and spiritual. For Socrates, though, pleasure is inevitably identified with goodness, and he proceeds to show that human nature need not be accepted in its natural state but may be cultivated and improved. Callicles remains obdurate, and Socrates reiterates his opinions of rhetoric. The dispute is resolved in Socrates' favor only by a philosophical deus ex machina as Socrates invokes the concept of retributive justice in the afterlife to seal his point, although for him the mythological apparatus only dramatizes the necessity of a self-justifying virtue.

Plato's dialogue *Gorgias* is quite moving as an idealistic credo, but it wholly neglects the unique powers of language to investigate and formulate visions of reality. What, after all, is Socrates' medium when he is not relying on psychic telegrams from his daimon, or guiding spirit? Historically, the dialogue indicates the depth of distrust for new verbal and intellectual technologies that led to Socrates' own execution. The same moralistic ideological bias is evident in attitudes toward literature from more modern sources as well, including some Christians

and communists. The suspicion of verbal play and the austere definition of pleasure also contrast markedly with Socrates' own delight in confounding his interlocuters and the warm erotic glow that envelops so many of the scenes of the dialogues. The reductive view of the rhetorician as irresponsible antinomian not only ignores the subtleties in Gorgias's thought, it obscures difficulties in that of Socrates. Apart from not questioning the accuracy of words when used for stating philosophic doctrine, Plato also has Gorgias accept without question the reality of the transcendental categories of truth and justice and the possibility of gaining access to them and yet still defending rhetoric as the highest art. Still, the *Gorgias* memorably enacts the collision between idealism and skepticism and, from a partisan point of view, delineates the attitudes toward language associated with each position.

Gorgias is a major, if little-recognized, figure in the history of literary criticism. As the individual responsible for transmitting rhetorical theory to Athens, he helped to lay the foundation for the two-thousand-year dominance of the rhetorical terms used for critical thinking. As a pioneer in developing self-reflection about an art that the Greeks had practiced for centuries, he made numerous specific contributions, among them the elevation of prose to a position potentially equal to that of poetry, particularly through the lavish use of ornaments both in sound pattern and in concepts. His direct influence as a teacher was considerable, and Alcibiades, Thucydides, Isocrates, and Antisthenes are numbered among his pupils.

In philosophy Gorgias resembles certain modern existentialist authors in taking skepticism almost to the point of nihilism and yet salvaging humanistic values. He extended the Eleatic dialectic to its ultimate logical conclusions and yet, having eliminated all possibility of meaningful knowledge, managed to reconstitute literature as the sole remaining viable discourse. He was the antagonist whose challenges inspired Plato not only in the *Gorgias* but also in many of the late dialogues. In him can be seen the iconoclastic innovations in thinking that evoked admiration as well as hostility from his contemporaries.

He transformed the practice of rhetoric no less than its theory. His daring use of a superabundance of poetic devices such as antithesis, paronomasia (double meanings), pariosis (repetition of an expression in different connections), and a host of other figures opened the possibilities of artful prose writing forever, even as their less effective use led to abysurdly labored or tedious compositions. In different ways euphuism, Victorian schoolmasters such as Blair, James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* (1939), and the rhythmic, hypnotic messages of American advertising might be seen as Gorgian. The disputes between those raising the supposedly opposing banners of style and content might be traced to those ancient controversies in which Gorgias played his vital and important role. Finally, his own ideas, which anticipated Aristotle even to the extent of naming pity and fear as the most significant tragic emotions, provide a still meaningful basis for defending the unique value of literary texts. In Gorgias's view aesthetic texts embody the contradictions of reality and reproduce the ambivalences of the human mind as reflected in the ambiguities of language and may therefore claim to be not only more beautiful and pleasurable but also more true than other forms of discourse.

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Heraclitus

(flourished circa 500 B.C.)

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MAJOR WORK: *On Nature,* or *Muses* (circa 500 B.C.)

Editio princeps: *Poiesis Philosophos,* edited by H. Estienne (Geneva: H. Estienne, 1573).

Standard edition: *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker,* seventh edition, volume 1, edited by Hermann Diels and Walther Kranz (Dublin & Zurich: Weidmann, 1954).

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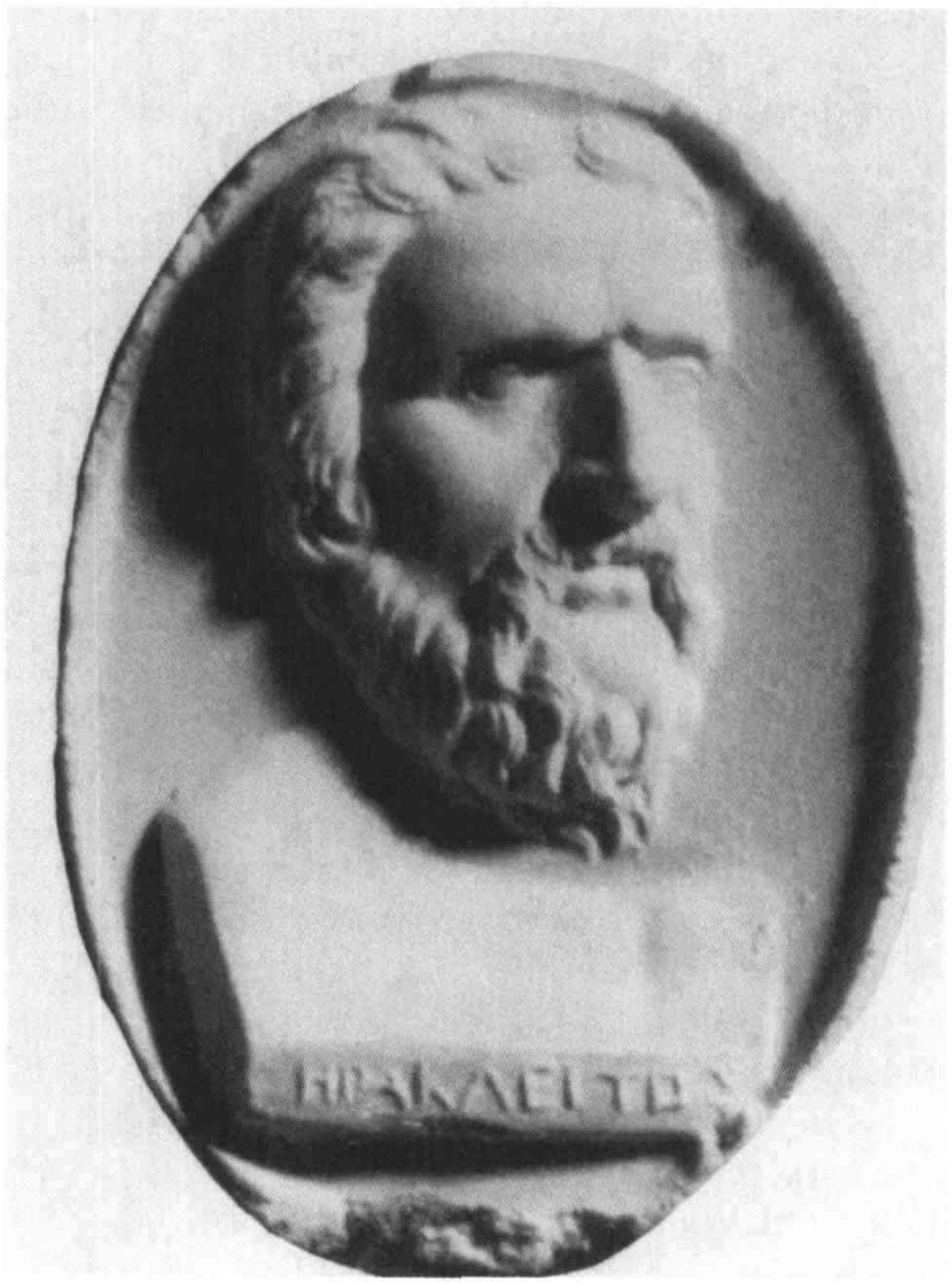

Heraclitus; inscribed gem of the Roman period (National Museum, Athens)

[Numbering of the fragments in the text of this entry follows that in the edition by Diels and Kranz.]

Heraclitus was a pre-Socratic philosopher who, along with his polar opposite, Parmenides, set out the basic premises of Western thought. While Parmenides emphasized the strict immutability of existence, Heraclitus argued for the continuous alteration of all that exists. Much of later Greek philosophy can be viewed either as an acceptance of one position and rejection of the other or as an attempt to reconcile the two. In his conception of the cosmos Heraclitus looks back to the beliefs of earlier eastern Greek thinkers (often called Milesian, after the city of Miletus) who, less consciously and explicitly than he, were proponents of the doctrine of change; he also foreshadows the work of Plato, Aristotle, and others, who, quite consciously, felt the need to incorporate Heraclitean flux into their cosmologies and epistemologies.

Little about Heraclitus's life is known for certain. All sources agree that he was born and lived in Ephesus, a prosperous city on the Ionian coast not far from Miletus. There is no reason to distrust this claim, but everything else in the ancient lives is highly suspect. That the name of Heraclitus's father is variously given as Bloson, Heracon, Bautorus, Blyson, and Heracinus serves as a reminder that, when ancient biographers were in doubt, they invented, either ex nihilo or by imaginatively extrapolating from the subject's writings to his life. As a notable example of the latter method, several sources

describe, not without some disagreement among themselves, Heraclitus's fatal dropsy, his failed attempt to cure himself through smearing his body with dung, and his body's further mistreatment after death by dogs who failed to recognize him. This vivid picture seems to derive from a reading of Heraclitus's lines about the worthlessness of corpses and about dogs' barking at that which they do not recognize. Again, one wonders whether Heraclitus, as ancient testimony has it, played dice with children near the temple of Artemis rather than engaging in Ephesian political life, or whether this story is a composite inspired by his comment (B52) that "one's life is a child at play who moves the pieces about. Kingly power is that of a child."

Even Heraclitus's explicit mention of one Hermodorus and the shabby treatment he received at the hands of their fellow Ephesians does not further biographical research. The otherwise unknown Hermodorus may not even be his contemporary, as is usually assumed, but rather an exemplary citizen from an earlier generation. Heraclitus certainly refers elsewhere to his intellectual and artistic predecessors: Homer, Hesiod, Archilochus, and Thales, all of whom died before Heraclitus was born; Bias and Pythagoras, who could have been his older contemporaries; and Hecataeus and Xenophanes, who were almost certainly contemporaries. Why would he not also refer to an Ephesian known long after his death for his political activity?

Some suppositions about Heraclitus's life can be reasonably made, however. Because Xenophanes, another pre-Socratic, was said to be his teacher, it can be guessed that Heraclitus was active around 500 B.C. Indeed, the later author Olympiodorus dates the period he which he flourished to the sixty-ninth Olympiad (504–501 B.C.), although how much earlier and later he was also active cannot be said with certainty. But the fact that Heraclitus does not criticize or, indeed, even allude to Parmenides, who began to write in the early fifth century, suggests that Heraclitus was not active long after the beginning of the century.

Although most of the facts of Heraclitus's life remain obscure, one can perhaps sympathize and agree with those ancient biographers who, trying to infer Heraclitus's personality from his writings, declared him a misanthrope. He certainly exudes an air of hauteur as he relegates the majority of people to the class of intellectual sleepwalkers whose eyes will never open to view the universe's comprehensive order. The weakly attested story that Heraclitus gave up the kingship of Ephesus in favor of his brother has been believed by some scholars on the grounds that the attitude of superiority that Heraclitus displays is consistent with his being of royal blood; it is also believed because the story does not have any obvious origin in his writings. But there is no hard evidence to support the story about kingship, nor any particular reason to believe it. Moreover, the story of Heraclitus's being indifferent to or giving up worldly goods for philosophy was a commonplace claim attached in various guises to Thales, Anaxagoras, Democritus, and others.

Heraclitus's major work survives only in fragments, and even its title is uncertain. According to some ancient sources, the book was called *Muses;* others give the title as *On Nature*. It was said that Heraclitus deposited his book in the temple of Artemis in Ephesus. He did so, the ancient source suggests, to restrict access only to those able to understand it, although how this ability would or could be ascertained is not spelled out. A modern suggestion is that deposition in a temple would lend his book the character of a sacred discourse, but ancient Greek temples served as the equivalent of a modern bank's safe deposit box and accepted all sorts of secular objects for safekeeping without there being the thought of consecrating them. Another objection to this theory is that Greece was largely unfamiliar with the notion of a sacred text (some Orphic documents notwithstanding). If, though, this story is not true, it is at least more apt than the others that have been foisted on Heraclitus, because it suggests what the fragmentary remains constantly show; namely, that Heraclitus, one of the earliest prose writers known, took such exquisite pains with the precise expression of his thought that he judged his exact wording to be worth preserving in its original form. In an age in which all literature was delivered orally (and, hence, was subject to change from performance to performance, especially after the death of the author), Heraclitus, knowing that his thought was inextricable from the words that express it, strove to fix its exact form as best as he was able.

A corollary of this notion is that Heraclitus composed for a new world of readers as much as for the more usual audience who heard the text delivered by its author. Since the ancients read their texts aloud, the difference between readers and audience was smaller then than it is at the present time, when silent reading is the rule. Heraclitus's carefully composed rhythms and assonances would still be heard. Furthermore, the writings of Heraclitus, like those of many poets, reveal more to the reader than to the listener, who would probably hear it only once. And his prose, like that of Plato,

conveys its philosophical message in more than just the kind of formal argumentation that has come to be considered the only kind of philosophy worth taking seriously.

Unfortunately for Heraclitus and for his modern readers, however, the temple of Artemis is now no more than a damp hole in the ground. His book, ransacked by a millennium of later Greek and Latin writers for its striking aphorisms, survives only in the form of discrete literary fragments, few of them greater than one sentence in length. Indeed, some modern readers argue that Heraclitus did not write connected arguments but filled his book with short sententiae. The few extant ancient descriptions of his book suggest otherwise, but they inspire no more trust than those attesting to his life. In the first place, as noted earlier, they cannot even agree on its title, calling it variously *Muses* and *On Nature,* the former probably inferred from a humorous remark in Plato, the latter a generic title attributed to the works of nearly all the pre-Socratics. More unsettling, there is also disagreement about its form: according to one source, Heraclitus's book was divided into three chapters: physics, politics, and theology – which three rubrics also formed part of the sixfold division of the Stoic Cleanthes in the third century B.C. Because the Stoics venerated Heraclitus as an important precursor of their own theories, it is likely that the supposed threefold division of Heraclitus's book reflects a later rearrangement done under Stoic influence. One would certainly be hard pressed to assign most of the extant fragments exclusively to one or another of these three categories. Another source, the grammarian Diodotus, denying that the book concerns nature, maintains that it is about politics and that the sections referring to nature are to be interpreted as allegories whose real meaning pertains to government.

Because discussions of politics and government in ancient Greece comprehended the proper behavior of citizens, that is, ethics, Diodotus's account of Heraclitus's book may be close to the truth, especially since his interpretation is in line with several brief descriptions that are known of Heraclitus's work, such as "sure rudder for the rule of life," "moral compass," and "sole and universal Plan of conduct." It should therefore probably be allowed that there was a strong ethical component to Heraclitus's work. But rather than reading the physical fragments as simple allegories, it would be more in line with what Heraclitus says about the unity of the cosmos to understand him to be saying that there is but one order underlying everything and that knowledge of this divine pattern enables one to apply that pattern to both natural and political orders. One can, that is, employ the natural order as an analogy of the man-made order (politics and ethics) and vice versa; and either, furthermore, is analogous to man himself and his own powers of intelligence. This view presumably is what lies behind Heraclitus's statement (B101) that "I made inquiry into myself and learned everything from myself."

Heraclitus, moreover, made it clear that his own book was part of the man-made order. In this he was helped by (and he made maximum use of) the multiple meanings of the Greek word *logos,* which, like *kosmos,* essentially means a patterned arrangement. In its usual sense, *logos* refers to a single word (an ordered arrangement of sounds) or to an artful composition of words, such as a speech or a tale. It also can refer to the active intellectual faculty that can discern the pattern in complicated and confusing arrays of data, whether visual, aural, or purely intellectual.

Evidently thinking that his own logos (his book) should present the same challenge to comprehension as the external logos (the cosmos), Heraclitus composed in a riddling, teasing prose style that challenged and continues to challenge his reading audience to winkle out its meaning, a meaning that in turn alludes to the truth behind the shifting phenomena of the world. His prose is thus less a revelation of the cosmos than a propaedeutic for its understanding. The text that resulted was judged, by Cicero and others, not only to be difficult, but to be intentionally so. Some merely called it "poetic," in part because a strong prose rhythm is often discernible, but probably also because it presents the same kind of problems of intepretation as do the more complex lyrics of poets such as Aeschylus and Pindar. One ancient author, in fact, compared the writings of Heraclitus to the "riddling" verses of Orpheus.

Aristotle and his student Theophrastus, two of the most learned philosophers known to have studied the texts of the pre-Socratics, were more specific in their descriptions of Heraclitus's prose. Aristotle singles out the first sentence of Heraclitus's book for a glaring ambiguity: where Heraclitus writes (B1): "But of the logos that is always are men unaware." Does the word *always* go with the words that precede or with those that follow it? Theophrastus says that some of Heraclitus's utterances seem incomplete and that his text contains remarks at variance with one another. Similarly, Demetrius of Phalerum, a writer on prose style, finds it difficult to determine where one of Heraclitus's clauses ends

and the next begins. For all this general agreement about his obscurity, however, it is easy for some to agree with Socrates, who, when asked his opinion of Heraclitus's treatise, is said by Diogenes Laertius to have answered: "What I understand is excellent, and I think that even what I do not understand is equally excellent. All one needs is a Delian diver" (one skilled in explicating the oracles of Apollo). Lucretius, the Latin didactic poet who, unlike Heraclitus, explained things pedantically and at great length, acknowledges that Heraclitus's difficult prose has its admirers when he calls him *clarus ob obscuram linguam* (a play on words roughly equivalent to "known for his unknowable language").

The link between Heraclitus and Apollo alluded to by Socrates surely refers to Heraclitus's statement that "The lord whose oracle is in Delphi neither speaks out nor conceals but signifies." As Lucian says, this is precisely what Heraclitus himself seems to do, neither speaking out (clearly) nor (altogether) concealing, but rather hinting at his true meaning. Heraclitus seems to have believed that too straightforward an explanation of a complex and changing phenomenon can never be entirely or lastingly true. This may be what he means, or rather hints at, when he says that "an unapparent harmony [or joining] is better [or stronger] than an apparent one" (a sentence that is held together by its own strong dactylic rhythm), because (B56) "men have been deceived in their awareness of what is apparent."

Not all of the writings of Heraclitus puzzle in the same way, however; some sentences depend upon a similarity between sounds that are meant to suggest a deeper relationship than ordinary language or etymology would allow. For example, when one reads the first clause of fragment 39, "to the bow is the name bios," one would naturally pronounce *bios* with the accent on the final syllable; in this case it is another word for "bow." But continuing to the end of the sentence, one reads "but its work is death" and realizes that the word in the first clause must be pronounced with the accent on the first syllable, meaning "life," to obtain the contrast between life and death that the sentence obviously evokes. Heraclitus here, as he does more explicitly elsewhere, alludes to the notion that opposites like life and death cannot exist one without the other, and, perhaps further, that one entails, contains, or is in some way coextensive with the other. Thus, elsewhere he implicitly criticizes Homer for having one of his characters wish that strife among men would disappear; rather, Heraclitus says (B53), "War is

*Second-century-*A.D. *statue from Gortyn tentatively identified as Heraclitus (Museum of Heraclion, Crete)*

the father of us all and our ruler; he makes some gods, others men, and some men he makes free, others slaves." In using the word *gods* here, Heraclitus is alluding to those warriors who are worshiped after death almost as though they were gods. Thus, as he says elsewhere (B62), "mortals [those subject to death] are immortal, immortals are mortals [because they had to die to attain this state], one group living the death of the other, the other group dying the life of the first."

Since "not everyone understands how something differing with itself agrees with itself,"

Heraclitus takes pains to ensure that neither can his reader – at first reading, at any rate – understand his statements dealing with the identity of opposites; but there is, he continues, "a backward turning harmony [or joining], just like that of bow and lyre." That is, both bow and lyre accomplish their tasks by tying together and bending backward two end pieces that strain to go in opposite directions; and, as the syntax of the sentence allows one to interpret, there is also a harmony between *bow,* which symbolizes war, and *lyre,* a sign of peace and leisure.

It should be clear by now that Heraclitus, although concerned with the nature of the universe and how people think and act, does not pursue philosophy as this activity has been understood since Aristotle; that is, as a series of interlocking arguments that are applied to fairly well-defined areas of ethics, ontology, epistemology, and so forth and that culminate in tentative or definite conclusions. He may, indeed, be more aptly compared to Socrates, who also thought that making people think for themselves was more important than presenting them with a written, or at any rate prepared, doctrine of his own. And like Socrates, who proclaimed his own ignorance and who urged others to join him in a shared search for truth, Heraclitus can say (B50), "Do not listen to me but to the logos." In this context listening to Heraclitus means merely perceiving his words alone, rather than their meaning, a common fault among people in general and one to which Heraclitus reverts many times.

But while Socrates never wrote his ideas out or looked to any man or book for external truth, Heraclitus assimilated himself and his book to the external order: the logos that is his reasoning faculty (because it can discern order in seeming chaos) produces a logos (his written work) that is designed to suggest ways to discern the logos of the phenomenal world. That humanity needs this guidance he makes clear in the first sentence of his work: "But of the logos that is always are men unaware. . . . " Here *always* modifies both logos (which refers both to Heraclitus's book and to the unchanging order described in it) and the ignorance that people display toward this logos.

Why is it necessary to understand the world through oneself and oneself through the world? In part because the process keeps a person awake (to use one of Heraclitus's favorite metaphors), and also, perhaps, because it is amusing. The riddles to which Heraclitus refers directly and the riddles he embeds in his prose suggest that Heraclitus took great joy in his own intellectual powers. As he says (B18), "if one does not expect one will not find the unexpected," a statement that in the context of Heraclitus's thought comes close to Socrates's later view (in Plato's *Theaetetus* 155^{d}) that "wonder is the beginning of philosophy." Only by looking for odd and not readily apparent connections can one discern the underlying (and stronger) harmony holding everything together.

Heraclitus, moreover, imbues this investigation with hints of the divine. Seeking universal rules, he, like other early Greek thinkers, was moving away from a reliance on the anthropomorphic gods of the Greek pantheon, who, as is clear in Homer and elsewhere in Greek myth, would at random interludes interfere with the lives of mortals and even with the workings of the heavens. Heraclitus, on the other hand, in accordance with the new protoscientific view that the workings of nature are universal and inviolate, refused to separate divinity from the material world; therefore, the material world cannot have had a genesis such as traditional religious thought (although never in complete agreement on the details) had posited. On the contrary (B30), "This cosmos was produced by neither god nor man, but always was, is, and will be, an everliving fire, being kindled in measures and being quenched in measures." The cosmos, in other words, may be regarded as a solitary, all-powerful deity that comprises itself in all of its seeming contradictions (B67): "God: day night winter summer war peace satiety famine," a god, furthermore, who, representing wisdom, "is unwilling and willing to be called by the name of Zeus." The god may, for example, be thought of as *Dike* (Justice), the female deity who is held responsible for the continuing pattern of nature's alterations as seen in the daily, monthly, and yearly cycles of sun and moon.

In short, Heraclitus was a profoundly original thinker and writer who sought to alter the way that mortals looked at themselves, their gods, and the universe. Heraclitus's way, however, was too mystical and mystifying to deflect the course of early Greek thought from its more scientific investigations into the composition of matter and the origin and current formation of the universe. This is not to say that Heraclitus had no followers, but they do not loom large in the history of pre-Socratic thought. The best known of these Heracliteans was Cratylus, who seems at first to have expanded on Heraclitus's belief in the power of individual words to mirror the world, arguing that all words are appropriate to their meanings. Later, in a sharp reversal, he is said to have understood Heraclitus's statements about eternal change to mean that no true

statement could ever be made – an extreme epistemological conclusion that Heraclitus himself would reject – and that language cannot serve as a means of describing ultimate reality. Plato, however, who jokingly refers to Heracliteans as "fluxers" (from Heraclitus's comparison of universal alteration to a river) who themselves are somehow unstable, can nonetheless be seen to have taken Heraclitus very seriously, particularly in his own formulation that the impermanent world of nature is a shadow of the fixed world of Forms.

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Herodotus

(circa 484 B.C. – circa 420 B.C.)

Stewart Flory
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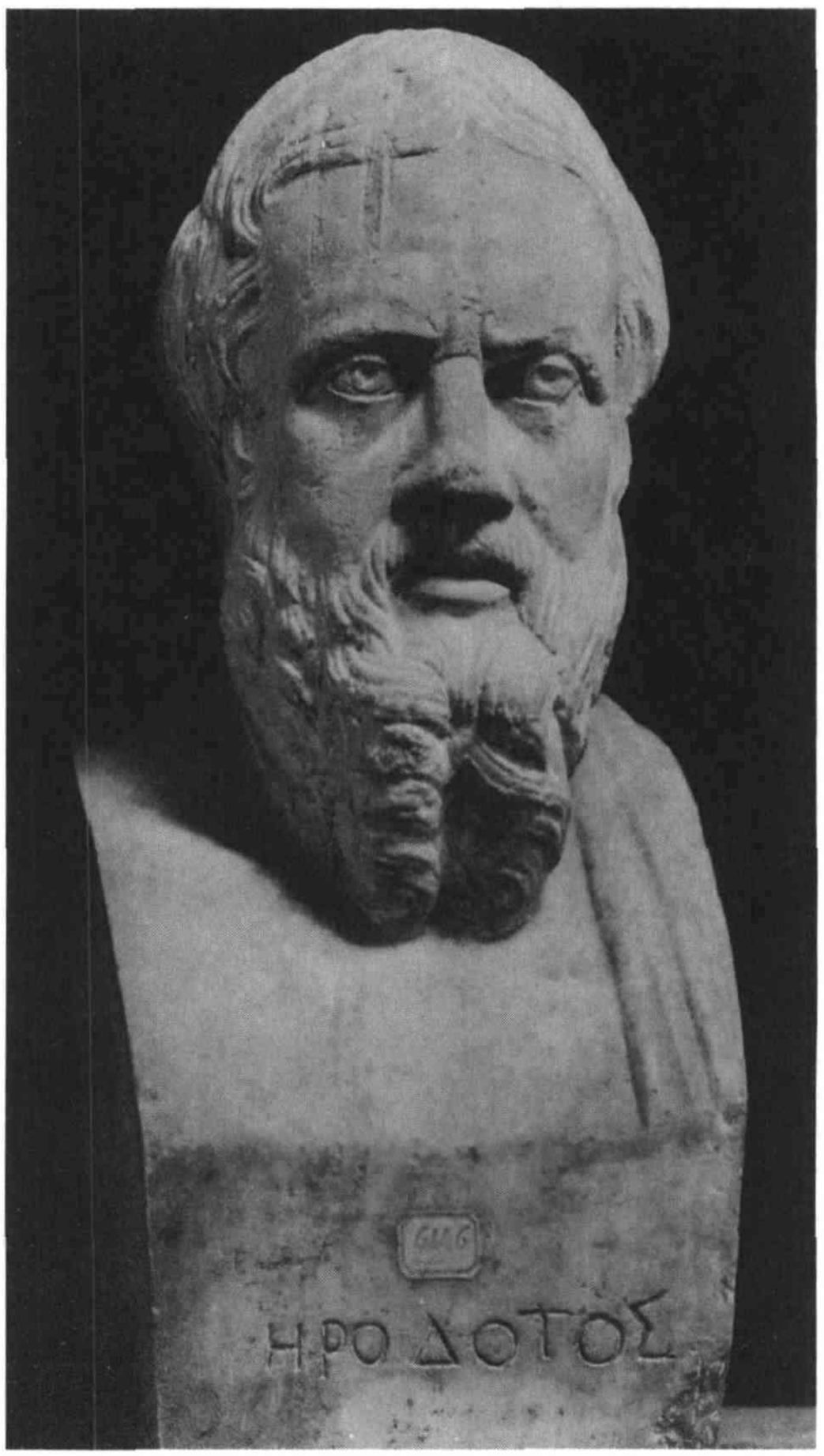
MAJOR WORK: *History of the Persian Wars* (circa late fifth century B.C.)

Editio princeps: *Herodotou Logoi Ennea,* edited by Aldus Manutius (Venice: Aldus Manutius, 1502).

Standard editions: *Hérodote: Histoires,* 11 volumes, edited by P. E. Legrand (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 1908–1972); *Herodoti Historiae,* 2 volumes, edited by Carolus Hude, third edition (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927); *Herodotos,* 5 volumes, edited by Heinrich Stein (Zurich: Weidmann, 1962–1969); *Le Storie,* 9 volumes projected, volumes 1–5, 8–9 published, edited by David Asheri and others (Milan: Mondadori, 1978–).

Translations in English: *The Persian Wars,* translated by George Rawlinson (London: John Murray, 1897); *Herodotus,* 4 volumes, translated by A. D. Godley (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1961–1966); *The History: Herodotus,* translated by David Grene (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); *Herodotus: The Histories,* translated by Walter Blanco and Jennifer Roberts (New York: Norton, 1992).



Herodotus (National Museum, Naples, no. 6146)

Herodotus, often called the "Father of History," is the earliest and one of the greatest in the pantheon of ancient Greek prose writers. He was born in the early fifth century B.C., about the time of the Persian invasion of Greece that was a major focus of his book, traditionally known as the *History of the Persian Wars.* He was born in Halicarnassus, a Greek city on the coast of Asia Minor, but he spent much of his life traveling around the Mediterranean. His father was Lyxes, but little is known about his parents, and nothing is known about any spouse or children. He probably died toward the end of the fifth century, perhaps in Thurii, a Greek colony in southern Italy.

Besides his *History of the Persian Wars,* no other work by Herodotus is known; but the surviving text of the history is a long one–almost certainly the longest written in its time and for a long time to come. The work appears to be essentially intact and complete. With many digressions and insertions, and written in a lively, anecdotal style, *History of the Persian Wars* describes the early rise of the Persian

Empire and the resistance to that empire in 490 B.C. and again in 480–479 B.C. by a small group of Greek city-states on its western, or Aegean, border. Some ancient scholar – not the author – divided Herodotus's text into nine "books" named after the nine Muses; a further division of each book into numbered chapters dates back only to the first printed edition (1502).

Herodotus is the earliest substantial prose chronicler in the Western tradition, and his *History of the Persian Wars* is virtually the only source for most of the events it describes. Persian inscriptions offer some controlling evidence for his account, but no narrative Persian source for this period is known. Aeschylus's *Persians* (470 B.C.) supplies some valuable information about the momentous battle of Salamis, in which the playwright was a combatant. Herodotus's predecessor, Hecataeus of Miletus, of whose work only fragments exist, seems to have written only brief, rationalized versions of Greek mythology. Fragments and *testimonia* of other early logographers do not encourage one to take them seriously as rivals of Herodotus or – where they are earlier – as important sources for him.

Herodotus was aware of Hecataeus's work, clearly knew the poets – especially Homer – looked at inscriptions on occasion, and read some of the small amount of prose that existed in his time; but it is unlikely that he did much of what would now be called research or even that he took many notes. He is, in fact, his own most important source, because, as he relates, his three essential tools are *opsis* (personal inspection), *historiê* (inquiry), and *gnômê* (judgment). Essentially, then, Herodotus stands alone, and however modern historians may criticize him for occasionally mistaking the facts, the record that he has left is invaluable and unlikely to be superseded by new discoveries. If one evaluates his book solely as a repository of historical data, however, one's view of Herodotus is much impoverished.

The proem, or title page, of Herodotus's *History of the Persian Wars* plunges the reader directly into the problems of his biography and the nature of his achievement: "Here is a display, the inquiry of Herodotus of Halicarnassus." The Greek word here translated as *inquiry* (and oral inquiry is clearly meant) is *historiê,* cognate with the English word *history* (also, incidentally, with *story*). Herodotus uses the word *historiê* many times, but never with emphasis, as a technical term, and never to mean what in the modern era would be called "history." To later ages, however, Herodotus seemed to be a historian par excellence, and in *De Legibus* (Laws) Cicero calls him the "father of history." Herodotus's book is known today as *History of the Persian Wars,* but it is not known what the volume's ancient title was, or even if it had one.

The problem is that "history" was not a recognizable genre in Herodotus's day – there was not even a Greek word for it. Indeed, the term *history* scarcely describes the full contents of Herodotus's book. While it certainly focuses on a definite historical event – the triumph of the Hellenic states, under the leadership of Athens and Sparta, over the Persian Empire – the work includes much else. Herodotus begins his story centuries before the start of the Persian Wars. His topic encompasses the outer margins of human knowledge, in terms both of time and of space: the earliest historical events and the most recent ones, as well as the farthest reaches of each point of the compass; and he includes much material that is not – to modern eyes at least – related to his supposed major historical theme. At a minimum his book comprises, as well as history, what modern readers would call anthropology, geography, natural history, theology, folklore, and political science. Moreover, although Herodotus writes in prose, many of his implicit principles of organization and selection are those of poetry, specifically epic and choral lyric, with a diachronic account of res gestae interwoven with synchronic poetic themes.

Herodotus's book is, above all, a personal one whose author repeatedly uses the first-person singular, telling all that has interested him in his life and travels. That this interest sometimes focuses on historical events may be only an accident of the time in which the author lived. Thus, to an unusual degree it can be said of Herodotus that *le livre, c'est l'homme* (the book is the man) and that his subject chose him rather than he his subject. *History of the Persian Wars* belongs – like the works of Plato, for example – to a unique, irreproducible genre, the product of its unusual circumstances of composition and its remarkable author.

The opening sentence of Herodotus's book provides other clues about the author's life and work: Herodotus is "of Halikarnassus," a Hellenic-Carian city on the coast of Asia Minor south of Miletus and close to the island of Kos. Apparently, however, some ancient texts of the history – for example, those quoted by Aristotle (*Rhetoric* 3.9.1409a29) and the Roman emperor Julian the Apostate (*Epistulae* 22) – had as Herodotus's place of origin not Halicarnassus but Thurii, the Panhellenic colony in the instep of Italy founded by Athens in 444–443 B.C. The date of the foundation of Thurii and Herodotus's association with it seem to have been

well known in antiquity and to have fixed in many sources the year of Herodotus's birth. Assuming that Herodotus arrived in Thurii at the prime of his life, conventionally considered to be the age of forty, these sources count backward that number of years to 483 B.C., which was, as Herodotus writes in *History of the Persian Wars,* "only a few years before Xerxes' invasion."

This date of birth roughly agrees with the impression gained from reading Herodotus's account of the Persian Wars. The author does not remember Xerxes' invasion, but he has no difficulty locating informants and sometimes even participants who recall these events with perfect clarity, including even what was said at a certain Persian dinner party before the battle of Plataea. Herodotus thus grew up in a period of unrivaled Panhellenic, interpolis patriotic fervor. Clearly many Greeks had expected the success of Xerxes' invasion to be a foregone conclusion, and the "Medizing" of Thebes and the Delphic oracle (which thought it had learned a lesson when the Persian king Cyrus II crushed Croesus) provided bellwethers for this pessimism. When the Greeks triumphed over mighty Persia, their startling victory became a defining event in Greek history.

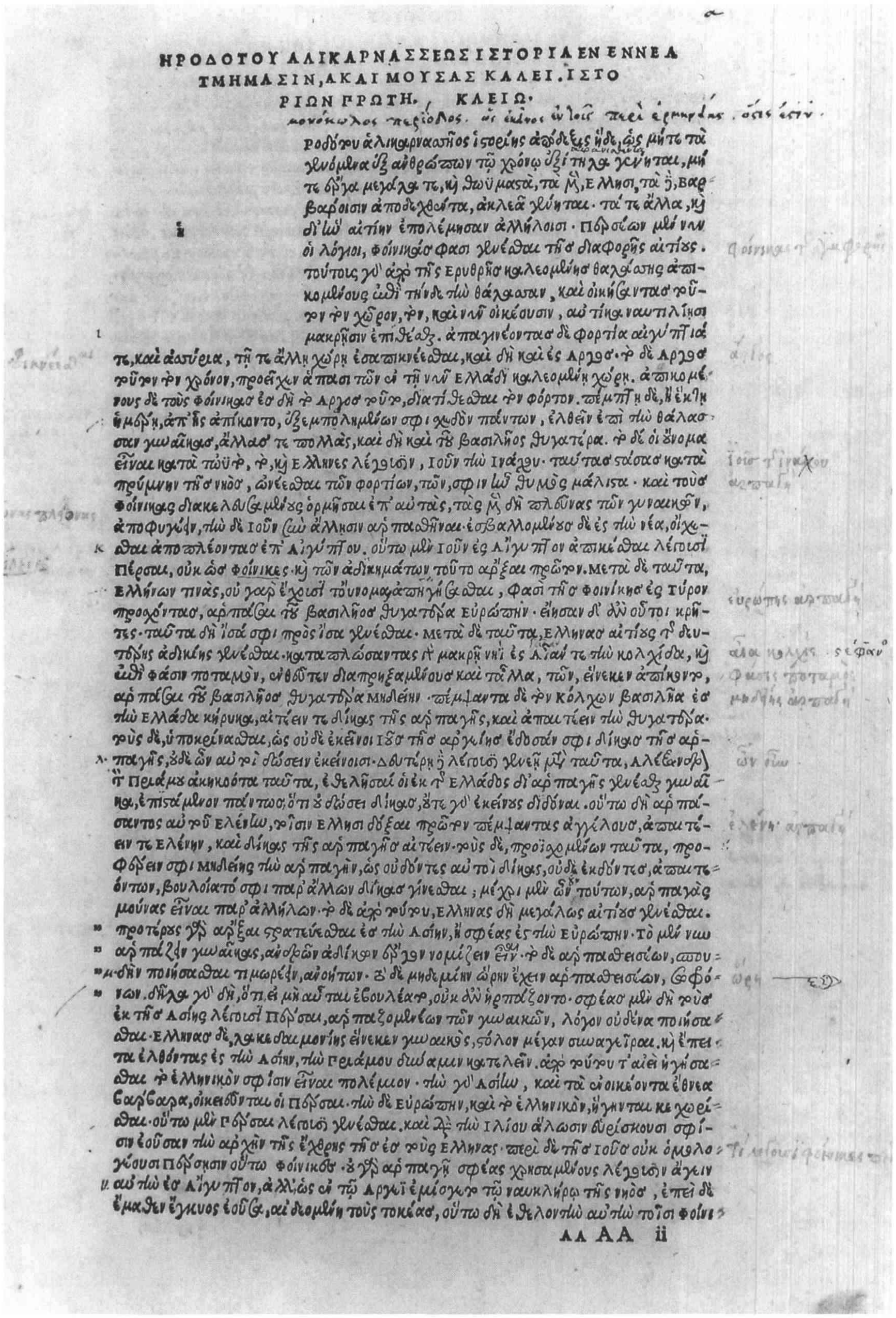
To be sure, a loss to the Persians might not have had long-term effects, since the Persians, with their landlocked mentality, were not so much interested in managing an empire across the Aegean as they were in pacifying a troublesome flank. Persian victories in 480. Probably would have resulted in Athens's and other mainland Greek cities' having to pay Persian tribute for a while. Persia, however, would likely have taken a relatively small role in the Aegean and tried to influence affairs in that region mainly through the distribution of moneys to useful friends and also through preventing any one Greek polis from becoming dominant – something that they did anyway – until the time of Alexander the Great. It is also true that for Persia, winning or losing the conflict in 480–479 meant comparatively little, considering the enormous size of its Asiatic empire – of whose extent, grandeur, and wealth the Greeks had little appreciation or even knowledge.

For the Greeks, on the other hand, the victory over Persia, however limited in scope, gave them a sense of themselves as a people set apart from the so-called barbarians. A strong case can be made that their success in the Persian Wars promoted the Hellenes' chauvinism, because thereafter they lumped together indiscriminately as "barbarians" both those non-Greek speakers who were richer, more ancient, and more cultured than themselves, like the Egyptians, and those, like the African pygmies, who lived in what might be called more-primitive cultures.

Herodotus's origins in Halicarnassus gave him a unique perspective from which to narrate the events of the conflict between Hellas and Persia. Halicarnassus began as a colony of Dorian Greeks, one of six such cities, but it had always had a close relationship with the indigenous Carians, to whom, for example, the Hellenes attributed the invention of bronze body armor. This Carian connection is of interest because Herodotus's father, Lyxes, has a Carian-sounding name, while his brother's name, Theodorus, is as purely Greek as his own. It is not necessary, however, to conclude that Herodotus was the product of a mixed marriage between a Hellene and "barbarian," because Greek families often adopted non-Greek names for various sentimental or political purposes. At the very least, however, this information about family names shows how close was the affinity between Hellenic and non-Hellenic worlds in Herodotus's background.

By the time Herodotus was living in Halicarnassus, local inscriptions were written not in the Doric of the city's origins but in Ionian Greek, the Greek of Thales and other early scientists and philosophers. Although Herodotus himself wrote in the Ionic dialect, something in his Halicarnassian background may have given him a special admiration for the Doric, Spartan way of life. This admiration is often evident in *History of the Persian Wars,* as when the exiled Spartan king Demaratus cautions Xerxes that Spartan soldiers serve a master that they fear more than his subjects fear him, and that this master is law. This shift from Doric to Ionic dialect, together with the continuing Carian influence, indicates a kind of yeasty, cross-cultural society in which a young person of curiosity and intelligence would likely be exposed to new ideas that were springing up in conflict with the old.

Halicarnassus also had a complex history politically, and Herodotus's early life was lived in a time of dramatic change. In Herodotus's boyhood a series of Carian tyrants ruled Halicarnassus. Originally, Halicarnassus had been part of the Lydian Empire, but that empire was destroyed and absorbed by the Persians when Cyrus defeated Croesus in 540. From that time Halicarnassus paid tribute to the local Persian satrap. It is therefore not surprising, although it might seem so to the modern, untutored reader, that Herodotus begins his book with an account of how Croesus gained and then lost the throne of Lydia instead of an account



ΗΡΟΔΟΤΟΥ ΑΛΙΚΑΡΝΑΣΣΕΩΣ ΙΣΤΟΡΙΑ ΕΝ ΕΝΝΕΑ
ΤΜΗΜΑΣΙΝ, ΑΚΑΙ ΜΟΥΣΑΣ ΚΑΛΕΙ. ΙΣΤΟ
ΡΙΩΝ ΓΡΩΤΗ. ΚΑΛΕΙΩ.

μονόκωλος περίοδος. ὦι ἐλίνοι ὠλοῖς πρὸ ἐρμηνέως. ὅσις ἐστὶν.

ροδότου ἁλικαρνασσῆος ἱστορίης ἀπόδειξις ἥδε, ὡς μήτε τὰ γενόμενα ὑπ' ἀνθρώπων τῷ χρόνῳ ἐξίτηλα γένηται, μήτε ἔργα μεγάλα τε, καὶ θωυμαστὰ, τὰ μὲν, Ἕλλησι, τὰ δὲ, βαρβάροισιν ἀποδεχθέντα, ἀκλεᾶ γένηται· τά τε ἄλλα, καὶ δι' ἣν αἰτίην ἐπολέμησαν ἀλλήλοισι· Πέρσεων μέν νυν οἱ λόγοι, Φοίνικάς φασι γενέσθαι τῆς διαφορῆς αἰτίους. τούτους γὰρ ἀπὸ τῆς Ἐρυθρῆς καλεομένης θαλάσσης ἀπικομένους ἐπὶ τήνδε τὴν θάλασσαν, καὶ οἰκήσαντας τὸν περ καὶ νῦν οἰκέουσι, αὐτίκα ναυτιλίῃσι μακρῇσιν ἐπιδραμεῖν. ἀποδεξαμένους δὲ φορτία αἰγύπτιά τε, καὶ ἀσσύρια, τῇ τε ἄλλῃ χώρῃ ἐσαπικνέεσθαι, καὶ δὴ καὶ ἐς Ἄργος. ἦν δὲ Ἄργος τοῦτον ἐν χρόνον, προεῖχε ἅπασι τῶν κατὰ τὴν νῦν Ἑλλάδα καλεομένην χώρην. ἀπικομένους δὲ τοὺς Φοίνικας ἐς δὴ τὸ Ἄργος τοῦτο, διατίθεσθαι τὰ φόρτια. ἐπεμπτάμηνον δὲ, μάλιστα, ἀπ' ἧς ἀπίκοντο, ὑπὲρ ἐμπολημάτων σφι σχεδὸν πάντων, ἐλθεῖν ἐπὶ τὴν θάλασσαν γυναῖκας, ἄλλας τε τοιάσδε, καὶ δὴ καὶ τοῦ βασιλέος θυγατέρα. τὴν δὲ οἱ ὄνομα εἶναι κατὰ τὠυτὸ, τὸ, καὶ Ἕλληνες λέγουσι, Ἰοῦν πρὸ Ἰνάχου· ταύτας στάσας κατὰ πρύμνην τῆς νηὸς, ὠνέεσθαι τῶν φορτίων, τῶν, σφι ἐν νόῳ θυμὸς μάλιστα· καὶ τοὺς Φοίνικας διακελευσαμένους ὁρμῆσαι ἐπ' αὐτάς, τὰς μὲν δὴ πολλὰς τῶν γυναικῶν, ἀποφυγούσας, πρὸς δὲ Ἰοῦν ἐν ἀλλήλῃσι ἁρπασθῆναι· ἐσβαλομένους δὲ ἐς πρὸ νέα, οἰχεσθαι ἀποπλέοντας ἐπ' Αἴγυπτον. οὕτω μὲν Ἰοῦν ἐς Αἴγυπτον ἀπικέσθαι λέγουσι Πέρσαι, οὐκ ὡς Φοίνικες· ἀπὸ τῶν ἁρπαγμάτων τοῦτο ἄρξαι πρῶτον. Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα, Ἑλλήνων τινὰς, οὐ γὰρ ἔχουσι τὰ οὐνόματα ἀποφαίνεσθαι, Φασὶ τοὺς Φοίνικας ἐς Τύρον προσχόντας, ἁρπάσαι τὴν βασιλέος θυγατέρα Εὐρώπην· εἶναι δ' ἂν οὗτοι κρῆτες· ταῦτα δὴ ἴσα σφι πρὸς ἴσα γενέσθαι· Μετὰ δὲ ταῦτα, Ἕλληνας αἰτίους τῆς δευτέρης ἀδικίης γενέσθαι· καταπλώσαντας γὰρ μακρῇ νηῒ ἐς Αἶάν τε πρὸ Κολχίδα, καὶ ἐς τὸν ποταμὸν, ἐνθεῦτεν διαπρηξαμένους καὶ τἆλλα, τῶν, εἵνεκεν ἀπίκοντο, ἁρπάσαι τὴν βασιλέος θυγατέρα Μηδείην· πέμψαντα δὲ τὸν Κόλχων βασιλέα ἐς πρὸ Ἑλλάδα κήρυκα, αἰτέειν τε δίκας τῆς ἁρπαγῆς, καὶ ἀπαιτέειν πρὸ θυγατέρα· τοὺς δὲ, ὑποκρίνασθαι, ὡς οὐδὲ ἐκεῖνοι ἴσα τῆσι ἁρπαγῆσι ἔδοσάν σφι δίκας τῆσι ἁρπαγῆς, ὀδὲ ὧν αὐτοὶ δώσειν ἐκείνοισι· Δευτέρῃ δὲ λέγουσι γενεῇ μετὰ ταῦτα, Ἀλέξανδρον τὸν Πριάμου ἀκηκοότα ταῦτα, ἐθελῆσαί οἱ ἐκ τῆς Ἑλλάδος διὰ ἁρπαγῆς γυναῖκα, ἐπιστάμενον πάντως, ὅτι οὐ δώσει δίκας, ἴσα γὰρ ἐκείνας δεδόναι. οὕτω δὴ ἁρπάσαντος αὐτοῦ Ἑλένην, τοῖσι Ἕλλησι δόξαι πρῶτον πέμψαντας ἀγγέλους, ἀπαιτέειν τε Ἑλένην, καὶ δίκας τῆς ἁρπαγῆς αἰτέειν· τοὺς δὲ, προϊσχομένων ταῦτα, προφέρειν σφι Μηδείης τὴν ἁρπαγὴν, ὡς οὐδόντες αὐτοὶ δίκας, οὐδὲ ἐκδόντες, ἀπαιτέοντων, βουλοίατό σφι παρ' ἄλλων δίκας γίνεσθαι; μέχρι μὲν ὦν τούτων, ἁρπαγὰς μούνας εἶναι παρ' ἀλλήλων· τὸν δὲ ἀπὸ τούτου, Ἕλληνας δὴ μεγάλως αἰτίους γενέσθαι. πρότερος γὰρ αὐτῶν στρατεύσαι ἐς τὴν Ἀσίην, ἢ σφέας ἐς τὴν Εὐρώπην· Τὸ μέν νυν ἁρπάζειν γυναῖκας, ἀνδρῶν ἀλίκων ἔργον οὐ νομίζειν εἶναι· τὰς δὲ ἁρπασθείσας, σπουδὴν ποιήσασθαι τιμωρέειν, ἀνοήτων· τοὺς δὲ μηδεμίην ὥρην ἔχειν ἁρπασθείσας, σοφόν· ἦλπα γὰρ δή, ὅτι εἰ μὴ αὐτῶν ἐβουλέατο, οὐκ ἂν ἁρπάζοντο· σφέας μὲν δὴ τοὺς ἐκ τῆς Ἀσίης λέγουσι Πέρσαι, ἁρπαζομένων τῶν γυναικῶν, λόγον οὐδένα ποιήσασθαι· Ἕλληνας δὲ, Λακεδαιμονίης εἵνεκεν γυναικὸς, στόλον μέγαν συναγεῖραι. ἧκέ τε ἐλθόντας ἐς τὴν Ἀσίην, τὴν Πριάμου δύναμιν κατιδεῖν. ἀπὸ τούτου τὰ εἰκὸς ἡγήσασθαι τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν σφίσι εἶναι πολέμιον· τὴν γὰρ Ἀσίην, καὶ τὰ ἐνοικέοντα ἔθνεα βάρβαρα, οἰκηιοῦνται οἱ Πέρσαι· τὴν δὲ Εὐρώπην, καὶ τὸ Ἑλληνικὸν, ἤγηνται κεχωρίσθαι· οὕτω μὲν Πέρσαι λέγουσι γενέσθαι. καὶ ἐς τὴν Ἰλίου ἅλωσιν δυείσκουσι σφίσιν ἐοῦσαν τὴν ἀρχὴν τῆς ἔχθρης τῆς ἐς τοὺς Ἕλληνας· περὶ δὲ τῆς Ἰοῦς οὐκ ὁμολογέουσι Πέρσῃσιν οὕτω Φοίνικες· ἀγνοέουσι γὰρ ἁρπαγῇ σφέας χρησαμένους λέγουσιν ἄγειν αὐτὴν ἐς Αἴγυπτον, ἀλλ' ὡς εἰκὸς τῷ ναυκλήρῳ τῆς νηὸς, ἐπεὶ δὲ ἔμαθεν ἔγκυος ἐοῦσα, αἰδεσθεῖσα τοὺς τοκέας, οὕτω δὴ ἐθελοντὴν αὐτὴν τοῖσι Φοίνι-

ΑΑ AA ii

First page of the editio princeps (1502) of Herodotus's History of the Persian Wars *(courtesy of the Lilly Library, Indiana University)*

of the early histories of Athens, Sparta, and Persia. Herodotus's ancestors had presumably been Lydian subjects and his father technically a Persian subject. Thus, for Herodotus the connection between Lydia, Persia, and Hellas was already embodied in the experience of his native city.

The reader of book 1 of *History of the Persian Wars* sees that even though Herodotus begins with Lydia, he manages a flash-forward introduction to the Spartans and Athenians, which is seamlessly embedded in the story of Croesus. Croesus rewards the Delphic oracle for the accuracy of its prophecies and asks whether he should attack Persia across the river Halys (today the Kizil Irmak in Turkey). The oracle makes its famous riddling reply that by crossing the Halys the Lydian will destroy a great nation; it also tells him to ally himself with "the most powerful of the Greeks." Croesus then learns that the most powerful of the Greeks are the Spartans and the Athenians, and Herodotus takes this opportunity – in the guise of what Croesus learns – to tell characteristically symptomatic anecdotes about Athens and Sparta. Strife and party politics characterize the Athenians. There is a glimpse of the wiliness of the tyrant Peisistratus, who promotes himself by the use of a tall girl dressed as the goddess Athena, and also a glimpse of the gullibility of the Athenians (despite their wide reputation for good sense, says Herodotus with tongue in cheek) in their being taken in by the ruse. Sparta, on the other hand, appears as constantly at war with her neighbors but also constantly hampered by excessive religiosity and superstition, in this case the need to retrieve "the bones of Orestes" in order to prevail in battle. Then Herodotus turns back to the story of Croesus, who decides to ally himself with Sparta. Ironically, however, by the time Spartan assistance arrives (the Spartans are always late in *History of the Persian Wars*), Croesus is already Cyrus's captive. Then, in typical nonlinear fashion, Herodotus turns back to inquire "who this Cyrus was who had just conquered Croesus." Surely similar questions were asked at the time in the tavernas of Herodotus's native Halicarnassus.

The victory of Cyrus over Croesus had consequences for Halicarnassus, but beyond its political consequences this military victory provoked astonishment because it was so unexpected. In fact, it seems to have suggested to Herodotus a major motif for his book. Croesus was the archetypal rich, good man, whose enormous wealth and munificent piety at Greek religious shrines, especially Delphi, commended him to the Hellenic imagination. The Lydians were culturally and linguistically close to the Greeks, whereas Cyrus, by contrast, at least in Herodotus's telling, was a savage primitive from the steppes of Asia. Herodotus goes out of his way in his account of early Persian customs to paint the Persians as noble primitives who teach their sons three things and three things only: to ride a horse, to shoot with bow and arrow, and to tell the truth. The demise of Croesus thus falls into the pattern of the confident, feckless tyrant, enervated by luxury, who is destroyed by the noble savage, whose poverty sharpens his fighting spirit. When Herodotus comes to tell the story of the later Persian Empire, he sees this pattern repeating itself, as the noble savage Persian becomes corrupted by conquered wealth and himself plays the role of the confident tyrant. Just so, Cyrus falls before the savage Massagete queen Tomyris; Cambyses falls before the Ethiopians; and Darius falls before the Scythians. Xerxes and the noble savage Hellenes thus supply the last link in this chain.

The account of the Persian attacks on Greece occupies books 6 through 9 of *History of the Persian Wars,* or about a third of the whole work. In 490 the Persian king Darius sought to punish Athens for her role in supporting the revolt from Persia of the Ionian cities on the coast of Asia Minor. He sent a force by sea, which landed on the beach at Marathon, north of Athens, and there the Persian force met an unexpected defeat at the hands of the Athenians and Plataeans. The Spartans had pledged support but were detained by a religious festival and missed the battle. The Hellenic victory, under the leadership of the Athenian general Miltiades the Younger, was as glorious as it was surprising. The Persians, lacking their cavalry for some reason, were crushed by the Athenian hoplites, who advanced at speed across the plain under a rain of Persian arrows. Though the numbers Herodotus gives are clearly exaggerated, the Persians lost many thousands. The Athenian losses stood at 192, a number that became enshrined in memory; as a special honor the Athenian soldiers were buried on the battlefield in a mound that has been excavated and reconstructed and can be seen today.

Ten years later the Persian king Xerxes, son of Darius, returned to Greece in person with an enormous land and sea army, perhaps as many as one hundred thousand men and one thousand ships, to wreak vengeance for his father's defeat. The Persians annihilated a Spartan rear guard of three hundred hoplites under Leonidas at Thermopylae and overmastered an allied fleet at Artemesium. Thermopylae, although technically a defeat, gave the Spartans at least a noble gesture to match that of Athens at Marathon. Athens was abandoned

to the Persian invaders, but an allied fleet, thanks to the wiliness of the Athenian Themistocles, neutralized the Persians near the island of Salamis, within sight of the Athenian acropolis. Xerxes retired to Asia, and in the following year, 489, the Hellenes outlasted the Persians at the long and confusing battle of Plataea. Herodotus's book ends, perhaps appropriately, with scattered references to Greek counterattacks against the Persians, events of the 430s. Herodotus here also recounts the conflict between Spartan conservatism and Athenian aggressiveness as leader of the Delian League, a conflict that was soon to ripen into the Peloponnesian War – to be chronicled by Herodotus's somewhat younger successor, Thucydides.

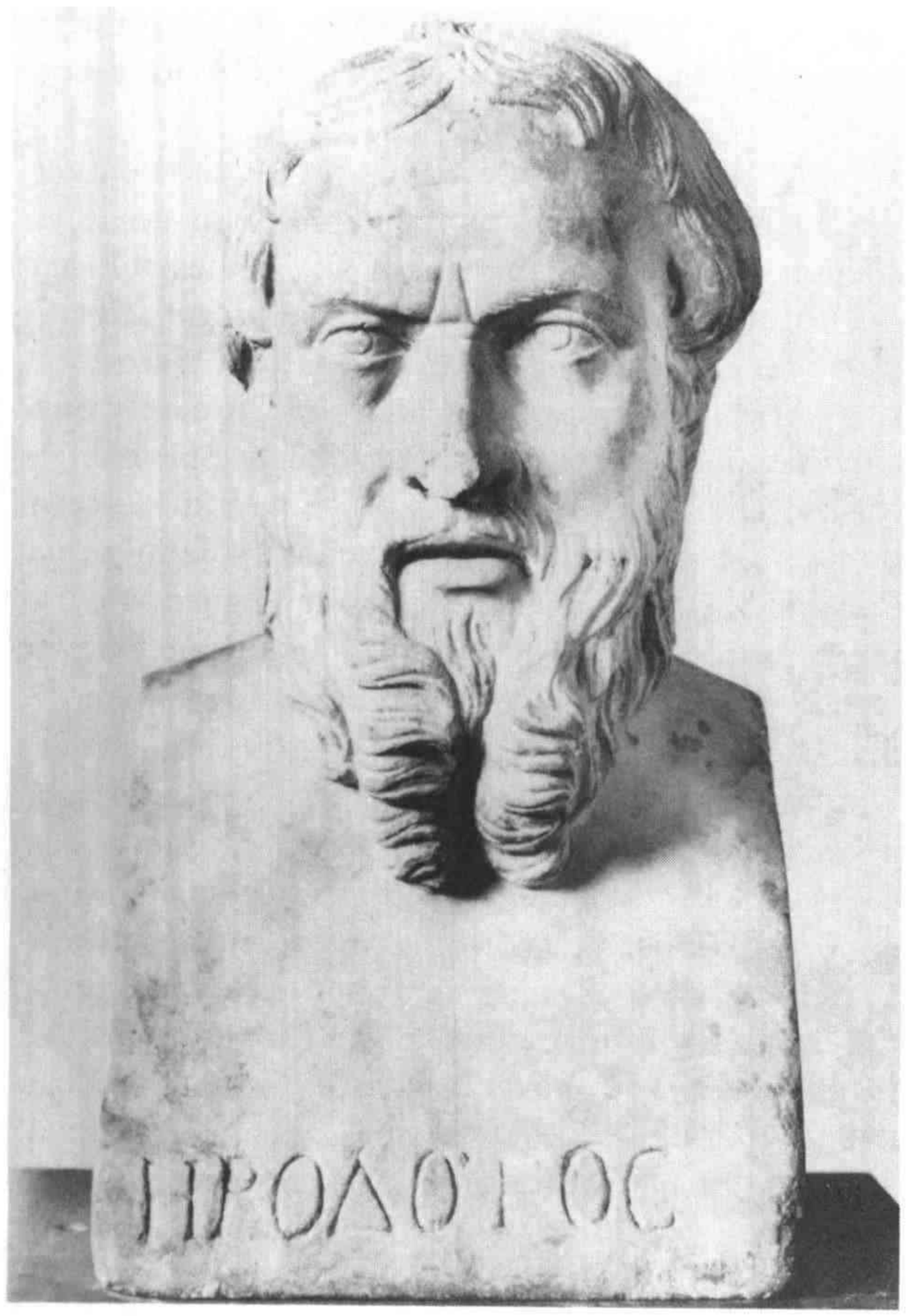
At the time of the Persian Wars a Carian princess, Artemisia, ruled Halicarnassus, and in the pages of Herodotus she plays a signal role in the battle of Salamis, fighting bravely and cleverly on the Persian side and prompting Xerxes to say: "My men have become women and my women men" (8.88). It was with the grandson of this Artemisia, the tyrant Lygdamis, that Herodotus is later supposed to have had difficulties. Here, as with the details of Herodotus's parentage, one has to deal with a body of late, anecdotal biographical snippets. Many of these come from a Byzantine encyclopedia called the *Suda,* but none is of any great intrinsic historical reliability, and all must be treated with caution. Greeks of the classical period were incurious about the private lives of their literary figures, so later ages often had to invent lives for them, sometimes based on extrapolations from their texts but sometimes based on nothing more than the desire to tell a colorful story. Consequently, some of the information about Herodotus may be of value precisely where it is not an obvious extrapolation of his text and where it is not merely picturesque. Thus, useful biographical information may be extracted even from a doubtful tradition.

There seems no reason to doubt Herodotus's birth in Halicarnassus, but his father's Carian name seems a bit less certain. There was an anti-Herodotean tradition in antiquity that saw him as a traitorous "barbarian lover." Plutarch, for example, wrote an essay, "On the Malice of Herodotus," defending his native Thebes against the historian's charge that Thebes fought on the wrong side in the Persian Wars. One can well imagine Plutarch or some Boeotian like him relishing the news that Herodotus was not only a barbarian lover but a barbarian himself. On the other hand, the specific and convincing Carian name and the lack of pejorative adornment, indeed the closely conjoined notice that the historian was "of good family," lend credence to the information that Herodotus had a father with a non-Greek name.

Allied to the name of his father in the anecdotal Herodotus legend is the name of his uncle (or cousin), Panyassis. Panyassis is a firmly established historical figure, author of a once well-regarded epic poem on Heracles (a hero-god in whom Herodotus had a special interest), of which unfortunately only a few fragments survive. His exact dates, probably a little earlier than the dates of Herodotus, are in doubt, and one might be suspicious of a family relationship alleged between two literary figures alive at the same place and roughly the same time. But the legend continues in such a way as to strengthen the link between the two men. In the early fifth century Panyassis was put to death by the tyrant Lygdamis, grandson of Artemisia. This assassination or execution, the sources relate, caused Herodotus to go into exile in Samos. From this exile he returned and somehow aided in bringing about the expulsion of the hated Lygdamis at some time around 455. An inscription of 454 shows Halicarnassus as a modest, tribute-paying member of the Delian League of Greek cities against Persia; it also shows some form of moderate democracy in existence. So Halicarnassus in about a hundred years ran an amazing gamut from Lydian to Persian to Greek, from tributary to independent status, and from tyranny to democracy – all of which provided an ample field of study for a man with the interests that Herodotus proved to have. Herodotus sets a series of speeches in praise of democracy, oligarchy, and monarchy (rather improbably, as scholars have complained) at the Persian court prior to the accession of Darius; yet these are issues that Herodotus might well have heard debated in Halicarnassus.

The astonishing thing about the Herodotus legend is that just at this point, with family difficulties and political difficulties settled, when one would think the historian could have settled down to live out his life untroubled in his homeland, he left – apparently forever. Of Herodotus's travels to Egypt, Tyre, Babylon, Scythia, and southern Italy, however, the Herodotus legend has surprisingly nothing to say. And yet the legend merits at least some belief precisely because it does not dwell on the obvious conclusion that one would draw about him from his text – that he was a world traveler.

The travels of Herodotus have attracted much scrutiny, and he has occasionally been accused of exaggerating their extent. Certainly, an aura of mystery surrounds these travels, because it is not known why Herodotus undertook them at all, other



Bust of Herodotus found in Benha (ancient Athritis), Egypt (Metropolitan Museum, New York, 91.8)

than, perhaps, simply to satisfy his curiosity. Herodotus only rarely reveals his motives for travel, saying, for example, that he went to Tyre because he heard that there was an interesting temple of Heracles there. One might look for comparison to the motives Herodotus attributed to other travelers. To Solon's travels he attributed the motive of *philosophiê,* the first occurrence in Greek literature of a word that Plato later used to mean "philosophy" in what became the principal sense of that word but that here means only "love of knowledge." Herodotus's Arion, the famous harpist, goes to *Magna Graecia* to make his fortune and does so (whether by art or commerce is not clear), meeting with cruel pirates and, luckily, a helpful dolphin on his return journey. In modern times it has been suggested that Herodotus himself was a merchant, and the idea is an attractive one.

Herodotus showed considerable interest in merchants, calling some of them by name and demonstrating a knowledge of raw and manufactured products, trade routes, and navigable rivers. That Herodotus could have made a living from recitations of his prose appears to be a fantasy of some in later antiquity who were puzzled by the question of how Herodotus supported himself. Plutarch mentions, for example, that the Athenians awarded Herodotus ten talents for his prose recitations, an improbably large sum. The reward is unlikely, anyway, because, while Herodotus had some good things to say about Athens, he had much more to say that was unfavorable. Surely when Herodotus traveled, he went – in the obvious absence of any public transport – on a merchant ship, going down to the harbor, as Arion did, and bargaining with the merchant sailors of a vessel heading in the direction of his destination. Indeed, the Arion story presents what must have been one of Herodotus's own nightmares, that of a lone person traveling with cash on a strange ship and fearful of the sailors' greed.

A timid traveler in fact, Herodotus never explored territories unknown to the Hellenes. With rare exceptions, such as his trip up the Nile to Elephantine, he stuck to the Mediterranean coastal region. Even in Egypt, Greek mercenaries went further than Herodotus, to Abu Simbel, before Herodotus was born. He appears to have known no language but Greek and thus had to depend for his information on local Greek-speaking dragomans and the Greek merchants who were his traveling companions. Given Herodotus's close association with traders, a group of which otherwise little is known, it is interesting that Herodotus does not look for the economic motives for warfare; for him it is usually a rich nation that attacks a poor one, frequently out of sheer wickedness, not a desire to master trade routes or secure new markets. Why Herodotus uprooted himself from Halicarnassus in the first place remains a mystery, one all the more puzzling in light of the fact that ancient Mediterranean culture required that an individual have not just a source of income but an *oikos,* or home, which meant not just a physical dwelling place but a spiritual identity and a multigenerational family that gathered at a sacred hearth. It is difficult to explain how Herodotus managed to survive and to record his accounts without these associations.

Herodotus in his *History of the Persian Wars* is always interested in the superlative facts about things – the biggest and smallest, the oldest and youngest, the coldest and hottest, and the furthest distance known on every point of the compass. In this sense his book, aside from its historical narrative, aspires to be a kind of universal compendium of knowledge. In Egypt Herodotus found both a land of extremes and also a civilization with some pretensions of being the oldest. It is therefore not surprising that

Herodotus prolongs his digression on the customs and history of Egypt to fill all of book 2, much to the delight of Egyptologists and the frustration of some other readers.

Throughout Herodotus's account of foreign peoples, he writes as a Greek but has a curious, internationalist's lack of bias and is as ready to praise the so-called barbarians as he is to criticize his fellow Greeks. In fact, he seems to take particular delight in identifying barbarian customs as more rational and civilized than Greek ones. On the other hand, his travels gave him a respect for the varieties of human experience and the right – indeed the obligation – of each race to pursue its own mores. A key concept for Herodotus is that of *nomos,* meaning variously "law" or "custom" and "geographical boundary." Herodotus gives special importance to rivers and other natural boundaries and to those who seek to transgress these boundaries, such as Croesus in attacking Cyrus or Xerxes in attacking Hellas; they do so with disastrous results.

It was perhaps from Herodotus's travels that his notion emerged of the role of divine providence in human affairs, as well as in the natural world. This divinity is somehow "wise" in the sense that it erects proper ethical and geographical boundaries and punishes those who transgress them. It creates checks and balances in nature by ordaining, for example, that the timorous hare will have many progeny and the fierce lion few. This divinity, however, also appears as inscrutable and often even hostile to mankind. This God – to whom the otherwise polytheistic Herodotus often refers in the singular – proves "jealous and meddlesome," one who "having given man a taste of sweetness is proven jealous in this very gift." Throughout *History of the Persian Wars,* however, it appears that though there is a kind of malign fate lurking in the background, man is responsible for his own sufferings, largely through his unpredictable and ungovernable passions. Thus, unlike Thucydides, Herodotus does not believe that comprehensible abstract forces govern human life, but rather that, as he has Solon tell Croesus: "Man's life is all accident."

Herodotus clearly visited Athens, probably sometime after the middle of the fifth century, but he gives no unified account of Athens's marvels, as he does, for example, of Samos or Babylon. How long he stayed in Athens is not known. Scholars have dwelt on Herodotus's Athenian sojourn out of all proportion to the evidence for it and to its significance in his life and work. The nineteenth century saw Herodotus as a simpleton who needed Athens, and especially the tragic theater of Sophocles, to inspire him with a worldview. The evidence for friendship with Sophocles rests only on a doubtful similarity between a passage in *Antigone* (circa 441 B.C.) and Herodotus's account of the wife of Intaphernes in book 3 and on a supposedly Sophoclean ode to the historian that, even if genuine, could be to a different Herodotus, a common enough name. It was once thought that Herodotus belonged to an alleged "Circle of Pericles," but of Pericles himself Herodotus tells nothing beyond his name and birth. Current scholarship measures the sophistication of Herodotus favorably against the conservative provincialism of Athens.

Of all the places visited by Herodotus none was more important to the writing of his book than Delphi, to which he made scores of references throughout his text. Delphi possessed a collection of offerings from both Hellenes and "barbarians" across the Mediterranean and from the earliest times, when a bunch of iron spits was a precious gift to Apollo, to the latter days that brought the gold and silver of Croesus. Other than Egypt, there are more references in Herodotus to Delphi – its monuments, its oracle, its history – than to any other single place, and these references are scattered uniformly through the text. It may have been first at Delphi that Herodotus heard many of the stories he relates; it may even have been there that he first conceived the notion of writing his book. Delphi's sacred way stood as a testimony to the vanity of human wishes, with its dedications testifying to the small cities that had become great and the great cities that had become small. The physical monuments there, those about which stories were told, tended to create and fix an oral tradition, and many of the stories Herodotus tells he may first have heard as explanations of some monument at Delphi. The survival of monuments from the past also provided Herodotus with an important criterion for distinguishing between myth and actual history, and he often closes an account with a mention of some monument dedicated by one of the protagonists of his story, usually at Delphi. Herodotus's achievement in discovering such a criterion cannot be underestimated, especially in a culture that did not usually make a careful distinction between fact and fiction.

The date of Herodotus's death is unknown. The latest event he mentions is the murder of Athenian ambassadors by the Thracian king Sitalkes. Thucydides describes this event as well, so it can be dated precisely to 430 B.C. There is no reason not to suppose that Herodotus lived into his sixties and seventies and witnessed the events of the Peloponnesian War between Athens and Sparta

(but probably not its conclusion and Athens' defeat in 404). There is some indication that the Peloponnesian War implicitly colored Herodotus's view of previous events, but there is no way of knowing exactly how long he lived or how long he continued to work on his history.

The ancient anecdotal tradition related that Herodotus died at Thurii, where his tomb was on view in the agora. Thurii was a Panhellenic colony sponsored by Athens. Hippodamus of Miletus is supposed to have designed the city, and Protagoras supposedly wrote its laws. Unfortunately, Herodotus never mentions Thurii in *History of the Persian Wars,* though he says a good deal about neighboring Sybaris, but he may indeed have spent time there and even become a citizen. Herodotus's death at Thurii could, on the other hand, be no more than an ancient erudite conjecture based on the reading of some manuscripts of the proem (which may in any case have been added by an ancient editor), because another grave is mentioned at Pella in Macedonia. Nevertheless, it would indeed seem fitting if Herodotus were born and died on opposite sides of the Mediterranean world known to the Hellenes.

Herodotus's literary achievement is hard to assess or even to characterize. From a modern perspective his book seems a patchwork of different genres. Some of this variety in texture may be attributed to Herodotus's status halfway between the predominance of oral and written texts. *History of the Persian Wars* is clearly not the verbatim transcript of a performance or recitation, however; it is much too long. It is not known when Herodotus's book came before a public, and it would be anachronistic to speak of its "publication" in any modern sense. That Herodotus wrote it all out, however, at a time when serious readers were few and book production was nonexistent, shows that in the act of "publishing" his book he was making a bold appeal to posterity. *History of the Persian Wars* incorporates lively anecdotes, great narrative tableaux, ethnographic descriptions, and rousing speeches. Indeed, Herodotus is often read only in pieces by experts looking to find Herodotean authority for their own interests; but what emerges from a reading of the whole work is a sense of a writer who always wants to keep his audience off balance. Herodotus's tale is complex in that his barbarian tyrants are not all cruel monsters; they are often quite sympathetic and even tragic, and none is more so than Xerxes. Despite a light surface tone in his book, a tone easily mistaken for triviality, Herodotus possessed a deep and heartfelt anguish about the human condition, the mystery of God, and the inability of human wisdom to avert disaster.

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Hesiod

(Traditional date: eighth century B.C.)

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MAJOR WORKS – EXTANT: *Theogony;*
Works and Days;
Shield of Heracles (questionable authorship).

MAJOR WORKS – FRAGMENTARY and of QUESTIONABLE AUTHORSHIP: *Catalogue of Women* (or *Ehoiai*) [extensively preserved].

MAJOR WORKS – FRAGMENTARY and of QUESTIONABLE AUTHORSHIP:
Aigimios (also attributed to one Kerkops);
Astronomy;
Descent of Perithous;
Great Works;
Great Ehoiai;
Idaean Dactyls;
Melampodia;
Precepts of Cheiron;
Wedding of Keyx.

Editio princeps: *Haec insuntin hoc libro. Theocriti Eclogae triginta. . . . Hesiodi Theogonia eiusdem scutum Herculis, eiusdem georgicon libri duo,* edited by Aldus Manutius (Venice: Aldus Manutius, 1495).

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It was a Boeotian peasant of the eighth century B.C. who wrote the earliest surviving systematic account of the gods of the Greeks – the *Theogony* – as well as the only surviving archaic Greek poem on farming – the *Works and Days*. This is the received opinion, improbable and folkloric though it might appear to be, going back at least to Hellenistic Alexandria and repeated with appropriate qualifications and evasive gestures ever since. This Boeotian poet called himself "Hesiod," a name unique to him, one that may be etymologized "he who emits the voice," according to Gregory Nagy. As such, the name looks more like an honorific and descriptive epithet than a given name in the usual sense. A wide range of poems beyond the *Theogony* and the *Works and Days* was attributed in antiquity to Hesiod, but in fact there is little reason to think either that modern scholarship is in a position to define the limits of the oeuvre of Hesiod (or any other Greek poet before the fifth century B.C.) or that the Alexandrian scholars who catalogued the preserved Greek literature that lay before them were much better situated to do so. This difficulty, for predecessors as for contemporary scholars, arises out of the complex relationship of the poetic traditions in question with

*Hesiod; fourth-century-*A.D. *mosaic by Monnus (Museum of Trier)*

preliterate, oral traditions, in which any ideas of authorship that may have existed had, presumably, little to do with later and current understandings of the generation of texts.

In archaic Greece the poets themselves invented nearly everything that can be said about their lives, and what they forgot to invent, their biographers invented. Homer, Hesiod, Orpheus, Musaeus, and even Archilochus, Anacreon, and Theognis were masks – personae – developed as the more-or-less individualized speakers of distinct traditions of poetry. Some of these fictive speakers (Homer and Musaeus, as far as one can tell) preferred to remain anonymous. Others flooded the listener – eventually the reader – with autobiographical fictions, whether fabulous (as in the case of Orpheus, perhaps), or down-to-earth (as in the case of Hesiod, Archilochus, and Theognis). At some point – perhaps in the time of the sixth-century tyrants – real, flesh-and-blood, individual poets learned to imitate these collective creations of the earlier poetic traditions, and by the time of Pindar, Greek poetry had made the transition from collective to individual composition. Pindar's persona – that pretentious wielder of the "big bass drum," in the words of Ezra Pound – was unique to the historical Pindar himself. That is, it was mortal: it ceased to be productive and died, for all practical purposes, with its creator. There is very good reason to believe that this was not true of any of the earlier "poets" listed above.

What can be said, then, of Hesiod's life? What the poems tell can be repeated – though to confuse any of their information with historical fact would be credulous in the extreme – and what the ancient biographies relate can be repeated, although their so-called facts are simply metafictions, building on the fabrications in the poems themselves with, here and there, an admixture of local traditions or pure, often moralizing, invention. But these sobering facts do not vitiate the enterprise, inasmuch as Hesiod, the rustic bard who tended sheep on Mount Helicon until he was initiated into the art of poetry by the Heliconian Muses, is – along with Orpheus, who charmed the rocks and trees and *nearly* sang his wife back out of the other world – one of the two exquisite, individualized fictions through which the earliest preserved European traditions of poetry invented their singers. The Boeotian shepherd-poet who asserted his right to tell kings about justice and sing the seasons and the generations of the gods is in a sense the ironic, sometimes even bathetic counterpart of the Thracian bard who asserts his power over nature and even death. The anonymous, omniscient Homeric narrator constitutes the background and the foil for these developments, and the increasingly urban, socialized (though sometimes antisocial) personae of Archilochus, Anacreon, and Theognis, bound more and more visibly to the distinctively Greek institution of the symposium, are the successors who complete the range of archaic Greek poetic speakers. But Homer's blind mask is aloof, an antecedent of individualization, and those symposiac personae are somehow "merely Greek" (as Friedrich Nietzsche wrote of Robert Schumann that he was "merely German"). It is Hesiod and Orpheus who embody the Greek invention of the European poetic voice in all its pretention and generality.

The individualized rustic bard belongs primarily to the dramatic monologue of the *Works and Days,* though he is clearly the speaker as well of at least the opening fifteen lines (the proem) of the *Theogony,* and it is only in that work that he names himself. Though there was no consensus in antiquity as to what poetry was Hesiodic and what was not – and Pausanias, the second-century A.D. traveler, reports the hardly self-interested minimalist claim of the locals

near the shrine of Hesiod's Muses in western Boeotia that Hesiod "himself" wrote *only* the *Works and Days,* minus the proem – these two poems may be taken as a mutually complementary sequence in the presentation of the Hesiodic autobiography.

The relationship between the two poems is generally said to be indicated by the opening lines (not counting the ten-line proem) of the *Works and Days:* "So there was not one single race of Strifes – instead, / there are two in this world." Even the unexpected past tense of the first verb reinforces the notion that the speaker is looking backward to some previous formulation (not, of course, that it need be his own), and *Theogony* 225 provides what looks like a more traditional and commonsensically monadic Strife, one of Night's nasty daughters, who in turn gives birth to a long list of the ills that beset mankind. The *Works and Days,* in this reading, starts with a correction of the *Theogony* and is therefore secondary to it (and it is worth noting at this point that Strife is a central and compelling figure in the architecture of the *Shield of Heracles* as well, providing a bit of albeit weak adhesive to bind that poem into the corpus).

It is the *Theogony* that presents the richer, more memorable account of the shepherd bard and his initiation into poetry, even if that persona might seem to have little relevance to the properly theogonic part of the poem, beyond the long proem. Here, in a complex hymn to the Muses, the poet begins by evoking a series of Heliconian places, all of which are endowed with meaning by the comings and goings of the Muses themselves – they dance around the summit and the altar of Zeus, they wash in the streams Permessos and Olmeios and in the spring Hippocrene, and starting from this valley they go off to sing the praises of Zeus and the other Olympians, as well as the Titans and Night:

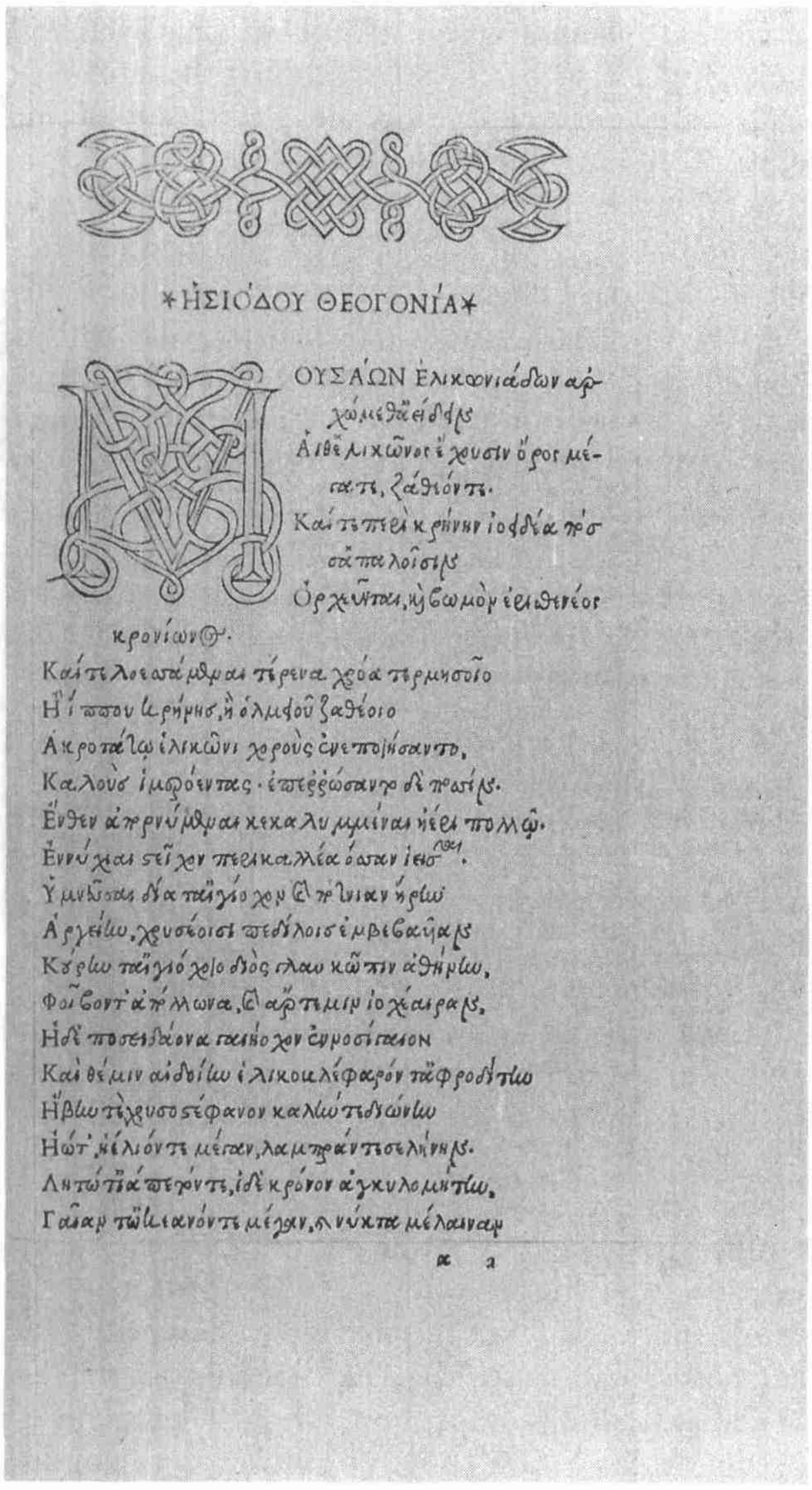
> These are the ones who once taught Hesiod beautiful song
> when he was tending sheep under holy Helicon.
> This is the first thing the goddesses told me,
> the Olympian Muses, daughters of Aegis-bearing Zeus:
> Shepherds who sleep on the ground, losers, nothing but
> stomachs,
> we know how to tell many lies that resemble the truth,
> and when we want to, we can tell the truth, too.

From its first evocation, the persona is bathetic. The Muses are sublime; the shepherds, at the other end of the scale of beings, are reduced to incarnate appetites, or worse, greedy flesh. But the Muses' insults are the ritual prelude to gift giving. They bestow upon Hesiod a scepter of laurel and breathe into him "a prophetic / voice, so I might sing what will be and what has been" before ending the exchange with an injunction to sing the generation of the gods, celebrating the Muses themselves at the beginning and the end of the performance. The power thus imparted is communicated in the identical formulaic language used to celebrate that of the Homeric seer Calchas, "who knew what is, what will be and what has been" (*Iliad,* eighth century B.C.). It is a power analogous to that of the Homeric singer and to that claimed by his Sirens in the *Odyssey* (eighth century B.C.). From this point in the proem of the *Theogony* the speaker is silent about himself, though his continued dialogue with the Muses whose praises he sings as prelude and precedent for his poem sustains the fiction that this is still their initiate who is speaking.

The *Works and Days* likewise opens with a hymn to Zeus and the Muses, this time with the epithet "Pierian" rather than "Heliconian" (something that might explain why the copy of the poem Pausanias was shown on Helicon lacked the lines). This proem, in contrast to that of the *Theogony,* is stamped with the seal of Hesiodic authorship only at the end, abruptly, and in a manner that demands further elucidation as the poem proceeds: "Hearken, [Zeus,] watch and listen – and with justice set judgments / straight! I, meanwhile, shall straighten out Perses." The "correction" of the *Theogony* on the genealogy of Strife follows, and a distinction is drawn between "bad" strife, associated with war and battle, and the strife that is "good for mortals" – one might call it "competition," though "emulation" or simply "ambition" might be closer to the point. This is the first injunction of this still anonymous speaker to his feckless brother Perses: Forget the strife of the agora and the lawcourt – until your barn is full, you can not afford the luxury:

> But come, let us get our dispute settled
> with a just judgment – they're the best and come from Zeus.
> We already divided up our inheritance, but you grabbed
> most of it and kept it, fawning on those bribe-eating lords
> who were willing to pass judgment in the matter.

Their situation, then, is quite clearly delineated and at the same time unremarkable to the point of credibility. Perses has cheated his brother and taken a disproportionate share of their patrimony. One purpose of this poetic apostrophe to Perses is to "set him straight" on that score. The issues at stake, however, go far beyond the scale of this domestic squabble. Hesiod – and one may as well give the anonymous speaker that name, since the developing situation makes it clear that he (or this persona) is


ΗΣΙΟΔΟΥ ΘΕΟΓΟΝΙΑ

ΟΥΣΑΩΝ Ἑλικωνιάδων ἀρχώμεθα θεὶ δήρ
Ἀιθ ἐλικῶνος ἔχουσιν ὄρος μέγα τε, ζάθεόν τε.
Καί τε περὶ κρήνην ἰοειδέα πόσ σὰ παλοῖσιν
Ὀρχεῦνται, ἠδ ὠμὸν ἐρι σθενέος κρονίωνος.
Καί τε λοε σάμεναι τέρενα χρόα τερμησσῆο
Ἢ ἵππου ἑρήμης, ἢ ὀλμοῦ ζαθέοιο
Ἀκροτάτῳ ἑλικῶνι χορούς ἐνεποίησαντο,
Καλούς ἱμερόεντας· ἐπερρώσαντο δὲ ποσίν.
Ἔνθεν ἀπορνύμεναι κεκαλυμμέναι ἠέρι πολλῷ.
Ἐννύχιαι στεῖχον περικαλλέα ὄσσαν ἱεῖσαι.
Ὑμνεῦσαι δ ἀπάγιόν χορὸν ἠδ ἱμερόεσσαν ἠρῶ
Ἀργείῃ, χρυσέοισι πεδήλοισι βεβηκυίᾳς
Κούρῃ πατρὸς ἐγιόχοιο διὸς γλαυκώπιδι θεῇ,
Φοίβην τ ἀπόλλωνα, καὶ ἄρτεμιν ἰοχέαιραν,
Ἠδ ἔποσειδάονα γαιήοχον ἐννοσίγαιον
Καὶ θέμιν αἰδοίην ἑλικοβλέφαρόν τε φερέσβην
Ἥβην τε χρυσοστέφανον καλήν τε Διώνην
Ἠῶ τ ἠέλιόν τε μέγαν, λαμπράν τε σελήνην.
Γαῖάν τ ὠκεανόν τε μέγαν, καὶ νύκτα μέλαιναν
α a

First page of Hesiod's Theogony, *from the editio princeps (1495)*

the same individual who described his initiation by the Muses in the *Theogony* proem – has a further reason (or excuse) for lecturing his brother. Perses, in spite of his success in cheating Hesiod with the help of the bribe-eating kings, is now broke and has come to his brother for a handout.

This bit of information is not supplied until halfway through the poem, but once supplied it illuminates the entire dramatic situation. Much of the content of the poem is gnomic – that is, it is made up of broad, sometimes proverbial, generalizations (*gnomai*) concerning human existence, its rights and wrongs, its limitations and shortcomings. In the realm of archaic Greek poetry, such utterances are not randomly allocated to all speakers. To impart such information to an interlocutor is the privilege of age, social rank, or some other sort of authority, such as that granted to seers and sages. To be on the receiving end of such discourse is to accept domination, to defer to power or privilege, to become, however provisionally, passive. In Homer's *Iliad,* a speaker (whether Nestor or Achilles) who addresses another in this way is asserting his dominance over that addressee, asserting his right to address him from a position of authority.

The autobiographical scenario set up in the *Works and Days* is thus integrally bound up in the nature of the poetry itself. Hesiod's tirade is both (as indirect address to the audience) the vehicle for the largely gnomic wisdom poetry that is the content of the tradition of Hesiodic song and, simultaneously, (as dramatic fiction) Hesiod's revenge on his feckless, devious brother. Perses is humiliated not just in the most obvious sense – he is addressed in formulas including the abusive word *nepios* (fool, sucker) three times. In fact, every line of the poem humiliates the mute addressee and further asserts the dominance of his brother. Hesiod has made good, in spite of Perses' cheating; Perses is a bum, in spite of having taken more than his share. Hesiod has Perses right where he wants him and lashes him with the consequences of his failure for eight hundred lines and more – it could have gone on forever.

It should be clear, at this point, that the poetry needs Perses. The persona that bears and speaks this wisdom poetry cannot address itself point-blank to its audience – that would generate a relationship between bard and audience that could not be sustained. Nobody wants to be humiliated. But witnessing the humiliation of another is quite a different story, and that is exactly the position in which the audience of the *Works and Days* is placed. The fictional exchange allows the audience to be exposed to, and to profit from, everything the Hesiodic tradition of song has to say about the necessity of hard work, about farming, about the relationship of wretched mankind to the gods, to the natural world, to necessity – and it allows the audience to do so without being subjected to that discourse. Rather, it is Perses who is subjected to it in place of the audience, which is allowed to savor the poet's triumph along with his brother's humiliation.

It is immediately clear that much of what is said to Perses is not intended for him. He does not need to be told about his failings, about the lawsuit. That is all for the external audience, shielded by Perses from the blast of Hesiod's tirade. The same is true, of course, of the rest. It is

the audience that is obliquely enjoined to work hard and to listen to the bard who can give the information that will render that work effective and profitable. The poem in effect makes explicit this generalizing injunction when, immediately in the wake of a particularly scathing and condescending order to Perses to make his choice between the path of virtue (*aretê*) and worthlessness (*kakotes*), the speaker continues in more neutral and less personal terms:

> The best man is the one who knows everything by himself
> and thinking it out brings about the best result.
> But also noble is he who takes the advice of one who speaks well.
> And whoever is ignorant himself, yet fails to heed the other
> and take the advice to heart, is utterly useless.

What is odd, though, is the degree to which this dramatic situation, so clearly a function of the poetic discourse itself, is individualized and localized. This happens primarily in the proem and in one of the oddest passages in the *Works and Days,* in which Hesiod gives his brother advice about seafaring. It is difficult, first of all, to imagine why a peasant in a dry, landlocked corner of western Boeotia needs to know about seafaring and maritime trade; but various arguments have been developed to mitigate the oddity of the inclusion of this advice in the poem. Hesiod presents himself as both inexperienced in seafaring and rather hostile to it as risky and dangerous – but with characteristic devaluation of experience in favor of traditional wisdom, he asserts his ability to lecture Perses on this matter by virtue of his training in the school of the Muses. He interrupts the instructions with two autobiographical anecdotes. "When the right time comes, Perses, drag your ship down to the sea and bring home profit (*kerdos*)," Hesiod enjoins, adding:

> just the way your father and mine, Perses you fool,
> used to sail, trying to find the good life –
> he ended up here after leaving Aiolian Kyme in a black ship
> and passing over a huge expanse of sea,
> no fugitive from ease or riches or luxury,
> but from the foul poverty that Zeus bestows on man.
> And he settled next to Helikon in a miserable village,
> Askra, bad in winter, awful in summer, and never any good.

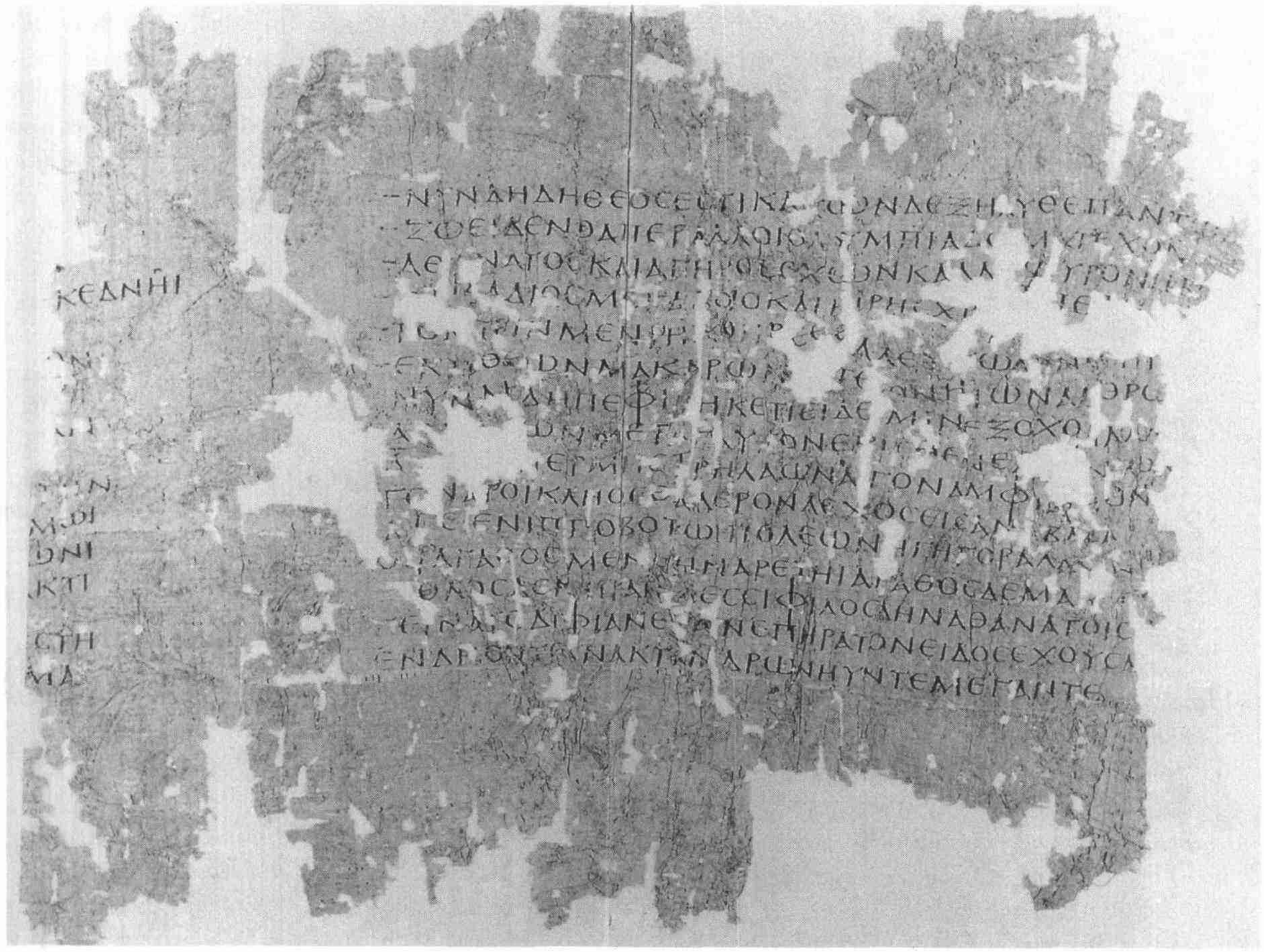
So, it seems, Perses is both a loser and the son of a loser. If the father ended up in Askra, and Askra was such as here described, then this nameless aspirant to status and wealth got little of that to which he aspired. The geographical specificity of the anecdote may be less confessional and more symbolic than appears at first glance, since Kyme (on the coast of Asia Minor north of Smyrna) would seem always to have been a rich and famous city, and so to provide an appropriate foil for wretched Askra. Listeners may also have savored the wordplay between the name of that city (*küme*) and the word translated "village" in the lines above (*kome*).

A few lines later the speaker (who of course has broken the paternal tradition of poverty by becoming a bard and going out into the world to compete for fame and profit) again interrupts the delivery of practical information to relate the story of his own single venture onto the deep – a journey his audience would recognize as a laughably short one:

> I myself have never gone sailing on the wide sea in a ship
> except from to Euboea from Aulis, where once the Achaeans
> gathered up a great host out of holy Hellas, to go against
> Troy of the beautiful women, and waited out the storms.
> Thence I set forth for the funeral games of brilliant Amphidamas
> in Khalkis. Vast prizes were announced,
> offered by his great-hearted sons. It is my boast
> that there I was victorious in song and carried off the eared tripod.
> That tripod I dedicated to the Helikonian Muses,
> there where they first brought sweet song upon me.

This is the passage that most securely binds the persona of the *Works and Days* to that of the *Theogony* proem. It has been suspected ever since antiquity. Plutarch dismissed it because he thought Hesiod's deliberate and ironic undercutting of his experience regarding seafaring to be trivializing. He must also have realized (as many modern critics have been quick to do) that this autobiographical boast served to guarantee the genuineness of a tripod proudly displayed in Plutarch's time by the priests of the Muses in the Heliconian shrine. The tripod in question may well have had a dedicatory poem specifying that Hesiod's victory at Khalkis had been over Homer (as an ancient marginal note and the *Contest of Homer and Hesiod,* a biographical romance of unknown authorship, assert). This would suggest that the passage is an interpolation, serving the interests of the priesthood and shrine of the Heliconian Muses, the institution that attached itself to the cultural property transmitted under Hesiod's name, serving both the poetry and themselves and in the process no doubt contributing – perhaps radically – to the formation of the Hesiodic canon as transmitted.

The information supplied by that canon regarding its singer stops here, with this idiosyncratic, highly specific, and equally suspect claim, where what may be taken to be one of the earliest biographical elaborations is articulated with the rest of the "autobiography" contained within the received text of the poems. The *Contest of Homer and Hesiod* is



Fragment of a third-century-A.D. papyrus text of Hesiod's Catalogue of Women *(Egypt Exploration Society, London)*

shown by a papyrus fragment to have existed in the early Hellenistic period, and most scholars believe it to have much older antecedents. As an exercise in literary-critical fiction, it requires only the existence of the two bodies of poetry, the Homeric and the Hesiodic, and so might have come into being well before the fifth century B.C. The notion that the two bards met in competition is a natural outgrowth of the poetic contests that were characteristic of Greek festivals at least as early as the sixth century, and quite probably earlier. This competition, in turn, is elaborated into a metaphor for the relationship of the two bodies of archaic poetry.

It is a paradox (no doubt a deliberately manipulated paradox) of the *Contest* that Hesiod is made to win the competition. The contest takes place, as the received text of the *Works and Days* would have one expect, in Khalkis at the funeral games of Amphidamas – the *Contest* adds only the name of one of the "great-hearted sons" who set up the event: Ganyktor. The poetic competition itself, wherein each poet presumably performed portions of his repertory, is described only as "wonderful." One could surmise that it was a draw, because the episode narrated in the surviving version of the *Contest* is presented as a sort of tiebreaker. It begins with what might best be described as a contest of cleverness (*sophia*), a series of challenging verse questions put to Homer by Hesiod, each of which he answers with wit and ease. This develops into an agonistic version of the symposiac *skolion,* a game in which the thread of a lyric or poetic statement was passed from drinker to drinker and each was obliged to carry on the syntax and rhythm as it was passed to him, and so to demonstrate his ingenuity. Homer easily meets every poetic challenge hurled at him by Hesiod, who becomes "jealous" and returns to the earlier mode of poetic interrogation; but Homer is way ahead of him, and in the end "all the Greeks" declare Homer the victor by acclamation. But the chief judge, Paneides, brother of the deceased Amphidamas, intervenes and sets one final contest: each poet is to recite the best passage of his own poetry. Hesiod leads with *Works and Days* 383–391, on the rising of the Pleiades and the beginning of the grain harvest. Homer counters with a vivid battle scene from *Iliad* 13. The crowd cheers for Homer again, but the judge overrides their verdict on the

grounds that "it was appropriate for the poet who encouraged farming and peace to win, not the poet who described war and slaughter." The clear moral is that war and violence are aesthetically more attractive, but the circumspect critic, mindful of his social responsibility, values more highly poetry whose effect on society will be more salubrious.

The *Contest* goes on to narrate the rest of Hesiod's life, though nothing before the contest is included, since knowledge of the "autobiographical" information in the poems (summarized above) is assumed. This may be taken to include the name of Hesiod's father, "Dios," implicitly derived from the puzzling epithet Hesiod applies to his brother in *Works and Days* 229, "*dion genos,*" variously interpreted as an (impossible) patronymic and as an ironic or parodic allusion to descent from Zeus. Hesiod, it is related, went from Khalkis to Delphi, where the oracle promised him widespread fame but warned him against "the pretty grove of Nemean Zeus," destined to be the place of his death. This seemed easy enough, and Hesiod set out from Delphi in the opposite direction, westward along the north shore of the Gulf of Corinth. But oracles find ways to fulfill their prophecies. Hesiod overstayed his welcome at a place called (perhaps) Oenoe, came under suspicion of seducing a nubile young lady of the household, and was murdered and thrown in the gulf by her brothers. All of western Locris, it seems, was "a holy precinct of Nemean Zeus." The *Contest* as it survives goes on, citing conflicting sources from the fourth and third centuries B.C., to add that the corpse was brought ashore by dolphins and that the murderers got their just desserts. In conclusion, the *Contest* relates that at a later date the body was moved and reburied, in response to an oracle, in Orchomenos, a few miles from Askra. This last bit of information – supported by the citation of the Orchomenian grave inscription in two elegiac couplets – is a reasonably certain indication that Hesiod's hero shrine was in fact to be seen in Boeotia.

The other surviving "biographical" sources relating to Hesiod range in date from some bits of information in Plutarch (first to second century A.D.) and Pausanias (second century A.D.), both of whom may be taken to give reliable reports of local Boeotian traditions in the high Roman Empire; to Hesychius and Proclus in the fifth century A.D., summarized in turn in the Middle Ages in the encyclopedia known as the *Suda* (tenth century); and finally by John Tzetzes (twelfth century). There is little reason to believe that any of the details – for the most part genealogies and anecdotes – provided by these sources can throw much light on the puzzle of the origins of the Hesiodic corpus. Still, Plutarch and Pausanias, both of whom visited the precinct of the Muses on Mount Helicon and no doubt saw the famous tripod that secured the right of that shrine to bask in the reflected glory of Hesiod, do throw light on the process by which the poems and their persona would seem to have been shaped to fit that institution. Pausanias expresses no skepticism about the tripod that he was shown, but it is frequently his manner to report fabulous claims without comment. Plutarch, on the other hand, by branding the passage on the contest and the tripod as an interpolation, implicitly indicates what he must have seen to be the case: the Hesiodic corpus in its received form reflects manipulation to match the artifacts shown in the precinct of the Muses on Helicon, and so the Hesiodic persona itself must at least in part be the creation of thatinstitution.

Here is a precious example of the way in which archaic Greek poetry, steeped in oral tradition and attached by deep roots to traditions extending back into the Bronze Age, was adapted to fit the needs of the institutions that housed it in the classical and Hellenistic periods. The presumed Peisistratean recension of Homer (which may in fact have extended to Hesiod as well), elusive as it is, represents a parallel tradition regarding the interference of cities and their festivals, and therefore of politics, in the preservation, the transmission, and ultimately the shaping of this poetry.

Given this obscurity at the very heart of the corpus, it will be no surprise that the other poems attributed to Hesiod, only one of which (the *Shield of Heracles*) survives intact, present even greater difficulties. Any sampling of ancient references to Hesiod will reveal a widespread ambivalence about the authenticity of single lines, bits of information, and whole poems. It appears that any poem of uncertain date of a didactic nature (such as the *Precepts of Cheiron*) or containing information about the natural world or the cosmos (as, for example, the *Astronomy*), along with various *epyllia,* or miniature epics, about the more obscure figures of the Heroic Age (for instance, the *Wedding of Keyx*), might be attributed to Hesiod.

The latter category of short narrative poems is linked to the most important, and most universally acknowledged as Hesiodic, of these lost works, the *Catalogue of Women* of the Heroic Age.

This was a very substantial work, richly represented in the papyrus record but lost to the continuous manuscript transmission of Greek literature. If modern scholarship has been reluctant to attribute it to Hesiod, this reluctance would seem to be born of too narrow a conception of the meaning of authorship in archaic Greek poetry, combined with an excessive credulousness in the assessment of Hesiod's own "autobiographical" content. The *Catalogue* was a vast compendium of tales and genealogies of the aristocracy of the remote past. It was in all probability subject to expansion and elaboration at will in the hands of the bards who preserved and transmitted it. The *Shield of Heracles* is such an expansion, taking as its point of departure the entry in the *Catalogue* devoted to Alkmene, the mother of Heracles. The highly imaginative, sometimes grotesque style of this epyllion richly illustrates one aspect of the qualities that ancient critics called "Hesiodic" at the same time that it marks the distance of this poetry from the "Homeric" ideal represented by the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*.

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Hippocrates of Cos

(flourished circa 425 B.C.)

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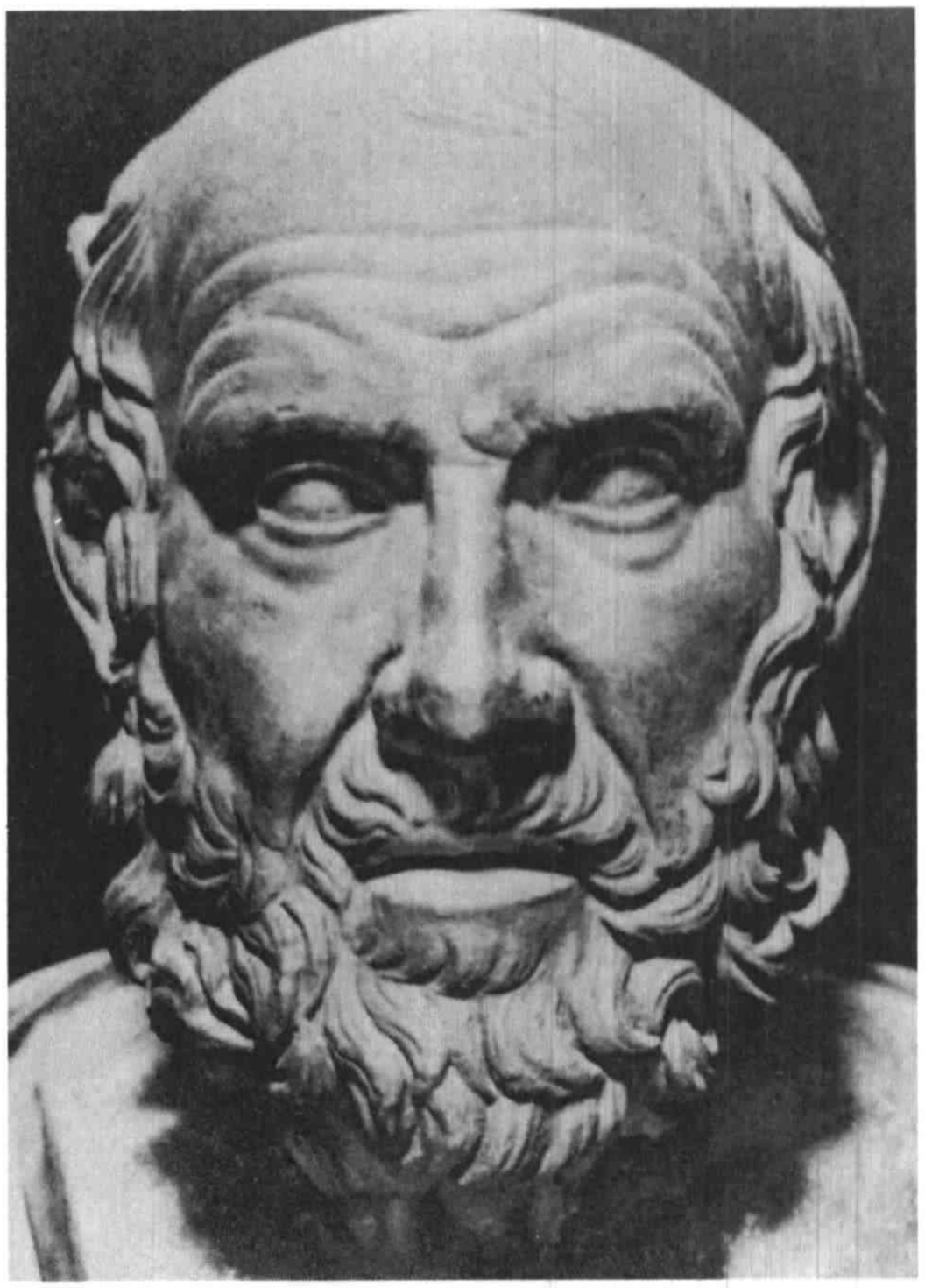
MAJOR WORKS:
Affections;
Airs Waters Places;
Ancient Medicine (or *Tradition in Medicine*);
Aphorisms;
The Art;
Athenian Decree (Pseudo-Hippocratic);
Breaths;
Coan Prenotions (or *Coan Prognosis*);
Crises;
Decorum;
Dentition;
Diseases I–III;
Diseases of Women I–III;
Eight Months' Child;
Embassy (Pseudo-Hippocratic);
Epidemics I–VII;
Excision of the Fetus;
Fistulas;
Fleshes;
Fractures;
Generation;
Glands;
Heart;
Hemorrhoids;
Humors;
Instruments of Reduction;
Internal Affections;
In the Surgery (or *Doctor's Stall*);
Joints;
Law (or *Canon*);
Letters 1–24 (Pseudo-Hippocratic);
Nature of Bones;
Nature of the Child;
Nature of Man;
Nutriment;
Oath;
The Physician;
Places in Man;
Precepts;
Prognostic;
Prorrhetics I–II;



Hippocrates (Uffizi, Florence, inv. 1914, no. 353)

Regimen in Acute Diseases;
Regimen in Acute Diseases (*Appendix*);
Regimen in Health I–IV;
Sacred Disease;
Seven Months' Child;
Sevens;
Speech at the Altar (Pseudo-Hippocratic);
Superfetation;
Ulcers (or *Wounds*);
Use of Liquids;
Vision (or *Sight*);
Wounds in the Head;
Young Girls (or *Girls*, or *Virgins*).

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Translations in English: *Hippocratic Writings,* edited by G. E. R. Lloyd (Harmondsworth, U.K. & New York: Penguin, 1978); *The Hippocratic Treatises,* "On Generation," "On the Nature of the Child," and "Diseases IV," translated, with commentary, by Iain M. Lonie (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1981) [*Ars Medica,* II. Abteilung, Bd. 7]; *Hippocrates Pseudepigraphic Writings,* translated by Smith (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990).

Among the celebrated physicians in history, none is more widely recognized than Hippocrates of Cos. If modern doctors know a name from antiquity, it will be that of Hippocrates, whether from the bowdlerized *Oath,* supposedly written by this renowned ancient medical figure, or from some vaporous recollection of "Hippocratic principles" enunciated by professional mentors in the course of medical training. One would expect, therefore, much information on the life and times of Hippocrates of Cos, a contemporary of the equally celebrated Athenian philosopher Socrates (469–399 B.C.), and Pericles (circa 495–429 B.C.), the important political and military leader of Athens in its so-called Golden Age. The Golden Age of Greece resonates exactly as it should, when modern physicians lay claim to the founding of their profession. In company with the finest philosophy, the beginnings of scientific inquiry, the idealized democracy of an imperial Athens, and the justly esteemed tragedies of Sophocles (circa 496–406 B.C.) and Euripides (circa 485–406 B.C.) and the comedies by Aristophanes (circa 457–circa 385 B.C.), Western medicine can proclaim its origins in the fifth century B.C., and, even better, can have a founding father, Hippocrates of Cos. History, however, offers little on Hippocrates.

As widely known as Hippocrates of Cos is, there are almost no reliable details about his life. What there is can be quickly summarized. In Plato's *Protagoras* (311 B.C.) one reads the following: a young man by the name of Hippocrates (a common name in those days) wants to study with the Sophist Protagoras, but has just arrived in Athens. The youth asks Socrates to arrange the situation for him. "Let us assume you were thinking of going to your namesake, Hippocrates of Cos, the Asclepiad, and of paying him a fee for your instruction." This terse notice of the noted physician from Cos shows that he was known as an Asclepiad (that is, one of the followers of the god of medicine, Asclepius) and perhaps practicing medicine in or about the equally famous temple precinct of Asclepius on the island. The short passage also indicates that Hippocrates was a teacher of medicine who accepted fees for instruction, and the lines of Plato's *Protagoras* show that Socrates (that is, Plato) could speak of Hippocrates of Cos in the same way that he might speak of the well-known sculptors Polyclitus or Phidias and, in effect, everyone would know them as remarkable figures in their respective professions.

A second mention of Hippocrates of Cos also occurs in a Platonic dialogue, this time the *Phaedrus* (270 B.C.). The setting is as one would expect: Socrates is comparing rhetoric to medicine, and in both one must know nature; in medicine one must know the nature of the human body, and in rhetoric one must know the nature of the human soul. Without this knowledge the doctor and the orator employ only tricks or perform empirically; but if the physician knows nature, he gives health and strength to the human body with drugs and foods. Phaedrus answers the question whether it is possible to recognize the nature of the human soul without knowledge of the nature of the whole: "If we may trust Hippocrates, the Asclepiad, it is impossible without this method to have any knowledge of the human body either." These two passages are the earliest mentions of Hippocrates, and, given the Greek custom of not citing or quoting contemporaries by name, one can confidently presume at least a generation's lag for the adulthood of Hippocrates of Cos, pointing to a time of peak activity of about 425 B.C. This agrees well with the date of birth provided by the earliest extant *Life of Hippocrates,* that by Soranus of Ephesus (flourished in the reign of Trajan, A.D. 98–117), who states that Hippocrates was born in the first year of the eightieth Olympiad, 460/459 B.C.

No other details of Hippocrates' life are certain, and there is even a disagreement among ancient sources regarding the name of Hippocrates' mother (one of the pseudo-Hippocratic *Letters, 2,*

gives the name as Praxithea, while Soranus has Phainarete). Some indication of the jumbled traditions about the death of Hippocrates is suggested by Soranus's *Life of Hippocrates:* "He ended his days in Larissa, at the same age that Democritus is said to have died – some say at 90 years, others 85, some 104, and still others 109" (translation by Jody Rubin Pinault in "The Origins and Life of Hippocrates, According to Soranus," in *Hippocratic Lives and Legends,* 1992, p. 8). There are other, rather later accounts of Hippocrates' life and times (including the entries under "Hippocrates" in the Byzantine encyclopedia called the *Suda* of circa A.D. 1000), but all are derivative in the main from the details found in the *Life* by Soranus. To be sure, there are varying specifics in the *Suda,* the so-called Brussels Life (Latin, dated to circa A.D. 600), and the "On Reaping Personal Pains According to Hippocrates" written within the *Chiliades* by John Tzetzes (circa A.D. 1150). These small divergences certainly suggest other traditions than those recorded by Soranus in the second century, but except for the date of the eightieth Olympiad as Hippocrates' birth (concurring with the historical notices of Hippocrates by Plato), there are no data whatever on which to base a biography of this best-known of the Greco-Roman physicians. This is in striking contrast to what we know about the other famed ancient doctor, Galen of Pergamon; Hippocrates' life is enswathed in later legend, while the mass of "biographical" details that exist about Galen come largely from Galen himself.

That Hippocrates was known as a prominent physician fairly early in the Hellenistic era (323 B.C. to 30 B.C.) is amply attested, both through papyri and commentaries made on works under the name of the Coan. In 1892 Frederic Kenyon announced that the British Museum had in hand a papyrus of slightly more than nineteen hundred lines, much of which was part of the lost *Menoneia,* a collection of medical *doxai* (opinions) set down by Menon, one of the students of Aristotle. Philologists presume that the original *Menoneia* dates from about 260 B.C. and that the extant papyrus (apparently copied out for private use in Roman Egypt) is to be fixed sometime before A.D. 150. It appears that the "works" of Hippocrates as known by Menon or the anonymous compiler were not part of what were collected as the "works" of Hippocrates, probably about 200 B.C. or later, most likely at the great library of Ptolemaic Alexandria.

As they have survived, the tracts in the *Corpus Hippocraticum* appear never to have been formally organized, nor were they quite divided into special aspects of medicine, so that what constitutes "Hippocrates" is a collection of medical writings added by Alexandrian scholars to the ever-growing collection of scrolls attributed to Hippocrates. Two or three commentaries on the Hippocratic "collection" made note of odd words and terms that turned up in these medical texts; one of them that is extant is the *Hippocratic Words* by Erotian (flourished circa A.D. 50), who knows earlier lexica and employs some of their glosses. Erotian lists 29 titles of tracts in 38 books (this is the number of scrolls). Later Roman sources, including Galen, designate the number of works as anywhere from 53 to 72, and during the Middle Ages more writings were added to the corpus, bringing the number up to 130. The best manuscripts, however, incorporate about 60 books, ranging in style and content from the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. to about A.D. 50. Internally, many of the tracts contradict one another, so that the search for "genuine Hippocratic writings" is generally fruitless; the hope and assertions by scholars continue, however.

In *The Hippocratic Tradition* (1979) Wesley D. Smith has proven beyond reasonable doubt that the Coan versus Cnidian "schools" of medicine were a fiction invented by Galen, and he demolishes the putative "historical" Hippocrates as another carefully constructed fiction by Galen. Yet even Smith cannot let go of the urge to find a "genuine" tract and settles on *Regimen.* But at least the arguments here are not as shrill as those voiced through a lifetime of research by Charles Lichtenthaeler, who insisted on the reality of *a* Hippocrates who wrote almost all the tracts under his name. Most scholars now accept their inability to know "who wrote what" in the collection of works under the name of Hippocrates of Cos, so almost everyone now takes the convenient dodge proposed by G. E. R. Lloyd in 1975, calling all the writings simply "Hippocratic."

Significantly, Hippocrates does not appear among the Fourteen Famous Physicians pictured in the magnificent A.D. 512 Vienna Codex that shows Dioscorides and other authors who wrote about drugs, plants, poisons, and medicine. It may be that Byzantine physicians in the early sixth century did *not* regard Hippocrates as the "ideal doctor," in spite of Galen's verbose assertions and lengthy and numerous commentaries on the "genuine works" of Hippocrates. Half a millennium later opinions had changed, marked by the fairly full entries under "Hippocrates" in the *Suda.* The "Hippocrates" delineated clearly to savants and physicians in the Middle Ages, Renaissance, and the later centuries of Eu-

Galen learning from Hippocrates; fresco painting, circa 1250, in the cathedral of Anagni, Italy

ropean medicine as it shifted from humoral pathology to the germ theory – that Hippocrates was the Hippocrates of Galen's fertile and subtle imagination, an imagination buttressed by ineluctable logic and philosophic premises.

Once Galen of Pergamon (A.D. 129–after 210) canonized Hippocrates of Cos as *the* greatest physician of classical Greece, a selection of medical writings under the name of Hippocrates was presumed to be genuinely by the physician himself. Even in the second century and earlier, there was heated debate about the genuine works of Hippocrates, yet Galen's influence became paramount, thanks to his painstaking interpretation of subjects within circulating "Hippocratic" tracts, as well as to an assumption (first enunciated by Galen) of rival schools of medicine, those of Cos (Hippocratic) and those called Cnidian. Cnidian works, while grouped within a purported Hippocratic corpus of writings, were deemed less important by Galen and by almost all physicians, philologists, and students of medical theory well into the nineteenth century.

In spite of almost two millennia of acceptance of the Hippocratic works as a discrete collection of medical treatises, good philologists and doctors (and before World War I, many students of Greek medical writings were both) recognized blatant contradictions among works in the collection as well as frequent internal contradictions within specific tracts. Moreover, by the nineteenth century some Hippocratic tracts were easily shown to be fragments of longer books, and occasionally these bits and pieces were clumsily yoked as single titles in the texts that had descended from Greek manuscripts into the early printed editions; these became the texts and translations (most often Latin, but frequently French, Italian, Spanish, German, or English) studied in the early nineteenth century as basic textbooks in European and American medical schools. Frequent confusion mirrored the garbled manuscript traditions, and attempts to smooth over variants were opposed by physicians and scholars who could easily cite texts in the Hippocratic corpus that refuted any efforts to gloss one text into another. That confusion and discussion and repeated denial of revisions had immediate and practical consequences: physicians and medical students stood on wobbly foundations both in terms of accepted theory and in terms of application of therapies, notable as problems early in the history of printed texts and simply worsening as the decades passed into centuries.

A modern reader may, at first, be surprised that Hippocrates and Galen remained as fundamental teaching texts in the medical schools a mere two hundred years ago, but the superb editions of the Greek texts and their translations into Latin, French, English, and German in the early nine-

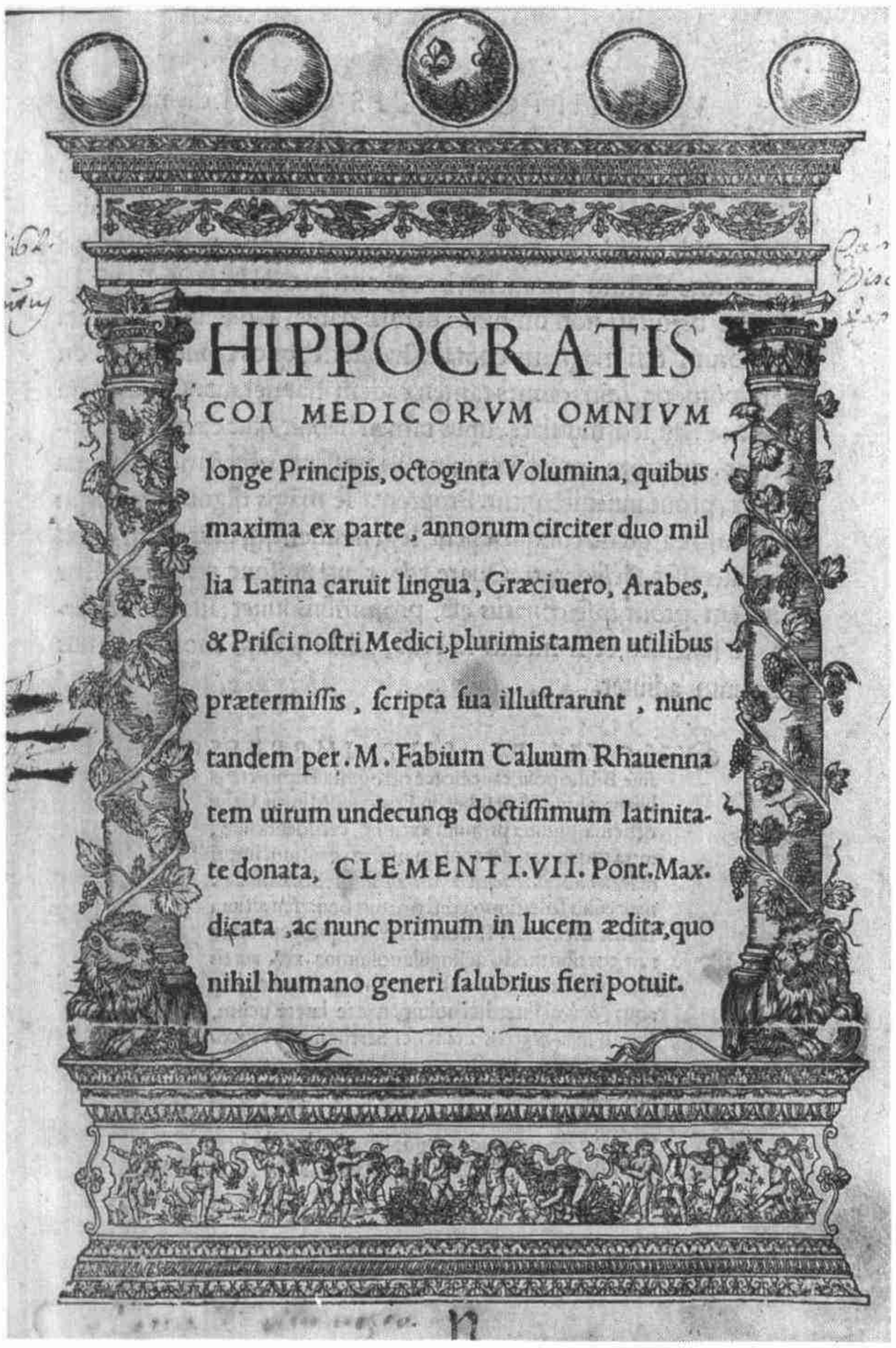
teenth century were fully intended as medical primers for aspiring physicians. This historic context engendered the "new Hippocrates" of the nineteenth century, founded on excellent holdings of medieval codices in Greek, Latin, and Arabic in several European libraries, particularly in Italy, France, Germany, England, and occasionally Spain. In fact, the edited texts and translations of the Hippocratic works into French by the talented physician and classicist Émile Littré, published in ten volumes from 1839 to 1861, remain the most complete and most frequently cited by classicists, physicians, and historians at the end of the twentieth century.

Only in the Littré editions can one find all the tracts thought to be Hippocratic, ranging from the deservedly famous case histories of *Epidemics I* and *III,* to the absolutely fundamental *Sacred Disease,* the splendidly real-life details in *Diseases of Women,* and the quirky *Sevens.* A weird irrationality permeates *Sevens;* anonymous practicality dominates *Diseases of Women;* and an utter faith in human comprehension of all facets of nature guides the author of *Sacred Disease,* in spite of the despair attending the epilepsies. *Sacred Disease* is the medical work that set down the basic notion that all diseases – even the Falling Sickness, or epilepsy – were parts of a natural order, certainly not to be perceived through magic or supernatural forces, and therefore equally subject to the ministrations of a carefully schooled physician who discerned disease as a state of nature to be corrected through diet, drugs, surgery, or a change of lifestyle (a regimen). Quite rightly do modern doctors cite *Sacred Disease* as canonical in Western medicine (much as did Galen), since it assumes medicine as an art can cure even the most mysterious of ailments, once cause (in nature) is understood and once the true nature of the disease is understood in terms of a natural universe that has laws to be revealed through logic and philosophy, careful records of illnesses and their courses, and painstaking observation by experienced doctors of symptoms (as they would later be termed) that display disease. Modern molecular genetics presumes exactly the same set of premises.

Littré's edition of the Hippocratic works still is most often cited, because of its complete incorporation of treatises known as "Hippocratic" in the early nineteenth century. Perhaps, however, Littré's devotion was not only to the Hippocratic ideal of medicine, but also to his lucid perception of the Hippocratic concept of medicine as an art fused with experience and humane grace, in turn amalgamated with an assumption that as physicians gathered data on health and disease, so, too, would medicine constantly become better able to heal the sick of body and soul. It is not surprising that René Laennec, celebrated for his description of the first stethoscope in 1819, was a near-rabid Hippocraticist, demanding of colleagues and patients a firm adherence to "Hippocratic principles" in diagnosis, prognosis, and therapy, quite in keeping with the revolutionary and "rational" politics in France after 1789.

This is Littré's era as well, and perhaps that wonderful breath of the "new rationalism" in government and politics (one simply can ignore Napoleon, for the sake of argument) found corollaries in the new Hippocrates of Laennec and his stethoscope and the new Hippocrates of Littré's reinvestigating the Greek. Even as the new medicine and pathologies founded on the germ theory were beginning to emerge, Littré's Hippocrates redivivus had been completed, and his edition forms the essential foundations for scholarship on Hippocratic medicine. Although the texts and translations of Hippocrates as edited and rendered into English in the Loeb Classical Library have now expanded into eight volumes, Littré remains the only relatively modern translated edition of the wide-ranging works of Hippocrates, inclusive of numerology, gynecology, pediatrics, and obstetrics.

In ancient medicine, theory and anatomy generally come last in terms of importance, so that moderns puzzle over classification of the writings that have come down as the *Corpus Hippocraticum.* The beginning was almost always the sick person and his complaints, "medical action" that would now be called symptomatology, but Hippocratic medicine significantly struck a new direction in terms of theory. When an *iatros* (physician) prescribed diet or *pharmaka* ("drugs"), he was guided by both experience and theory; he generally was hoping to "evacuate a humor," or to help the body with its own natural healing power (the *dynamis* in a broad sense). Therefore it is almost impossible to make a modern distinction between pathology and physiology. If, however, one considers theory, one finds treatises that deal with humankind's life in both health and illness, or, put another way, with both physiology and pathology. Modern concepts, especially those standard in Western medicine since the late nineteenth century, cannot aid perceptions of medicine among



Title page for the first collected edition (1525) of Hippocrates' works (courtesy of the Lilly Library, Indiana University)

Hippocratic physicians, even though modern doctors sometimes impute fully scientific methodologies to Greek diagnosis, prognosis, and therapies.

Moreover, medical training now begins with basic anatomy and the dissection of the human cadaver, and all physicians today presume this foundation as necessary and ordinary. Among ancient Greek doctors, the opposite usually held true: there is little formally taught anatomy in the Hippocratic corpus, and Hippocratic medicine is not based on instructed anatomy; in fact, dissection and vivisection to the time of Aristotle (384–322 B.C.) was confined to animals, and as Aristotle's influential *Parts of Animals* (fourth century B.C.) readily discloses, knowledge of internal organs was drawn usually by analogy from animals. Occasionally there are glimpses of another kind of anatomy in Greek antiquity, that of the gymnastic experts coupled with the anatomy known by sculptors. Topographical anatomy, the muscles and their actions with bones, tendons, and ligaments, was rather well understood, neatly illustrated by both the sophisticated bonesetting manuals in the Hippocratic corpus as well as the highly elegant sculptures of the human form that have survived from classical Greek and Hellenistic times. And despite what has been written about the anatomy of the so-called Cnidian writings in the Hippocratic collection, there is no more anatomy that allows localization of disease in the Cnidian tracts than in any of the other works; since systematic dissection of the human body did not occur until the surprisingly brief careers of Herophilus and Erasistratus (in Ptolemaic Alexandria, circa 280 and 260 B.C. respectively), such dissections were rarely – if ever – repeated as an aspect of medical training in the Hellenistic kingdoms or Republican Rome or the successor Roman Empire. Only one tract – and it is short – in the Hippocratic collection may be based on dissection of a human organ, *Heart,* which fills a mere four pages. This is, as the British still like to say, the exception that proves the rule.

In the introductory sections of his *Hippocratic Words,* Erotian attempts an organization of the Hippocratic treatises known to him in the middle of the first century. This schematic taxonomy was applied to the Hippocratic writings in the Renaissance, with the most influential by Anuce Foës of Metz (1528–1595), who published a complete edition of Hippocrates in Greek (with Latin translations) in 1595. The Erotian-Foës classification placed works on anatomy in a class of etiology, so that *Heart, Glands,* and *Nature of Bones* appear in company with such tracts as *Airs Waters Places* and other essays patently within modern notions of etiology, albeit rather broadly. That Greco-Roman and Renaissance medical thinking grouped such writings suggests the differences from modern assumptions about anatomy, whether posited from the vantage of comparative anatomy and embryology or from purely human structures on their own. *Heart* is a fairly detailed account of the anatomy and physiology of this organ with some description of the great vessels and valves (it is not clear, however, that these derive from a *human* heart). *Glands* suggests the structure, function, and diseases of the tonsils, lymph nodes, the brain, and the breasts. Moisture keys these structures and the author attributes to them absorption and rerouting of moisture because of the analogy of their substance to sponges. The writer believes the brain draws into itself superfluous water from the head and redistributes it into the rest of the body.

Nature of Bones is a farrago of fragments, drawn from several unrelated accounts about blood vessels; the text is mistitled, reflecting someone shoving together bits of varying works that considered the heart as the presumed center of the system of vessels. Scholars have identified parts of *Nature of*

Bones as taken from the treatises of Syennesis of Cyprus (floruit circa 400 B.C.) as quoted by Aristotle in *Historia Animalium,* and other parts of *Bones* derive from the Hippocratic *Nature of Man* and *Epidemics II. Nature of Bones* does not anticipate the closed circulation described by William Harvey, as some moderns have asserted: in fact, when taken in context with the Hippocratic *Heart,* the full Hippocratic theory of heart function becomes reasonably clear, in stark contrast to functions taken for granted in the twentieth century. *Heart* describes the heart as a muscle with two ventricles and two auricles (or atria) feeding the lungs with blood and receiving air; the left ventricle has no blood but only air and is the seat of the innate heat (*thermon,* an important Aristotelian concept) and Intelligence that rule the soul. Explicit throughout modern cardiac physiology is the question of quantity (how much?) as contrasted with the question of quality (the hot, the cold, the wet, and the dry) assumed in Hippocratic theory: qualities in balance (the Greek *krasis)* determine essential health as does krasis of elements (air, fire, earth, and water) and – to some Hippocratic writers – the krasis of the liquids of the body (*chymoi*), the well-known humors, reduced to four by the author of *Nature of Man,* arguably written by Polybus, the son-in-law of Hippocrates.

Foës's classification of Hippocratic tracts groups some works under the rubric of how medicine was practiced, and this includes the famous *Oath.* The *Oath* has engendered much literature and much controversy, especially since various versions of it were in circulation as early as late Hellenistic times and in the early Roman Empire. Which version was *the* Oath is relevant primarily to those desiring to buttress some plank of a current sociopolitical agenda (some versions do not include the prohibition against abortifacients), but it seems that the *Oath* is an authentic historical document employed to induct new members into a medical guild (generally rejected is Ludwig Edelstein's hypothesis that the *Oath* was Pythagorean, but his late date for the text has been accepted). The *Oath,* of course, represents an idealized picture of the medical practitioner and remains an ideal to be emulated by modern doctors.

The Hippocratic *Law* (or *Canon*) is a clipped statement on the low status of medicine, thanks to the sorry mental equipment of many practitioners. The author says that becoming a good physician takes talent, a willingness to learn and labor, good instruction, and the willingness to invest much time in gaining necessary experience. No specifics of a medical education are provided, but the text reflects the continuing uncertainty of a doctor's status in an age long before the existence of medical schools and explicit legal sanction of a particular kind of medical training. The *Hippocratic Art* (or *Science of Medicine*) is often paired with *Law;* the author of *Art* argues that medicine is far more than a mere skill or even an art, and that the rules of logic and science govern this profession quite explicitly. The style of *Art* reflects rhetoric, so that it is probably by an unnamed Sophist of the fifth or fourth century B.C.

The Hippocratic *Ancient Medicine* (or *Tradition in Medicine*) is a remarkable document, showing vividly the ongoing debate among practitioners and their patients regarding the role of theory in the practice of medicine. A well-written work and addressed to physicians and the general public, *Ancient Medicine* denounces the intrusion of philosophy into medicine, even though the language and logic of philosophy is present throughout the treatise. The author, most likely a Sophist in the fourth century B.C., makes the following arguments: medicine is an art of its own that emerged empirically after it was noticed that certain foods and diet improved the condition of the ill; the notion of opposites, as taught by philosophers (the theoretical qualities of the hot and the cold, the wet and the dry) is of little value in explaining health and disease; and the best medicine is a good diet, with foods adapted to individual capacities for digestion. After refuting the opposites of the philosophers, the author reflects on the usefulness of knowing "variations" in parts of the body (a kind of elementary physiognomy), as well as how humors can change from the sweet to the astringent or sour. Tastes and odors were important to this writer, perhaps mirroring concepts floating among intellectuals in the fourth century B.C., theories of smells and tastes more fully developed in the fourth-century B.C. *Odors* and *Sense Perceptions* by Theophrastus of Eresus, the most influential student of Aristotle.

Precepts, Decorum, and *The Physician* are three short disquisitions that consider the practice of medicine in its social context, what in the modern cliché is termed the doctor-patient relationship. *Precepts* is a meandering essay on what medicine is (and is not), what one can do to collect fees for advice and treatment, how one consults with medical colleagues, and how one should conduct oneself modestly – all subjects of interest in any century. It is from *Precepts* that medical propaganda gained the line, "For where there is love of man, there is also love of the art." *Decorum* is indeed about the physician's conduct during visitations of patients. Familiar are the words and sentiments of *Decorum:* "transplant wis-

dom into medicine and medicine into wisdom. For a physician who is a lover of wisdom is the equal of a god." *The Physician* is a valuable record of ordinary matters that would concern a physician setting up practice: this brief tract outlines some specifics in gathering equipment for a doctor's stall (bandages, various instruments, sponges, water, threads, and the like); how one should provide lighting; the use of cupping-glasses (actually bronze) and lancets for bloodletting; some notes on plasters, incisions, and brandings; and some tantalizing hints that there *were* manuals on military medicine. (*The Physician* as it survives seems to consist of the "head-summaries" of fourteen lengthy compositions on practical matters of supply of medical tools, linens, cupping-vessels, drugs, and oil for the lamps: most unfortunate is the loss of the listing of the instruments that must have followed after the "introductory heading" of *The Physician,* and one would prize the particulars of surgical treatment for wounds common in Greek armies, said to be available in *The Physician,* 14. The least important section of *Physician* states that the doctor should be plump, but not too fat; be clean; smell reasonably good from carefully chosen perfumed ointments; and the like. "Make a good impression," it reads.

Still occasionally termed "semiotics" after the Greek label, the aspect of medicine among the Hippocratics that focused on the signs and symptoms of diseases did not assume any form designated as "standard" as expected from modern doctors. Sometimes – in fact rather frequently – what are now called "symptoms" *were* the diseases to Greek physicians, and the "signs" equally often signaled the arrival of the symptoms that were equated with the disease. Lloyd's hypothesis in "Healing and Healers" of the "varying approaches of medical practioners," complementary and not necessarily competitive, is supported in this group of Hippocratic tracts, spanning the centuries from Pericles' day through the end of the Hellenistic era. All are Hippocratic only in that they share the Ionic dialect, and there are many contradictory views on how one interprets signs and symptoms; sometimes there are internal contraventions within a single document. The *Coan Prenotions* (or *Coan Prognosis*) is a good example of how Greek physicians put together catalogues of what they believed to be useful data, here a collection of bits from other Hippocratic discourses, especially *Prorrhetics I* (153 sections were borrowed directly). The author knows the Hippocratic *Prognosis,* since there are many parallel passages. *Coan Prognosis* consists of 640 prognostic generalizations, set out as 35 chapters classed by subject: they range from "Fever and Chill," "Course of Fevers," "Signs of the Ears," "Signs of the Tongue," and "Hemorrhage," to "Mortification of the Brain," "Expectoration," "Spasms and Convulsions," "Pleurisy and Pneumonia," "Liver Disease," "Urinary Problems," "Female Problems," "Vomiting," "Sweating," and "State of Solid Excreta."

Prorrhetics I and *Prorrhetics II* are related, although composed by two different authors: *Prorrhetics I* has 170 sections (153 borrowed in *Coan Prognosis*) listing symptoms and forecasts of several diseases, with occasional cases employed as illustrative, but normally the writer gives conclusions by way of generalities. *Prorrhetics II* scoffs at physicians' miracle-mongering sometimes characteristic of prognoses, then attempts to set down what is really possible in terms of prognosis: reasonable assumptions follow if the doctor can ascertain how a patient has not followed a prescribed regimen, and thereby the physician can make general statements (the author provides no specific cases) regarding such ailments as dropsy, dysentery, some eye diseases, and infertility among several large classes of illnesses.

Prognostic is deservedly renowned, and among Hippocratic treatises on disease forecasting it stands as one of the finest. The principles of prognosis still apply. This author exhibits subtle sophistication in diagnosis and prognosis, enumerating many specifics among physical signs of crucial importance in medical forecasting: here are the classic signs of posture, breathing, fevers (if any), sweating, pains, habits of sleep, and the state of the three excreta (sputum, the urine, and solid waste, or stools). A fascinating aspect of the continuing debate among physicians in Greek and Hellenistic times is the author's presumption that these prognostic signs are independent of the commonly assumed variabilities of weather, geography and/or altitude (compare this with *Airs Waters Places*), and even of the diagnosis itself.

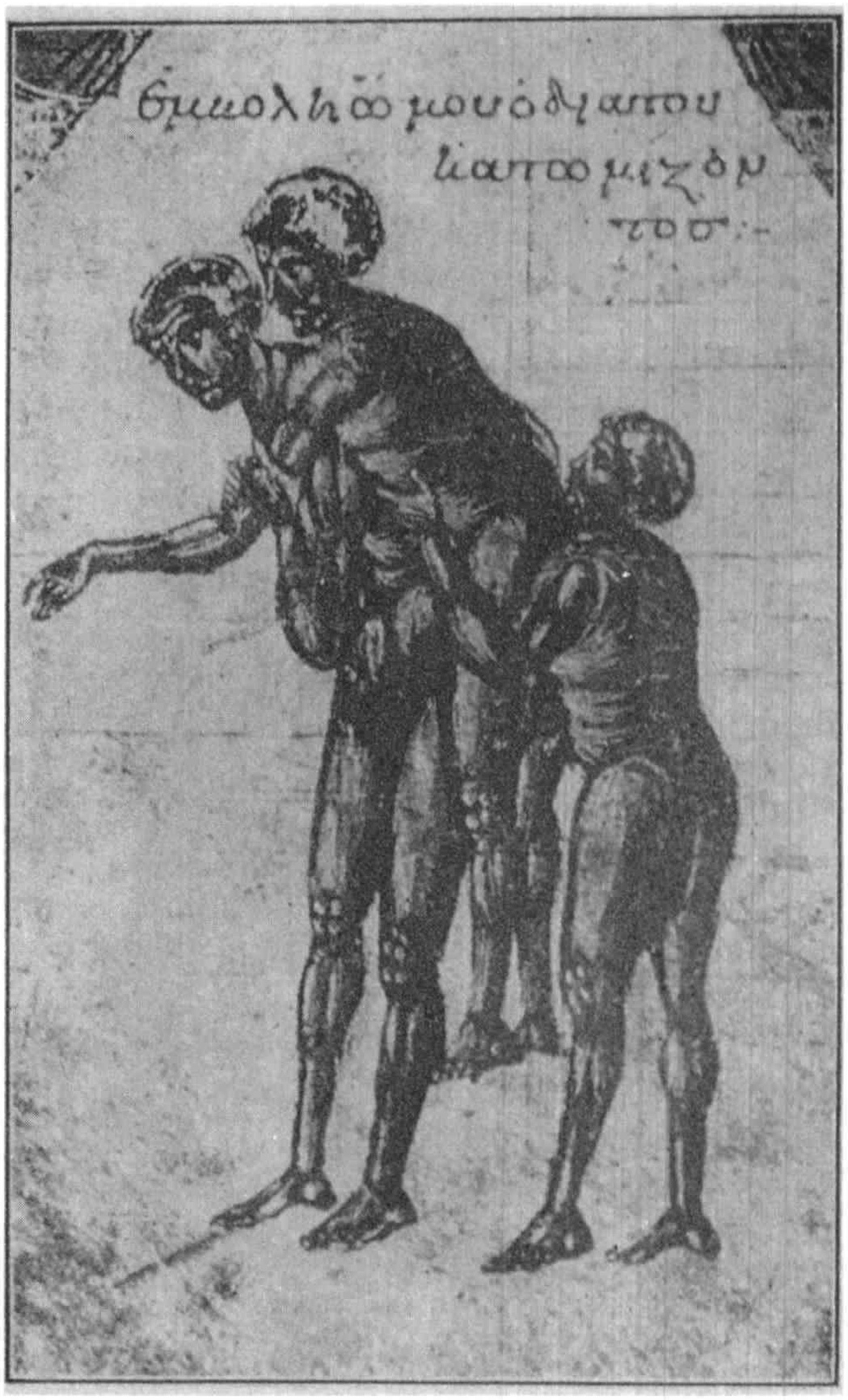
Crises, Critical Days, and *Humors* are three Hippocratic works purportedly of a "signs and symptoms" category. *Crises* is a rather shallow compilation of bits and pieces from the *Prognostic; Epidemics II, IV,* and *VI;* the *Coan Prognosis;* and *Aphorisms. Critical Days* is likewise another lightweight collection of bits from the Hippocratic *Epidemics III, Internal Affections, Diseases III,* and the odd *Sevens.* The *Humors* are an unknown doctor's notes, jotted down with no discernible pattern of organization. One encounters remarks on the humors, symptoms of various illnesses, psychological or mental states, a few remedies, some notes on the etiologies of diseases, and comments on

the weather. *Humors,* however, had a heavy influence on later Greek and Roman medical theory, since it was taken to be a kind of "summary" of important particulars in Hippocratic medicine, perhaps reflective of doctors' hopes to find a synopsis of difficult problems in their practice.

Even though Hippocratic medicine generally is bereft of anatomy, three tracts presuppose a rather profound knowledge of human anatomical structures. The practical and precise details in *Fractures* and *Joints* are probably summations of many generations – if not millennia – of experience with setting broken bones; there are similar particulars in some of the descriptions and prescriptions in the ancient Egyptian Edwin Smith Papyrus, dated by James Henry Breasted to about 1600 B.C., but that had literary ancestors going back at least a millennium. The Hippocratic *Fractures* and *Joints,* both set down in the fourth century B.C., show absolutely no necessity for any formal dissection to explain the very highly developed skills suggested in these Greek medical texts, which are simply the art of bonesetting and the accumulated expertise of muscles and tendons (and the usual placement of large blood vessels) bearing repeated and successful results by the time writing was invented.

Fractures and *Joints,* as well as *Wounds in the Head, Fistulas, Hemorrhoids, Ulcers* (or *Wounds), Instruments of Reduction,* and *Excision of the Fetus,* show a minutely detailed acquaintance with the human anatomy of the legs and arms, the muscles and bones of the limbs, head, vertebral column, ribs and sternum, and some accurate mastery of the bones, muscles, tendons, and vessels of the hands and feet. The short Hippocratic *Vision* (or *Sight*), often listed among the surgical works from the corpus, is actually descriptive of major eye diseases, including cataracts, trachoma, conjunctivitis, and amaurosis; and *surgery* is cautery applied to body parts other than the eye.

In *Fractures* there are carefully refined accounts of descriptions and treatments for fractures of the forearm and upper arm, dislocations of the foot and ankle, and fractures of the lower limbs, concluding with compound fractures and elbow dislocations. The surviving text of *Joints* displays much rearrangement and reediting as authors attempted to make this tract complementary to *Fractures. Joints* begins with shoulder dislocations, followed by fractures and dislocations of the clavicle, in turn succeeded by elbow dislocations and those of the wrist and finger joints (the elbow, wrist, and finger accounts are borrowed from *Instrument of Reduction*); then come injuries of the jaw, nose, ears,



"The shouldering method of reducing the shoulder joint"; illustration from a ninth- or tenth-century A.D. manuscript copy of Apollonius of Citium's Commentary on Hippocrates' Joints

spine, ribs, and hips, with *Joints* containing an excellent description of clubfoot; *Joints* 63.1–7, is the widely known document that records "what the Amazons supposedly do to their male offspring," but the author adds, "I do not know if this is true, but I do know that these results would follow from dislocating the joints in young infants." Next follow compound dislocations, amputation, and necrosis through gangrene; the final sections of *Joints* consider hip dislocation (purloined again from *Instruments of Reduction*).

Instruments of Reduction begins with a precise summary of the bones of the body (not complete, and proceeding opposite from the expected head-to-toe sequence), then proceeds to describe treatment (with or without mechanical aids) of injuries to the nose, ear, jaw, shoulder, shoulder blade, elbow,

wrist, finger joints, thigh joint, knee, ankle, foot, spine, and ribs, as well as clubfoot, compound dislocations, amputation, and necrosis. Clarity and clinical insight characterize the Hippocratic *Wounds in the Head,* and there are concise accounts of the bones of the skull (including the sutures), examination and diagnosis of wounds of the head, and prognosis and treatment for wounds of the head. It is this work that A. J. N. W. Prag and his colleagues can cite with assurance as they describe the bone surgery performed on Philip II and Alexander III in the fourth century B.C., and the texts make it clear that although there may be some problems with accepted nomenclature for bones and muscles, there is no doubt whatever about what had been found to ensure reasonably predictable success in treatment of head wounds, even as life-threatening as that received by King Philip at the seige of Methone.

Among Hippocratic works receiving early and full commentaries, *Joints* achieved the status of a well-known essay on practical medicine that also redounded to the prestige of the medical profession as a whole, and *Joints* was a fitting text upon which to write an explication. Late Hellenistic times had many important physicians who have left their mark in medical history with their writings, and quite prominent among them is Apollonius of Citium (flourished circa 50 B.C.), a royal doctor to one of the Ptolemies. Apollonius composed several books, among which was a lost *Three Books against Bacchius,* as noted in the *Hippocratic Words* of Erotian, and the *Commentary on Hippocrates' Joints,* which has survived almost intact. By the second and first centuries B.C., the debate about what books were actually by Hippocrates was already fiercely waged; Galen accepted *Joints* as genuine, and the work enjoyed a long history of copying and use by orthopedic surgeons.

That Greek physicians performed surgical abortions is revealed in the fragment *Excision of the Fetus.* This short text provides some instructions for the dismemberment and removal of a dead fetus, a practice that came under increasing condemnation as the centuries passed. Embryectomy, of course, was as ethically controversial in Greco-Roman antiquity as it is currently (witness the church father Tertullian's easy rebuttal from pure philosophy alone in his second-century A.D. *De Anima*), and some modern commentators have argued that this short fragment should thereby not be incorporated within the Hippocratic corpus. All such arguments are founded on the personal opinion of the commentator, much as Tertullian makes obvious.

The Hippocratic *Hemorrhoids, Fistulas,* and *Ulcers* (or *Wounds*) are three clipped works that indicate Greek surgical and pharmacological expertise in treatment of particular conditions signaled by the titles. *Hemorrhoids* reflects how troublesome this problem has been for humankind and gives presumably successful surgical interventions and postoperative treatments for the removal of hemorrhoids and condylomas. Included are cautery, simple excision, and a scraping technique, followed by some recipes for fomentations (warm poultices) and ointments that promoted specific necrosis of small amounts of tissue, drugs still termed putrefactants. *Fistulas* is a practical manual of surgical techniques for anal fistula and common complications that include strangury and rectal prolapse. *Ulcers* is somewhat longer, and the author presumes the major problem in ulcerations and wounds to be an excess of moisture, so that pharmaceutical therapies are those that dry out the wound. *Ulcers* is rich in pharmacology and the procedures of compounding particular applications and wound dressings, so that Prag is well advised to employ these specifics in suggesting how Critobulus could actually promote healing in the dreadful injuries suffered by Philip II and Alexander. The final sections of *Ulcers* concerns bloodletting and seems stuck on at the end of the text by an unknown scribe sometime in the Byzantine era.

Among dietetic treatises in the Hippocratic collection, several have had long-term influence in Western nutrition theory. *Use of Liquids* is a short synopsis of how various fluids, externally applied and consumed, promote several states of the body that engender health: fresh water, salt water, vinegar, and wine differentially warm, cool, clean, dry (in the case of vinegar), soften, and soothe. *Regimen in Health* is the primary ancestor of a long history of "health-through-good-foods-and-proper-exercise" manuals, which still are popular and which Galen reworked into his own *Hygiene.* The Hippocratic *Regimen in Health* lays down clearly organized information about foods and drinks, emetics, and mild exercises, including walks (modern doctors advise the same); and there are special instructions for athletes in training for events, along with directions for the balanced maintenance of health through diet for women and very young children.

Regimen in Health I, II, and *III* are unified through the author's theoretical assumption that the human being is composed of the basic elements of fire and water, and that all else in the body is to be understood in the context of this premise. Even birth, whether male or female, and intelli-

gence, are determined by the pairing of fire and water. *Regimen II* provides categories of major factors in dietetics as they relate to climate and fundamental geography, drinks and foods, the taking of baths, emetics, sleep, and exercises. In *Regimen III* the writer posits that foods and exercises are opposite (pairs again), and that the balancing between them determines health. Significantly, *Regimen III* offers two separate catalogues of practical instructions: one for the ordinary, not so well-off person and the other for someone well-to-do. The author of *Regimen in Health I–III* shows he is well aware of varying conditions as they would apply to patients living in urban centers (in Asia Minor, Ephesus, Halicarnassus, and some of the settlements at Cnidus and on the island of Cos, for example), as contrasted to most people who lived in the countryside and who were farmers. Foodstuffs are well known, the kinds that again would be common in both types of life.

Regimen in Health IV (or *Dreams*) is a rather curious tract that proffers a novel hypothesis for its day: dreams originate from internal things and functions of the body (arguably anticipating Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, and current molecular genetics), and dreams thereby mirror the individual's actual status of health or disease and can direct the dreamer in appropriate therapies or regimen. *Regimen in Health IV* may reflect a concurrent practice of Asclepian "incubation medicine," in which the supplicant to the god would slumber in a special chamber, and, in dreaming, Asclepius would appear in order to designate cures for the individual. The Asclepian shadow in *Regimen in Health IV* seems apparent as the author (uniquely among Hippocratic writers) commends the therapeutic function of prayer. *Regimen in Acute Diseases* is rather grouchy and almost polemic in its insistence on the absolute value of barley gruel in acute ailments, in its insistence on the utter necessity of precise timing in the administration of food and drugs, in its insistence that the doctor has to recognize the harm from rapid shifts in diet on any state of health or disease, and in an almost angry assertion that the physician must consider the patient's personal habits when prescribing therapies or any regimen. *Regimen in Acute Diseases (Appendix)* is a collection of scattered notes on prognosis and illnesses and their treatment, and the text is so unorganized that it would appear that it never was put into a final form. *Nutriment* is a quasi-philosophical tract, containing fifty-five aphoristic pronouncements on several different facets of growth and nourishment.

Perhaps least studied of all groupings of tracts in the Hippocratic corpus, the treatises that deal with embryology, gynecology, obstetrics, and pediatrics firmly delineate the grand mixture of sophisticated theory and philosophical argument with the venerated experiences of midwives and the folklore of pharmacy that stretched back many centuries. Modern physicians seem reluctant to peruse some of the works, perhaps because of the evidence of these texts that refutes rather well the concept of an "ideal" medicine practiced by Hippocratic physicians, especially men. Midwives, wet nurses, village women who functioned as nurses, and the ever-present root cutters and drug sellers jostle in these tracts with the philosophers and physicians, and in many respects these treatises probably represent Greek medicine "as it was," as contrasted to the frequently ethereal debates characteristic of so many works in the Hippocratic corpus. The books in this collection concentrate on birthing, the care of the newborn, pregnancy and its prevention or its abetment, menstruation or the lack of it, and generalized "women's problems." There is also the listing of the greatest number of drugs and pharmaceutical remedies of any group in the corpus. Perhaps this esteemed pharmacological folklore has much in common with similar matters found in book 9 of Theophrastus's justly renowned *Inquiry into Plants* of about 300 B.C. To be sure, as modern feminists have emphasized, many of the "cures" are those deemed reasonable from a male standpoint, but such opinions (as, for example, pregnancy as being therapeutic for young girls' ailments in the Hippocratic *Young Girls* [or *Girls,* or *Virgins*]) are easily detected and certainly do not characterize the whole of the prescriptions throughout the works on obstetrics, gynecology, and pediatrics. Actually one can observe the multifarious details on women's problems contributed by women and duly recorded here in these priceless texts. Folklore? In many respects. Practiced midwifery? Absolutely, and perhaps the repository of techniques and observations that have descended through many millennia.

Diseases of Women I and *II* are compilations of multitudinous details that mark medical problems that are particular to females rather than to males. Of special importance is what moderns would call the physiology of menstruation, linked in turn with questions of fertility; following in the texts as they exist are problems connected with pregnancy and complications that occur after parturition. Uterine pathologies are then discussed,

followed by some general observations on basic gynecology. There is then a lengthy collection of pharmacological prescriptions, augured by the format and contents of the previous chapters. *Diseases of Women* shows the ceaseless and timeless neutrality of obstetrics and gynecology, but its obviously masculine counsel is so blatant that one cannot mistake it for other than what it is. In her "*Autopsia, historia,* and What Women Know: The Authority of Women in Hippocratic Gynecology," Lesley Ann Dean-Jones states: "The Hippocratics could not fully understand female diseases because they did not share in the collective experience of the female body." It is not surprising that a centerpiece for Dean-Jones is a passage in *Diseases of Women,* where this special knowledge is made explicit. Yet ignored by most feminist scholars is the rich pharmacology in these Hippocratic writings, a pharmacy also derived from the feminine "collective experience," to use the phrase of Dean-Jones, a drug lore likewise made distinct even in the short *Diseases of Women I.*

Even though the extant Greek manuscripts divide *Diseases of Women* into *I, II,* and *III,* the enumeration of the chapters is continuous, a convention retained by Littré. Part 2 begins with a long-influential summary of "flowings" (from a total lack of menstruals, to those that cannot be stopped), or *fluxes,* as they were termed until World War II. And in *Diseases of Women II* is the classic account of the "wandering womb" and what is best rendered as "hysterical suffocation" (Greek's *hysteron* translates into English as "womb" or "uterus," so the unfortunate "displacement" of the uterus caused many problems, including its "strangulation" or "suffocation"), a notion accepted by both men and women as special to female conditions. (Note that what was later called hysteria remained a "female disease" well into the twentieth century). Several descriptions in the Hippocratic text recognize uterine prolapse, an easily paralleled pathology in modern gynecology. Logically enough, *Diseases of Women II* continues with various pathologies of the uterus, and pharmaceutical recipes conclude this remarkable work.

Diseases of Women III is sometimes called *Sterility* or *Infertile Women,* and, in older studies, *Barrenness.* Here one is unmistakably in the setting of the marketplace, the context of women in the village with their potions and drugs, and the manners and mores of an everyday medicine far removed from the theories that dominate several of the other Hippocratic treatises. *Diseases of Women III* is a fascinating farrago of tests for the determination of pregnancy, tests that determine the sex of the fetus, drug formulas guaranteed to ensure conception, and other drugs to cure habitual abortions (one presumes spontaneous or natural abortions, but the pharmacology implies double purposes). *Nature of Women* is a series of extracts from other treatises in the corpus on gynecology, especially *Diseases of Women II,* and *Young Girls* (or *Girls,* or *Virgins),* a short work propounding the nature of young women's afflictions and the usual cure for all of them: pregnancy. *Generation, Nature of the Child, Seven Months' Child, Eight Months' Child, Superfetation,* and *Dentition* collectively form the embryological, obstetric, and pediatric writings featured in the corpus.

Generation has attracted the attention of classicists and philosophers since the Renaissance because this tract addresses the question of "mixing" male and female and how that combination (especially of what is termed "generative fluid" by both sexes) determines the natural constitution of human offspring. *Nature of the Child* likewise has exercised the intellects of scholars because it proposes a detailed scheme of theoretical embryology that leans on concepts of breath, blood, and heat (the well-known thermon of Aristotle and many other writers) to explain the growth and differentiation of the fetus from conception to birth. There is much reasoning by analogy, and one cannot escape the impression that animal vivisection is the basic matrix, such as the vivisections performed by Aristotle and his students on diverse animals and their embryos; but this backdrop has been heatedly debated in specialist scholarship since the Renaissance. *Seven Months' Child* is an odd fragment that argues for the viability of a baby born in the seventh month of pregnancy, but the reasoning dissolves into pure speculation. One can imagine that there were individuals in the fourth or third centuries B.C. who claimed a special status by being "seven-month babies." Oppositely, the author of *Eight Months' Child* affirms that such a fetus cannot be born alive, but the logic applied here is full of vague numerology, quite lacking in clinical observations. *Eight Months' Child* is related to the quirky pseudo-Hippocratic work known as *Sevens,* which asserts the fundamental role of the number 7 in the cosmos, and *Sevens* was thought to be Hippo-

cratic from the contents of the second half, which takes up etiologies, therapies, and signs of acute diseases, particularly fevers.

Superfetation shows the ancient fascination with multiple births, in this instance, with two fetuses of different ages, neither identical nor fraternal (dizygotic) twins. Clinical observations on multiple births, premature births, stillbirths, conception, abortions, and some therapeutic measures compose this tract, generally bereft of theory and favoring prognosis and therapy. *Dentition* is a short, thirty-two-chapter text addressing teething and the nursing and weaning of babies, along with accounts of ulcers of the throat and tonsils, something akin to thrush. Wet nurses were common in Greco-Roman antiquity, and these specifics in *Dentition* are nicely paralleled in several papyri that detail the terms of contracts set down for wet nurses by wealthier members of female society who chose not to suckle their own infants; also these specifics are similar to those set down by Soranus of Ephesus in his masterly *Gynecology* of the second century.

Gynecology and obstetrics were as value-laden in Hippocratic times as they are in the present (one merely has to consult good scholarship on Athenian inheritance law to gain a firm picture on just *how* ancient Greek prejudices functioned), so that balanced studies on abortion, contraception, women's status, inheritance rights by women and offspring, and several related topics are few if outstanding. The best feminist scholars know full well that a detailed knowledge of the Greek texts is essential, and with that kind of expertise, a would-be critic must always argue from the texts, not from some current political or social agenda.

Surprisingly controversial has been the assumption that one *can* know much about the biochemistry, phytochemistry, and physiology of Greco-Roman contraceptives, abortifacients, and pharmacological specifics generally. John M. Riddle, in his *Contraception and Abortion from the Ancient World to the Renaissance* (1992), raised a flurry, not from feminists, but from the medical community, which generally doubts that *any* substance in Greco-Roman pharmacy had effective use. Riddle, however, has demonstrated otherwise.

Modern physicians who are proud of their skills in diagnosis and prognosis are those who take very careful "histories" of their patients, recording symptoms, signs, syndromes, what basics there are in lifestyles (foods, drugs, sexual habits, et cetera), age, the known illnesses of parents and siblings, and any other striking factors that could lead to effective and appropriate therapy. The methodology of re-

ΙΠΠΟΚΡΑΤΟΥΣ
ΚΩΟΥ ΙΑΤΡΟΥ ΠΑΛΑΙΟΤΑ=
HIPPOCRATIS COI MEDICI
VETVSTISSIMI, ET OMNIVM ALIORVM PRINcipis, libri omnes, ad uetuſtos Codices ſummo ſtudio collati & reſtaurati.
FRO BEN
BASILEAE
M D XXXVIII

Title page for the second printing in Greek of the Hippocratic corpus (courtesy of the Lilly Library, Indiana University)

cord-keeping of the illnesses of individual patients (ailments often recorded as fatal) had reached a sophisticated form in many of the Hippocratic writings, especially those usually called *Epidemics.* Rather misleading as titles in English, these extensive and remarkably precise case histories are records of physicians' observations as they "visited" various locales in the Aegean basin. The Greek *epidêmia* generally meant a "staying in a place" (not one's own home), or a "visit" (by an important person), with an extended meaning later attached to suggest a disease that, in effect, "took up residence" among a certain group of people. Although the *Epidemics I* and *III* are particularly well known, *Epidemics II* and *IV* through *VII* are equally replete with the data of medical observations, cases recorded and collected into tracts that could suggest patterns of illness, carefully linked to predictable variations of climate, diet, topography, and personal habits characteristic of particular regions.

A classic textbook on what are local "constitutions" coupled with case histories, *Epidemics I* be-

came a model of its kind by the Hellenistic era and held its own as a basic teaching text well into the eighteenth century. *Epidemics I* provides three reports on the health of a population (thus the traditional "constitutions") for the island of Thasos, the three reports organized by years that succeed one another, and the three annual "constitutions" are followed by fourteen case histories. The "constitutions" are statements about a single year's weather in a particular locale, in turn leading to detailed observations setting down which illnesses were apparent, how often they occurred, what sorts of people were rendered sick, how severe were the ailments, and how many recovered and how many patients died. The fourteen case histories detail the illnesses of particular individuals, following a single patient from the onset of an initial fever to the end of the case, either the remission of the disease or the death of the individual. Descriptions focus on symptoms and the status of liquid and solid excretions, and the author does not stress diagnosis, prognosis, or therapy. It is as if the writer setting down *Epidemics I* has deliberately foresworn theoretical assumptions to allow the primary role for exact symptomatology, and this is precisely the manner in which modern physicians take histories, later adding presumptions of the germ theory or whatever etiology might be appropriate.

Epidemics II lacks the coherence of *I* and *III,* but *II* incorporates forty-one case histories jumbled together with some comments on how particular ailments illustrate broader concepts of disease. This collection of disparate clinical data appears to have been intended as a textbook, as heterogeneous as the materials might be. *Epidemics II* also incorporates some suggestions for diet and therapies, as well as a portion of a "constitution" for an unspecified location, followed by sixteen more case histories. Part *III* is similar enough in style, composition, emphases, and organizational pattern that ancients and moderns alike have assumed a single author for *I* and *III,* an argument that can be supported from the texts. The actual "who" is unanswerable.

Epidemics IV strikes one as a physician's notebook, a version of memory jogs to help the practitioner recall observations taken down in the presence of ill patients. There are 112 case histories in *Epidemics IV,* some that are so clipped (a line or two) as to be almost opaque, others that take up a page or so of Greek. There is little theory in *IV* and only a few comments on climate and the weather. *Epidemics V* has 106 case histories, again some so short that there is no context, others rather longer. No organizational principle is discernible, but the physician has certainly recorded a substantial array of illnesses, including pleurisy, common indigestion, arthritic joints, loss of appetite, several phobias, breast cancer, and the fatal dropsy of case history 106: "And the hydropic man at Olynthus, suddenly voiceless, delirious a night and a day. He died" (translation by Wesley D. Smith).

Epidemics VI is a collection of near aphorisms (many of which are statements of the obvious) conjoined with many obscurities and splendidly accurate clinical observations. *Epidemics VI* is the source of the often quoted "Nature is the physician for disease," a misleading rendering of "nousôn physies iêtroi," more precisely translated by Smith as "The body's nature is the physician in disease." As might be expected, some later commentators thought the frequent opacity in *Epidemics VI* marked its profundity, and this Hippocratic tract received at least three Roman and Byzantine explications, with that by Galen providing the model for vacuous verbosity. General statements occupy about 80 percent of *Epidemics VI,* juxtaposed with thirty-four case histories and a fragment of a "constitution." *Epidemics VII* has 124 cases, varying in length, quality of description, and depiction of illness or injury. One sometimes gets the patient's name, his place of birth or manner of making a living, the season, a diagnosis, symptoms and the course of the disease, treatments, and final results. Occasionally the setting is quite vivid, the problem easily diagnosed, the outcome invariably fatal.

Easily subsumed among clinical observations, albeit in extremely pruned lines, are the 412 pithy statements of the famed Hippocratic *Aphorisms*. Number 1 is known in part by almost everyone: "Life is short, the art long, opportunity fleeting, experience is treacherous, and judgment difficult." This is the traditional rendering in English. Collectively the *Aphorisms* is a repository of the clinical wisdom gained during many generations of doctors, in which the carefully worded acumen smoothly becomes the easily recalled principles of an active practice, distilled into precisely condensed phrases. Roman and Byzantine physicians many times reverently recopied the *Aphorisms,* and translations into Latin, Arabic, Hebrew, and Syriac outnumber all other manuscripts of the Hippocratic writings. Jones has tallied 140 Greek manuscripts, 232 in Latin, 70 in Arabic, 40 in Hebrew, and 1 in Syriac; and there are four major commentaries that survive from Roman and Byzantine times: those by Galen, Stephanus of Athens (circa A.D. 600), Meletius the Monk (circa A.D. 700), and Theophilus (probably mid tenth century A.D.). While Jones called the *Aphorisms* "disappoint-

ing," physicians through the centuries have found these lines inspirational in a way quite unusual for a medical text. These sayings remind the practitioner of the ever-present hope attending a painstaking clinical observation, coupled with the experience that teaches wonder at the human body and the frequent tragedies characteristic of any career in medicine. Rare indeed is any work, technical or otherwise, that is somber and simultaneously uplifting.

Broadly defined, the association of climate and the change of seasons with the onset and ebbing of diseases in particular areas comes under the class of clinical records, and quite influential is the Hippocratic *Airs Waters Places*. Moderns might be tempted to characterize the first part of *Airs* as "environmental" or as "ecological etiology," but careful reading shows the author expounding on how the itinerant physician *must* notice the differences in physical environments (including weather and seasons, reminiscent of the "farmer's year" in Hesiod's *Works and Days* of about 700 B.C.) that could affect health in various places. Jones conveniently provides calendar dates (borrowed from Aetius of Amida, flourished in the reign of Justinian, A.D. 527–565) for the time tracking taken for granted by the author of *Airs*. The "environmental" factors lead logically enough into the celebrated *Airs Waters Places* 12–24, which stands as one of the first essays on ethnography in Western literature. (Another is in Herodotus, in his *Histories,* which presumes throughout the influence of climate on character and institutions, artlessly summarized in book 10 of his fifth-century B.C. *Histories* IX, 122. 3: "Soft lands breed soft men; wondrous fruits of the earth and valiant warriors grow not from the same soil.") The Hippocratic author of *Airs* compares in extenso the physiques, customs, and intellectual abilities of several European and Asiatic peoples, positing explanations for all differences on geography and climate.

Three works remain in an inclusive category of clinical observation (that is, in these instances, how the physician propounds a theoretical model for causes of disease from repeated perusals), and among the three, two works are startling in their long-term influence, and the third significant in its own right as the single tract "by" Hippocrates cited in the *Anonymus Londinensis*. The Hippocratic *Sacred Disease* is fundamental in setting the direction taken by Western medical theory ever since classical Greece formulated philosophical notions that separated illness from magic, religious concepts, or irrational forces. The subject is the falling sickness, or epilepsy, and the author of *Sacred Disease* states flatly that the so-called sacred disease is no more sacred than any other, and that fools, charlatans, and magicians designate it as such to hide their ignorance of clinical observations of victims and their ignorance of any logical causes that can be deduced from nature. In fact, the writer here says that *all* diseases (including epilepsy) are subject to the same rules of investigation as are all states of nature, and since epilepsy is a status observed in nature, it follows that careful investigation will eventually lead to effective treatments for even this most puzzling ailment.

First-century-A.D. coin from Kos, with a profile of Hippocrates

This is, of course, the heart and soul of Western medicine, and even though epileptics lacked effective pharmaceutical treatment until the mid twentieth century, the principle established by the author of the Hippocratic *Sacred Disease* was presumed by almost all physicians schooled in medico-philosophical traditions from Hippocrates' day until the present. The writer also states flatly that the organ of thought is the brain (showing some adherence to Plato's doctrines, as opposed to those of Aristotle), and thus the probable cause of epilepsy is a blockage of air vessels (a rough Englished semiequivalent to what the Greek notion imparts) by a buildup of *phlegmos* (phlegm), especially blocking those vessels that carry air to the brain; and convulsions result. Therapy also becomes apparent: unblock the vessels by antiphlegmatic measures, meaning that the physician can treat the cold and wet by the hot and dry.

The second work that exercised a heavy influence in Western medical thought is the Hippocratic *Nature of Man*. Here one finds the canonical "hu-

moral pathology," that is, an imbalance among the two biles (black and yellow), the blood, and phlegm engenders disease. The author asserts that theories employing a single humor or element do not take account of observed facts, so that blood alone cannot be a cause of disease, unless it becomes greater than its due proportion among the humors of the body, and that misproportion (*dyskrasia,* as contrasted to the krasis of health) is measured against the presence of the other three humors. Balances and imbalances are related to the seasons of the year, the amounts or degrees of heat and moisture, and the general prevalence of illnesses.

The author of the Hippocratic *Nature of Man* clearly refers to the fierce debate about "what element" or "humor" was dominant and "how many" humors existed, a debate then ongoing among Greek physicians and philosophers; but the Four Humors became absolutely canonical in Western medicine, once adopted and made a centerpiece by Galen of Pergamon in the second century. Galen's "Four Humors of Hippocrates" became *the* model by which a learned doctor almost always explained both health and disease. As Iain M. Lonie remarks in *The Hippocratic Treatises* (1981): "[there are] four elemental or component humors. The distinction is significant for the relation between medicine and philosophy. The medical writers [do not adopt completely] the concepts of the philosophers: they preferred to work with their own specifically medical concepts, believing in this way greater certainty could be reached." Galen would have agreed with this, even as the great Pergamene was deeply rooted in the logic of an Aristotelian template as he formulated his diagnoses, prognoses, and therapies, presumably improving on the intrinsic medical blueprints laid down by Hippocrates.

The third tract left to be considered in the broad category of clinical observation is the Hippocratic *Breaths,* apparently popular in Hellenistic and Roman times, then superseded into obscurity once the Galenic tripartite medical model took the dominant role. In this model there were four elements (air, earth, fire, water), four qualities (the hot, the wet, the dry, and the cold), and the four humors (blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile) that all needed to exist in krasis for health. *Breaths* is probably a set of notes taken from a public lecture (perhaps the actual draft of that lecture) that argued the proof of causes in disease is always air, the same air that comes into the body through breathing, and less so but importantly when one eats, drinks, or when a wound is "open" and lets in air. This is a clear and sober observation of many cases of illnesses that seem to have occurred after exposure to various "airs," and the writer makes this explicit as he presumes that fellow physicians would come to the same conclusions after much clinical experience. That *Breaths* faded from prominence after Galen's day does not dim its importance as the Hippocratic work that appears in the *Anonymus Londinensis,* and as such the unknown compiler of this "medical doctrines" papyrus reflects a widely accepted opinion (at least in Roman Egypt) that the Hippocratic *Breaths* merited inclusion.

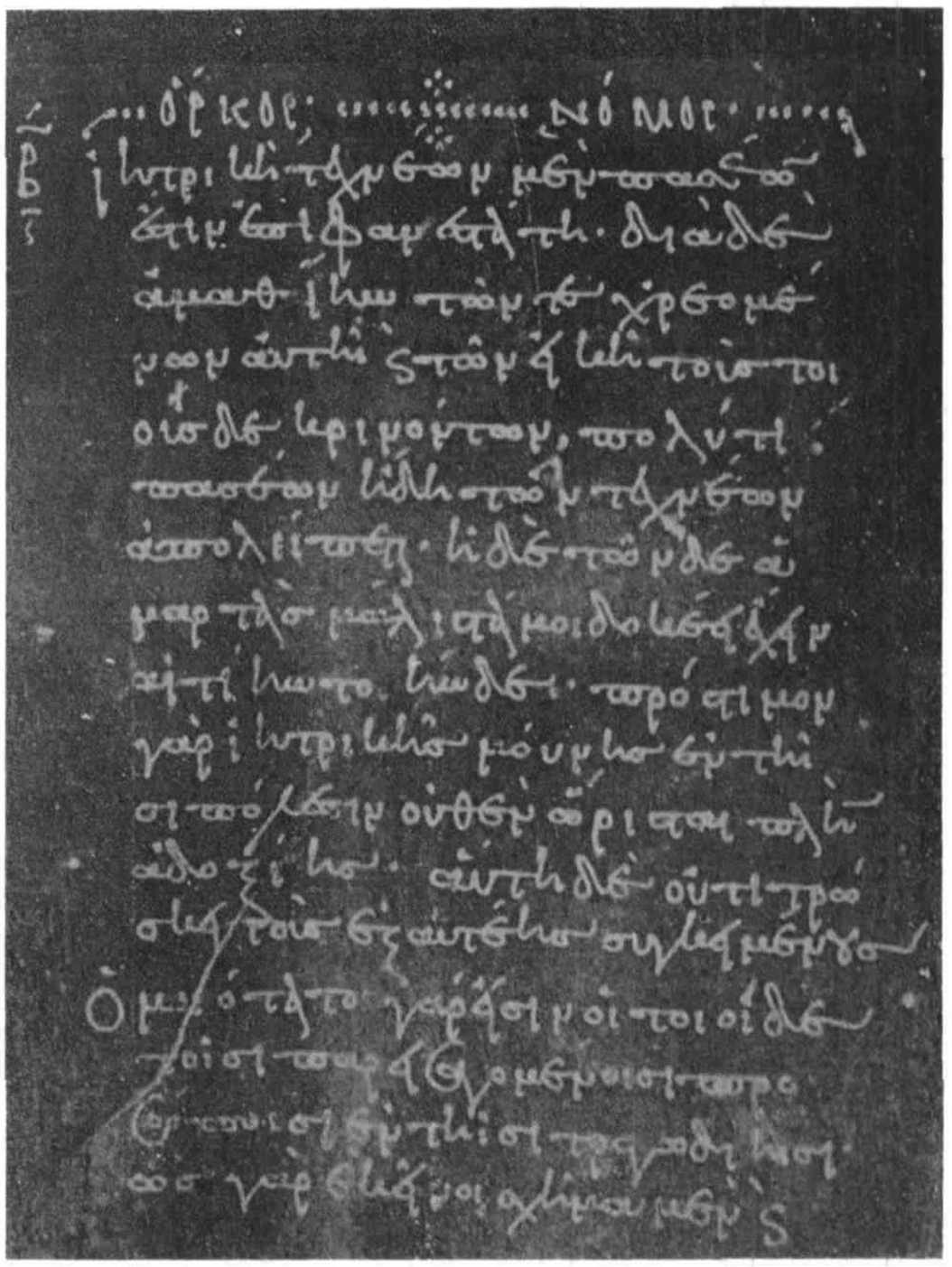
Treatment by drugs is one aspect of much medical therapy, and the four Hippocratic tracts titled *Diseases,* as well as *Affections* and *Internal Affections,* overlap in this facet with many of the gynecological and obstetric texts (and several others) already summarized. But *Diseases I, II, III,* and *IV* seem to emphasize pharmacological therapy rather more openly than many other treatises in the corpus, so that for convenience (certainly not from conviction that these works should be so classified) one can put *Diseases I–IV, Affections,* and *Internal Affections* into a class of writings that focus on drugs and thereby pharmaceutics. *Diseases I* begins where many Hippocratic works begin, with basic concepts and fundamental processes, that is, how some diseases originate, how some diseases change into another form, and why phlegm and bile are the ultimate causes or sources of all diseases. Structurally *Diseases I* through *IV, Affections,* and *Internal Affections* are all similar enough to enable some scholars to posit a single authorship, an assumption not widely shared among specialists. That hope of a unity dies hard, and it seems that hope will be argued for many years to come by those who desire to save the Father of Medicine in Western thought.

At any rate the compositional framework of *Diseases II* is curiously overlapping; that is, one finds general considerations of diseases of the head in two separate sections, and the author appears to have thought matters over but not revised what had been written down previously, so that in the latter section one finds a fresh predominance of prognosis and treatment. Ailments are grouped by anatomical part, so that diseases of the head are in one section, lungs in another section, liver problems in another, and so on. Drugs are quite conspicuous, with occasionally detailed instructions for preparation of simples, as exemplified in the treatment of *kynangchê,* quinsy (sometimes translated as "angina"), in *Diseases II.* Noteworthy are the sophisticated use of simples, mostly available in the districts of Greece and Asia Minor, and the Hippocratic author's experience in their preparation and administration.

Among many such texts, this one makes clear how essential is the doctor's command of botany and mineralogy in his practice (Paul Potter's "soda" is *natron*), and his pharmacy is as important as his skill in surgery, aspects also demonstrated in *Diseases II*. *Diseases III* is structually similar to *II*, but inferred throughout is heat as cause of illness (brain-swellings, headaches, strokes, a 'rotting' of the brain, lethargy, and so on), and remedies in *Diseases III* consist of twenty-four cooling treatments (Potter gives them letters, A through W). All these are fashioned into drinks, ranging from a mixture of honeycomb stirred in water with added celery (A), rainwater (F), to old wine of Thasos – well watered, twenty-five parts water to one part wine (Q) – and a specific diuretic made from three pinches of pennyroyal and six of celery seeds boiled in wine mixed with water (W).

Diseases IV is often classed among the writings on embryology, suffused as it is with theory on how ingestion and digestion take place, and how a triplicate balance among eating, digestion, and excretion is maintained, and thereby health is maintained. One of the sections of this treatise addresses parasitic gut worms, perhaps a reflection of the old debate about spontaneous generation of both flat worms and round worms, and the embryological focus becomes explicit: "Now I shall discuss flat worms. I maintain that these are produced in the infant while still in the womb; for once it has emerged from the womb the faeces do not remain in the intestines for a long enough time for them to form a creature of such size by a lengthy process of decomposition" (translation by Lonie). The remainder of *Diseases IV* disjointedly considers bladder-stone formation and dropsy, outlining the analogy drawn by the Hippocratic author from iron smelting to stone making in the body.

Affections summarizes twenty illnesses, beginning with the claim that "all diseases arise from bile and phlegm," and its later parts specify dietetic elements as drugs (honey, water for bathing, wines, some grains and gruels, oils for anointing) along with the theoretical frame for their particular employment. *Internal Affections* is a book of fifty-four chapters about various diseases and their causes, often designated by agents (bile, phlegm, and white phlegm); and there is a collection of accounts of pathological states like ulceration, stone formation, or pus formation, with occasional symptoms such as jaundice or pale complexion being ascribed to seasons. Among these works, *Diseases IV* has attracted the most attention, because of its multiple subjects and its transparent association with ongoing discus-



Page from a manuscript text of Hippocrates' Law *(Marcianus Venetus 269; from* Hippocrates, *edited by W. H. S. Jones, 1923)*

sions about basic generation and embryology. *Diseases II* and *III* are also significant: they show how the Hippocratic physician had to know vital techniques of drug preparation much as he had to have a command of simple and indispensable surgical procedures.

Attached to most manuscripts descending from medieval copies of the Hippocratic treatises are texts titled *Letters, Embassy, Speech at the Altar,* and *Decree.* Labeled pseudo-Hippocratic, these works have affinities to the *Lives* of Hippocrates by Soranus of Ephesus and others, but they were not intended by the anonymous writers to function as "lives" or "histories" of Hippocratic medicine. Rather, according to Smith in *Hippocrates Pseudepigraphic Writings* (1990): "these meager writings . . . became the standard picture of the father of medicine, whether by codifying already current stories or creating them. [Greeks and Romans] . . . would not have asserted their literal accuracy [but] their substance was alluded to as the real story of Hippocrates." In distinction from the rich historical data exploited by the authors of the *Letters* of Plato, Themistocles, and the Minor Socratics, these pseudo-Hippocratic tracts are poor historical ac-

counts that provide few clues regarding the reality they pretend to depict (Smith's telling adjective about them is *thin*).

Yet as fiction, these documents are examples of thoughtful, nonmedical literature that used the then-standard custom of imaginary letters and speeches (one only needs to recall the speeches in Herodotus and Thucydides) to create the personality of a profession that experienced triumphs and failures, a profession whose potential effects were as significant as battles won or the conquests recorded in the usual histories. As Thucydides inserts into the mouths of his historical figures sentiments and plans and arguments that "probably were true" or "should have been true," so too do the authors of the pseudo-Hippocratic *Letters* invent what "should have been true" about Hippocrates, or Democritus, or the kings of Persia, in relation to a Greek medicine that was equipped with the Greek proof of the superiority of the mind and deliberation over the forces of nature, of humanity over indifference. That ethics among physicians looms as an essential issue in Greek medicine is taken for granted by the pseudo-Hippocratic *Letters,* and this supposition melds securely with then-current presumptions in sundry tracts of the Hippocratic corpus as well as in important segments of Greek philosophy.

In this group of writings, some very short, others rather lengthy, twenty-four purported *Letters* to and from Hippocrates and other worthies of the era precede the *Athenian Decree* (number 25 in Smith, *Writings*), the *Speech at the Altar* (number 26), and the long *Ambassadorial Speech of Thessalus, son of Hippocrates* (number 27). Celebrated among the *Letters* are number 16, *Hippocrates to Crateuas,* and number 17, *Hippocrates to Damagetus*. Number 17 is memorable for its portrait of Democritus, "the laughing philosopher," and No. 16 is notable for its "advice" to Crateuas about the preparation, use, and transport of some drugs, particularly hellebore. Democritus is, of course, the famed philosopher (circa 460–[?]360 B.C. [ancient traditions are unanimous that he lived to an old age]), who along with his teacher (traditionally) Leucippus (flourished circa 420 B.C.) promulgated a notion of "atoms." This notion was the distant ancestor of the doctrines of Epicurus (341–270 B.C.), whose philosophical materialism had a heavy impact on Hellenistics and students of philosophy in the late Roman Republic. "Atomism" and its variants that seeped into a "medical Epicureanism" would evoke sharp condemnation from such disparate quarters as Stoics, Aristotelians, Platonists, physicians such as Galen, and the Christians. This pseudo-Hippocratic depiction of the "happily insane" Democritus had a deep influence on theories of mental illness well into the European Enlightenment. Having Hippocrates "learn" from the great philosopher is eminently sensible in the medicofictive context.

Crateuas, on the other hand, is the name of the famed body physician of Mithridates VI of Pontus (circa 120–63 B.C.), and Crateuas's fame rested on his knowledge of drugs and poisons and their antidotes; his (lost) works were used by Dioscorides of Anazarbus, Pliny the Elder, and Galen. Hippocrates' "teaching" Crateuas makes sense only in terms of medical ethics: tales told about Mithridates and Crateuas spoke of their willingness to "experiment" on living men to gain expertise of poisons and antidotes. Smith, in his *Writings,* thinks that "the audience was expected to think of that famous Crateuas and to think that Hippocrates is dealing with an ancestor of his." This is plausible enough.

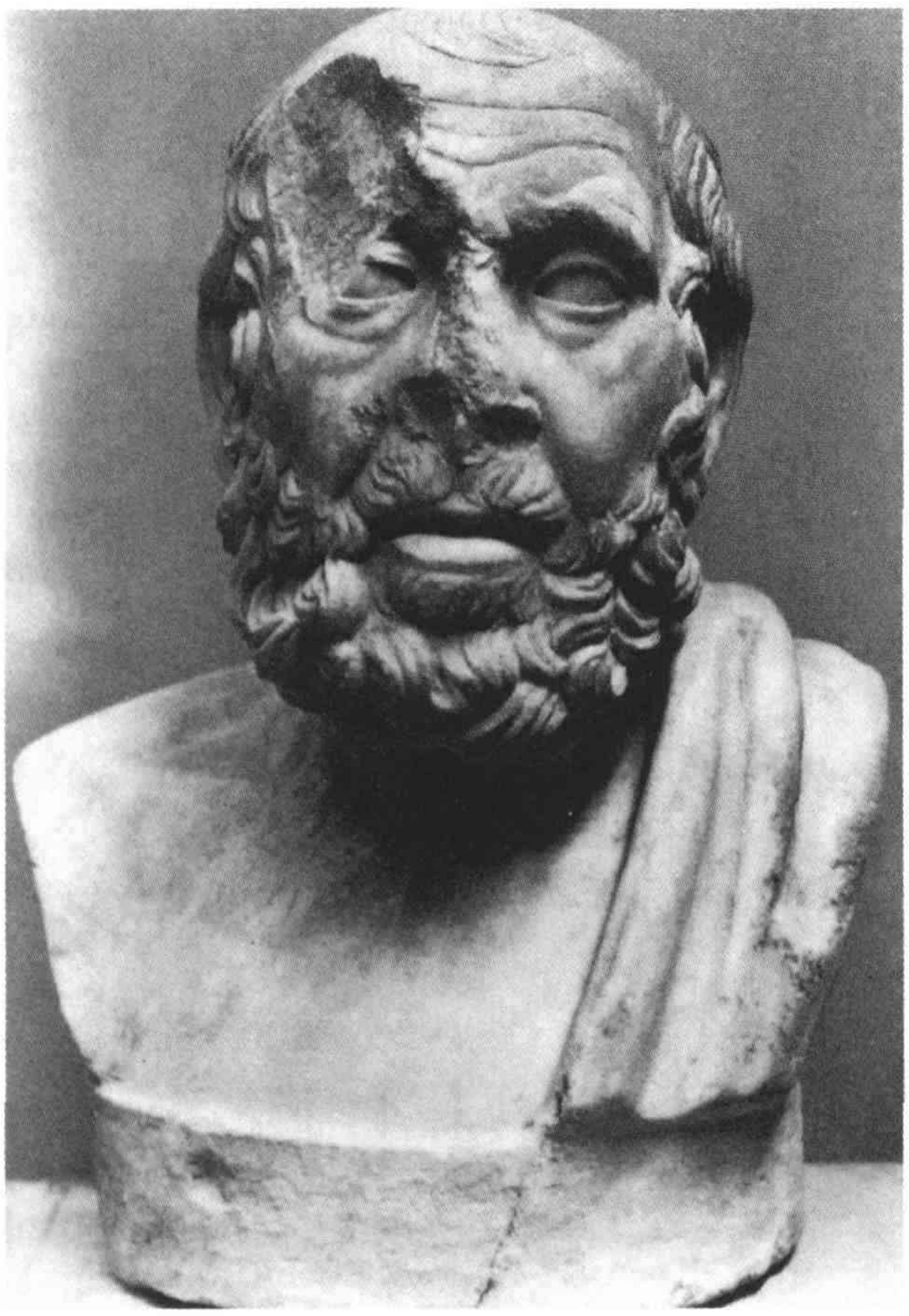
The pseudo-Hippocratic *Speech at the Altar* and *The Ambassadorial Speech of Thessalus, Son of Hippocrates* show how this personality, this Hippocrates of Cos, came to be all that was admirable in the practice of medicine, an ideal that haunted Galen and that continued to obsess doctors with its modeled perfection well into modern times:

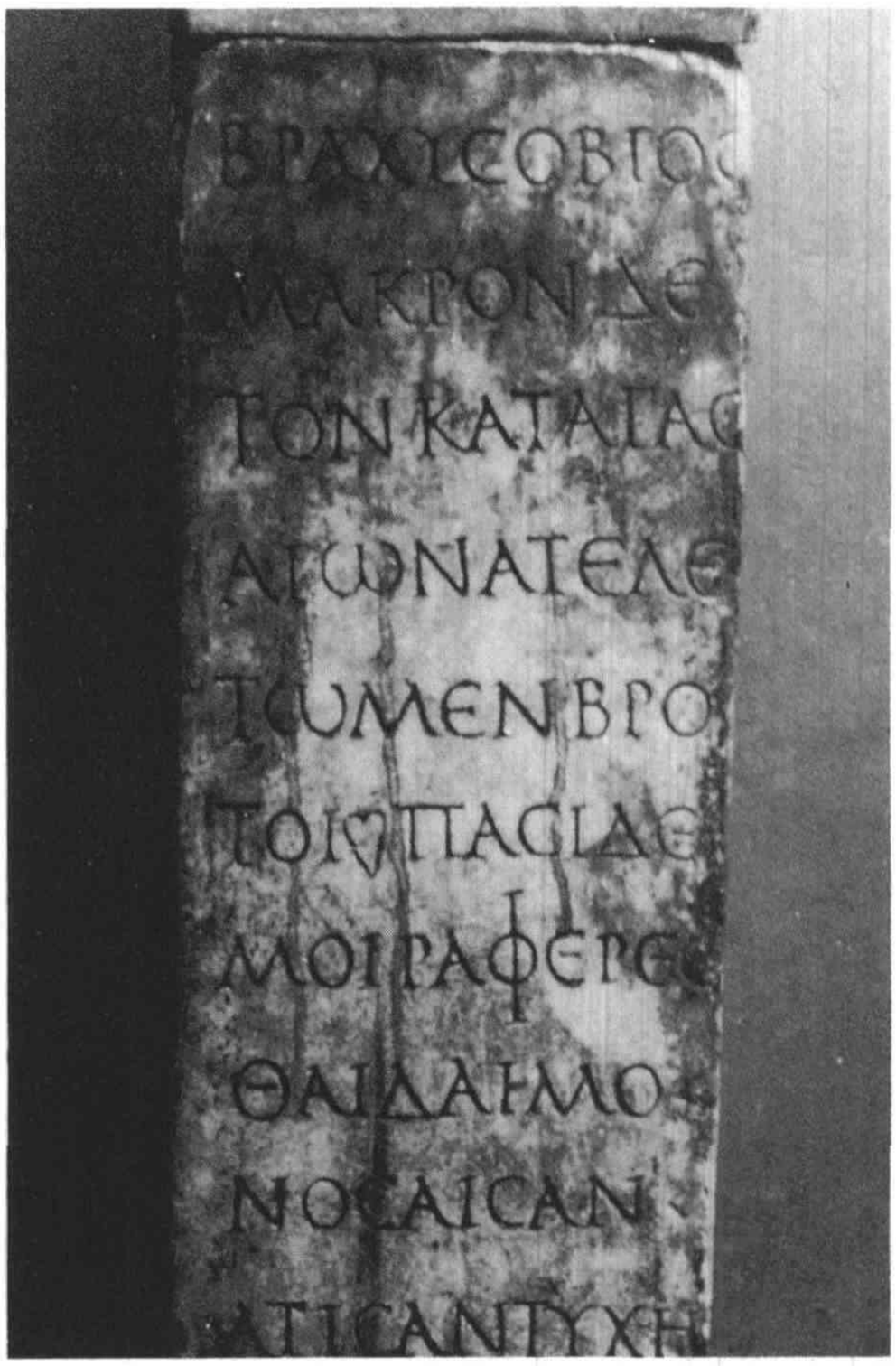
> I am Hippocrates the physician. . . . For my friends, among whom I can truly say I am known to many of you and many of your cities, and to speak figuratively, my name has traveled even more widely than my form, and that, I think, is because out of my science comes the cause of health and life for men: not only those in your country but to those many Greeks in your vicinity am I known.
>
> (*Speech at the Altar,* translated by Smith)

> My father chose in your behalf, for me as his son, that I wander about in a strange land, and on the sea, and in the dangers of war, and among sicknesses, which generally settle more on those whose lives are spent wandering about than on those in a settled life . . . I helped you and underwent dangers whenever the time came. And in both of these pursuits not disease nor distress nor fear of the enemy on the sea or land held me back.
>
> (*Ambassadorial Speech,* translated by Smith)

The fictional portrait could not be completed without the *Decree of the Athenians,* portions of which read:

> Hippocrates of Cos, being a physician and descended from Asclepius, has shown great concern for the safety of the Greek people. . . . In order that medical science bequeathed to the Greeks would preserve safe those that were ill from it he generously published his writings on medical science because he wanted there to be many





Bust of Hippocrates and supporting pillar bearing the inscription "Short is life, but long is the time we mortals spend in the earth after death." They were discovered in 1940 in the necropolis of the Isola Sacra, Porto di Roma (Museum of Ostia).

physicians who saved people. It is decreed by the people to initiate him into the great mysteries at public expense as was done with Heracles, the son of Zeus. And to crown him with a gold crown worth one thousand gold pieces, and to proclaim the crown at the great Panathenaia at the athletic competition. And that it be permitted to all sons of the Coans to be ephebes in Athens, since their country has begotten such a man. And that there be for Hippocrates citizenship, and sustenance in the Prytaneum for his lifetime.

(*Decree,* translated by Smith.)

Physicians still believe that they are citizens of every country, an ideal supposedly proclaimed by the Athenians in the fifth century B.C. The pseudo-Hippocratic author of *Decree* has it right: there is awe for doctors who ignore borders and politics, wars, dictators, and ever-present plagues as they minister to the sick, the dying, and the recovering. No longer need one fumble the questions of Hippocrates in "history" as opposed to historical fiction from antiquity: Smith's texts and translations should convince one that there are only *two* sources for the "historical" Hippocrates, and they remain the two passages in two of Plato's dialogues. And they are all.

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Homer

(circa eighth–seventh centuries B.C.)

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MAJOR WORKS: *Iliad* and *Odyssey* (circa 8th–7th centuries B.C.).

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Translations in English: *Iliad,* translated by Richmond Lattimore (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1961); *Odyssey,* translated by Lattimore (New York: Harper & Row, 1975); *The Iliad of Homer,* translated by Robert Fitzgerald (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1989); *The Odyssey of Homer,* translated by Fitzgerald (New York: Doubleday, 1990); *Iliad,* translated by Robert Fagles (New York: Viking, 1990); *Odyssey,* translated by Fagles (New York: Viking, 1991).

Homer is the name that has come down through the centuries as the author of the two earliest surviving poetic works of ancient Greece, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey.* Yet nothing is securely known about the authorship of these poems. Such was the reverence with which the ancient Greeks approached these poems that Homer was often called "the holy poet"–not because he had produced sacred verse, but because the two poems established a view of humankind that was highly satisfying to their audience and because these texts, the earliest poetry the Greeks had, were suitable for recitation at the most solemn civic occasions. It is mildly ironic, therefore, that modern scholarship has established a theory of the origins of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* that more or less dismisses the possibility of there having been any one author of both poems–or, for that matter, of either poem. Homer, it seems, was not an individual poet but, more likely than not, a group of singers who composed the works attributed to the name of Homer. And yet the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* have always enjoyed such strong and universal popularity that in the Western European world Homer is the one poet's name that can be expected to be known by almost anyone.

The ancient Greeks generally described Homer as a blind poet who lived on the island of Chios in the eastern Aegean Sea. Since Demodocus, one of the two poets described in the *Odyssey,* is blind, this aspect of the traditional portrait of Homer probably came from the poetic description. It is probably fair to say that the idea of Homer that was developed over the centuries by the early Greeks was altogether inspired by the poems themselves. It is interesting to note, however, that the modern theory of the origin of the poems insists on a poet who neither read nor wrote; blindness is the perfect metaphor for this condition.

The theory that posits a preliterate poet in the creation of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* starts with the fact that during the period in which the two poems most likely took shape, the ancient Greeks had no system of writing capable of transcribing or transmitting such long and complex poems. Therefore, it is argued, the two poems represent written versions that were set down after centuries of experimentation, of spontaneous performance, and, most important, of the development of a specialized language of formula and stereotype in which generations of poets slowly worked up ever larger story lines, refining some stories and dropping others, until two long narratives came to dominate the performance expectations of the populace. As these narratives were repeated time after time they began to coalesce into fixed versions until finally, after a Greek system of writing had been invented, these versions were somehow written down or dictated and eventually became not

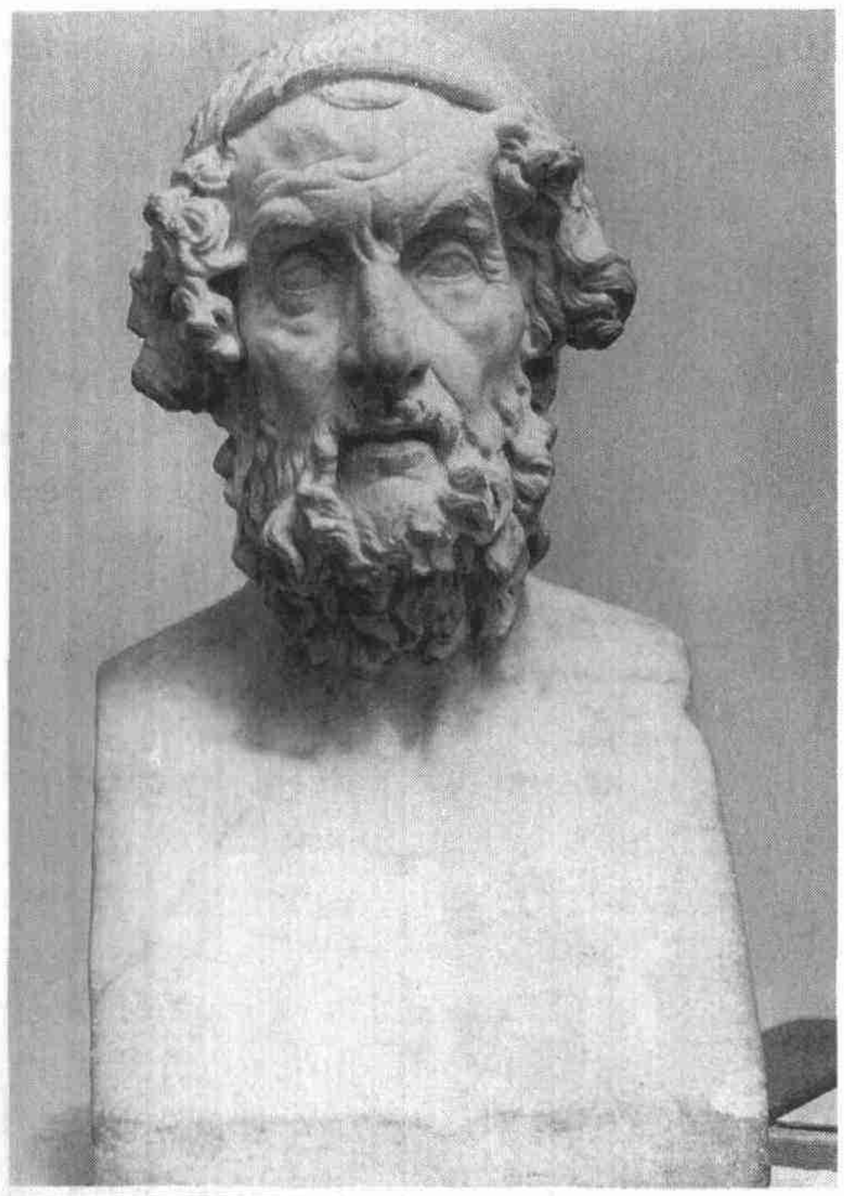
only fixed texts, but the two epic poems for which the Greeks would claim no equal. And thus they have entered the Western literary canon, from time to time, to be sure, challenged by the champions of the *Aeneid,* the late-first-century-B.C. epic by the Roman poet Virgil, but again and again reasserting their primacy of place.

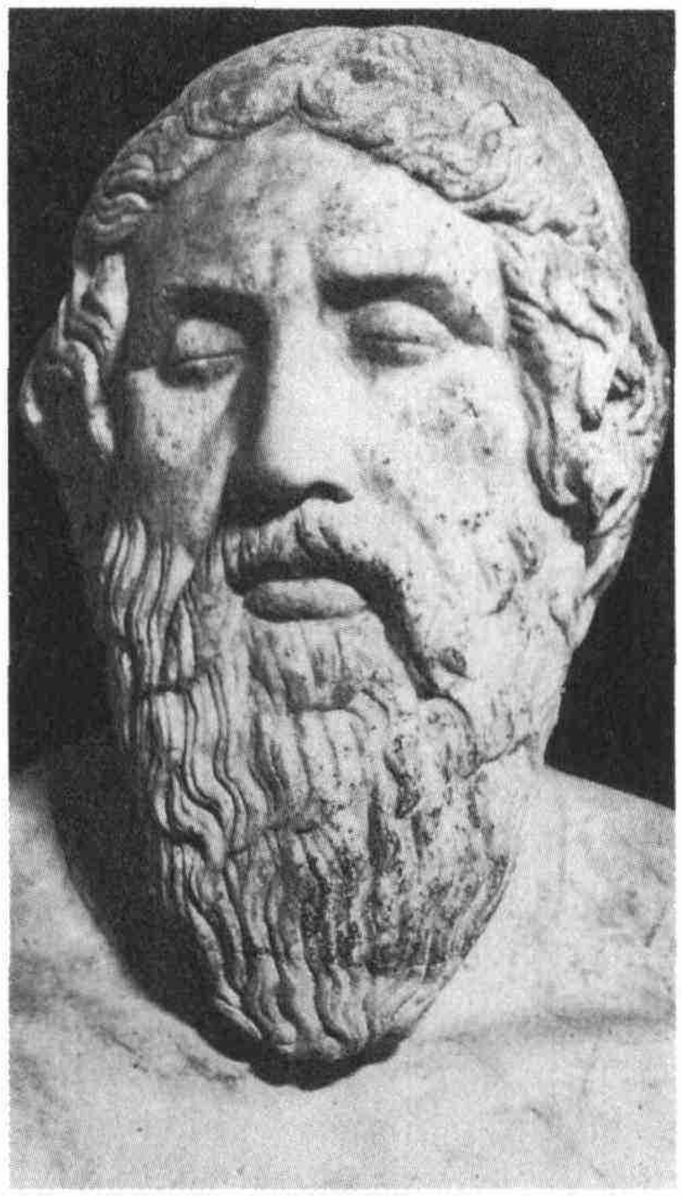
Although there are few hard facts on which to proceed, there are tantalizing bits and pieces with which to fabricate a theory. For instance, the first-century-B.C. Roman writer Cicero refers to a tradition that credits the Athenian Peisistratus, who became tyrant in 561 B.C., with arranging for the commitment of the Homeric poems to writing and their subsequent recitation at the Panathenaic Festival, which he is also given credit for organizing. This notion fits in well with the idea that a centuries-long tradition of oral poets working out the story line and progressively more of its details had, by the sixth century B.C., fashioned a kind of monumental poem that easily made the transition to a written text, as demanded by Peisistratus. But the Ciceronian story also gave impetus throughout the nineteenth century to the theory that Peisistratus had authorized a synthetic treatment of a great many pieces of a story, that is, various episodes of the story of the Trojan War. The poem's growth and development by previously memorized episodes seems to be substantiated by the scene at the court of the Phaeacians where Demodocus is called on to sing various favorite bits *(Odyssey,* 8.492–495). Nineteenth-century Homeric criticism rested on the premise that the many inconsistencies and awkwardnesses in the text betokened the joining of these fundamentally discontinuous episodes.

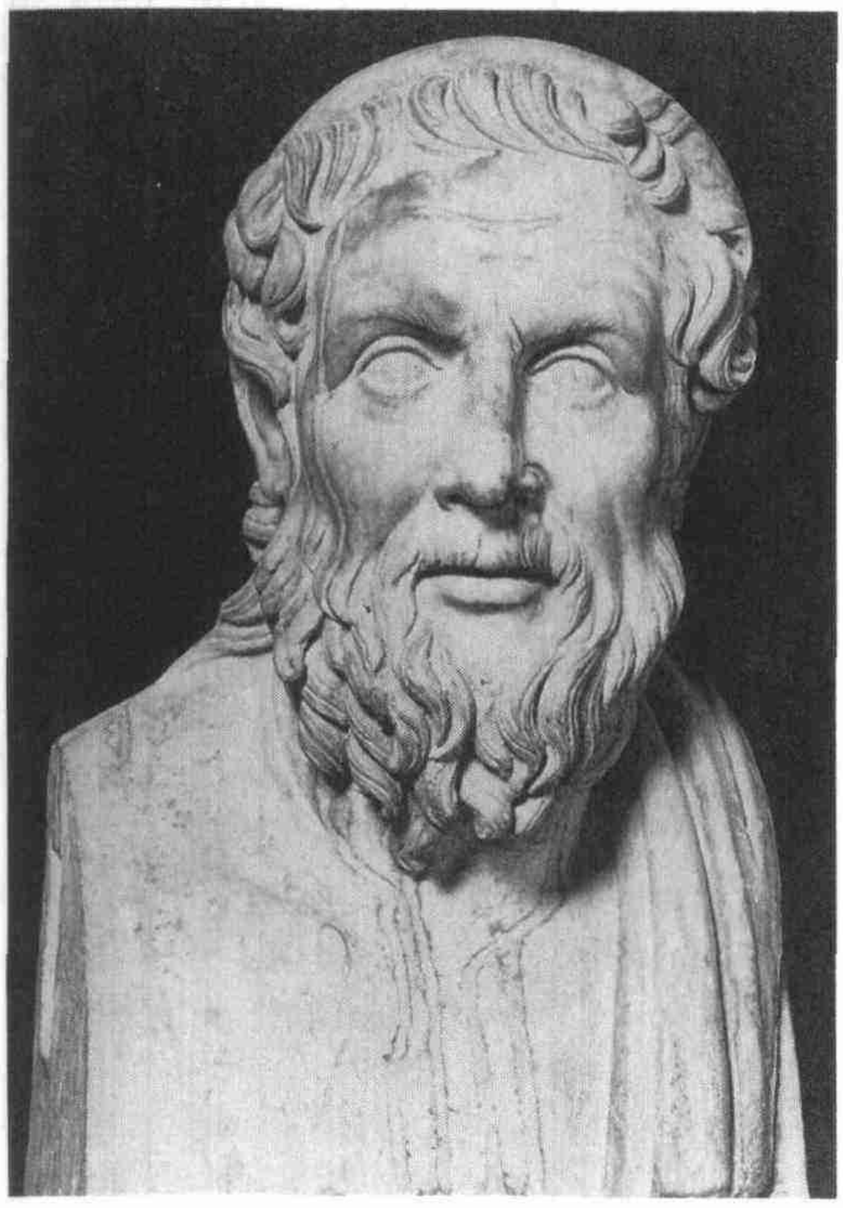
This sort of criticism was largely influenced by what seemed to be analogous work on the Bible. Nineteenth-century biblical criticism was committed to detecting the variant texts that had been combined into the one sacred text. The early creators of the Bible narrative, however, would have been constrained by a different method: they would have introduced all the variants because all were equally sacred. But since the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are not sacred texts, one would imagine that if there had been editors of the Homeric poems they, like all editors since, would have taken out and smoothed over the problem passages. That inconsistencies and rough places remain seems to proponents of the oral theory as proof that in performance no one, neither performer nor auditor, noticed such things. And certainly once fixed recitation began (presumably in the sixth century B.C.), no performer seemed to have had the audacity to alter such passages. After the sixth century the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* came to be recited formally by a guild of men, the *Homeridae,* who passed on from one generation to the next the style of delivery. There is a portrait of one of these men in Plato's dialogue *Ion* (circa 380s B.C.), in which Socrates, with his usual ironic, patronizing, and in some ways ridiculous questions, tries to discomfit the Homeric singer and force him to admit that he knows nothing of what he does other than the doing of it.

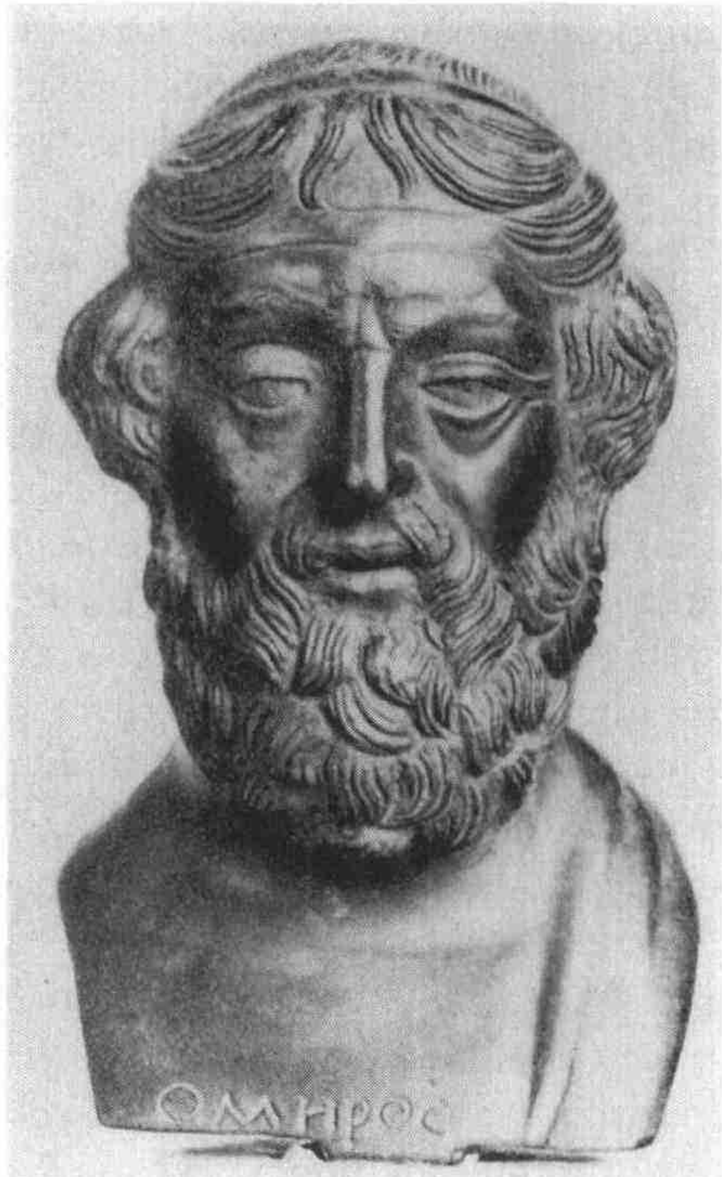
It could be said that Homer the poet, Homer the creator, is in fact the centuries-long tradition in which the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* took shape; or that Homer is the reflection of the deepest yearnings and expectations of generations of audiences who finally dictated what stories and manner of presentation were suitable, if not mandatory, for the singers. If, then, one is to try to understand Homer, to try to imagine the creative poetic undertaking that gave these two poems to the world, the poems themselves must be allowed to be the sole witness. There is simply no record of a poet. Modern literary critical theory insists on the supreme authority of the reader or of the text while denying to the author any stake at all in the text being read, and the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are perfectly suited to these theoretical positions. There is no poet's biography as there is, for instance, in the case of Virgil, Dante, or Percy Bysshe Shelley. The Homeric texts stand without antecedent, without author, without context, isolated fragments cast up out of the vast sea of the unknown. One reads the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey,* and one's imagination creates a poet, or at least a mind, a personality, an aesthetic stance, a moral and ethical sensibility to assign to the unknown creator of the texts. What, then, do the texts reveal?

First, it is immensely important that these poems were created in an oral culture. The poet in the early periods of Greek antiquity was a performer who created his poem anew on each occasion of its recitation. Scholars can identify with some degree of certainty the way in which the language of the poems came into being as an aid to spontaneous recitation and improvisation. The language of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* was never used for everyday communication. It is a stylized language made up of formulas, noun and adjective combinations having metrical values that fill certain segments of a dactylic hexametric poetic line. The dactylic hexameter, one long syllable followed by two short syllables (for which another long syllable can be substituted), is possibly an inheritance in Greek from an earlier Indo-European poetic language. In any case, the epic language seems to be based on









Homer – four bust types. Portraits of historical figures who lived before the fifth century B.C. were based on conventional representations; examples of the most important types of Homeric portraiture are (clockwise from upper left): the Hellenistic, blind type (British Museum, cat. no. 1825); the Epimenides type (Sala delle Muse, Vatican, inv. 315); the Modena type (Museo Estense, Modena, no. 2121); and the Apollonius of Tyana type (Stanza dei Filosofi, Capitoline Museum, Rome, no. 65).

creative combinations of phrases rather than of individual words. Readers of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* are likely to remember expressions such as "the wine-dark sea," "Menelaus of the loud war cry," or "swift-footed Achilles." A great part of the narrative of the poems is made up of repeated phrases of a given metrical value. Modern-day readers are often repelled by what they consider the heavy, dragging effect of the repeated phraseology, but this reaction simply marks the great difference between the literate culture of the present and the oral culture of preliterate society. What is heard in repetition becomes part of the texture of the continuous utterance and does not have the prominence that the reader assigns to each word as he or she apprehends it from the printed page at varying speeds, depending on the individual's concentration or reading ability. Oral poetic narrative is in this sense more like late-twentieth-century rap music, the language of which is both repetitive and shaped and delivered by the singer, which means that the speed of apprehension is more in the control of the performer than the auditor, but it is by repetition principally that the singer makes the words accessible to the listener.

There are a few revealing references to singers in the poems. Achilles sulking in his tent, his comrade Patroclus at his side, is described (*Iliad,* 9.189) as "singing the deeds of famous men," the kind of formula that suggests that he himself is attempting the sort of stylized narrative that makes up the poem. This suggestion, in turn, implies that intelligent, well-rehearsed amateurs were sufficiently familiar with the style that they could try it. It gives a hint of the accessibility of these poems, of their central place in the lives of the listeners. In the *Odyssey* there is considerably more reference to poets, as befits a poem that has as its principal figure a man who, wherever he goes, tells stories and gives fictional accounts of his background ("lying," as the poet calls it). It is related that when Agamemnon went off to Troy he left Clytemnestra in the care of a bard who was, however, sent away to a deserted island by Aegisthus so that the latter could have a free hand in trying to seduce the queen. Whether the singers of the court ordinarily exercised such moral authority as this passage suggests, or whether the poets who created this poem were doing a bit of self-advertisement, cannot, of course, be known.

At the beginning of the poem (1.325–352) the grieving Penelope asks Phemius to desist as he sings to her son, Telemachus, and to the suitors about the aftermath of the Trojan War and the return of the heroes. Clearly, it reminds her too much of her still-absent husband. Telemachus intervenes, however, remonstrating with his mother and reminding her that "people always will more readily applaud the newest song to circulate among the singers." The reader will note with some surprise that the text seems to be endorsing originality, since the theory of oral poetic recitation lays a heavy premium on tradition and repetition. If, on the other hand, the reader stops to consider that the *Odyssey* is, in fact, one long tale of the return of a particular hero and that Telemachus is encouraging a poet to sing a song of returns against his mother's wish for other aspects of the Trojan story, it seems to be the case that at the beginning of the poem its creator or creators are insisting on the narrative line that is about to unfold.

There is a theory that the oral poetic tradition of these people arose from what is called "praise-blame poetry." This phrase obviously relates to the *Iliad,* a long narrative recounting, with high enthusiasm and approbation, the exploits of a variety of heroes on the field of battle and, on occasion, remarking as well on their failures of strategy and attitude. The *Odyssey,* however, seems to be something quite different. Perhaps as the return narratives began to take shape there was some impetus for the poets to apologize for their new creation, if only in the subtlest fashion, as in Telemachus's rebuke to his mother's tearful entreaties to Phemius.

The most extended and vivid portrait of a singer is in the *Odyssey,* in the episode that takes place on the island of Scheria among the Phaeacians. The blind singer Demodocus is described as he entertains at the court of King Alkinous (8.471–521). The court assembles for his singing, and on one occasion he provides the music for formal dancing. He shows himself to be master of the heroic tradition as he sings stories of the Trojan War, responding to requests from his audience for various favorite episodes. The text contains the entirety of one of his songs (8.266–367); quite different from the narratives of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey,* it is a witty description of Aphrodite's adulterous relationship with Ares and of the clever capture of the two in their lovemaking by her husband, Hephaestus. It is much more like the narratives of the gods in the so-called Homeric hymns. This interlude serves as a reminder that the creators and practitioners of the oral poetic art had more than one kind of subject matter available for delivery.

If the *Iliad* may be styled a species of praise-blame poetry, then one may assume for the poet or poets enormous power in the community, since it is he or they who shape and assess the behavior of its

young male members. The role of poetry is also to explain and, finally, to justify the evil in human life. Helen can say to her brother-in-law Hector, trying to make sense of the dreadful and fatal predicament in which they find themselves (*Iliad,* 6.357–358), "Zeus has set this horrible fate upon us so that we may be the subjects of song for later generations." Alkinous, king of the Phaeacians, in talking of the Trojan War, echoes the sentiment (*Odyssey,* 8.579–580) when he remarks that the gods caused the Trojan War and "the destruction of men" so as to provide story material for the singers in later generations.

In a preliterate culture the past exists only in oral poetic performance; people and their acts can live on beyond the moment only in the memory of the poetic tradition. So from one perspective it is possible to say that events happen only as song, and the people behind the events are, in turn, only part of the fabric of song. Then, too, people living during something so grand and so awful as the ten-year siege and final destruction of Troy can only make sense of these events by assuming that they are finally transcendent not simply as history but as saga, as traditional narrative, as the song that singers sing. People gain a place in history, in human consciousness, only by being memorialized in epic song.

In Euripides' *Medea* (431 B.C.) Jason makes a telling remark to Medea when he is defending his behavior toward her. He says that he brought her out of the obscurity of Colchis to Greece, where she became known to all. Behind both the Homeric and the Euripidean passages lurks the notion that one who is forgotten is utterly dead, that some kind of immortality is promised to those who become the subjects of song. Thus, the praise-blame poetry has yet a greater role than justifying the existence of its heroes: it confers on them everlasting existence in the memories of their community. It is an existence similar to the eternal fame nowadays enjoyed by movie stars who appear forever on videocassettes or by opera divas whose recorded voices will not die out of the consciousness of humanity.

One may thus imagine for the ancient singer of epic poetic tales the kind of conferred value that Nestor in the *Iliad* is forever trying to wrest for himself from the younger men around him. Nestor is an old man who cannot claim to be one of the principal warriors in the battlefield, although the poet takes sufficient license so as to present Nestor girded up and in his chariot out on the field. Whenever he appears in dialogue, however, he insists on remembering events that he claims to have been of far greater moment than the present circumstance – there having been greater warriors, greater battles, far more momentous crises in the days of his youth – and thereby to establish his worth as memory's repository of valuable times gone by, now inaccessible to his audience except through his retelling of them. In the same way, only the epic poet can bestow on his contemporaries their own past. Just as any individual will hang in fascination upon the lips of some older relative who can describe the youth and early exploits of loved ones insufficiently understood or known, so the audiences of the oral poet, it may be assumed, desperately needed and hence valorized highly the performances of their singers.

If the reader stops to consider objectively the young male heroes of the *Iliad,* he or she will discover that they are possibly no more than brutes and thugs, the kind of physically overdeveloped and oversized males who terrorize people throughout the world today whenever social arrangements break down. The world Homer describes had no police force, no city government, no standing armies, no received body of law, no hotels nor restaurants for travelers, none of the amenities and securities on which modern civilized life depends. Any television viewer who witnesses the brutality and mayhem in areas undergoing revolution or in cities where law and order have broken down will recognize the modern Achilles or Diomedes among the smiling, handsome, brutish murderers, rapists, and plunderers, who are seen with gun in hand or being led off by grim-faced militia or police. When Phoenix says to Achilles in book 9 that the gods will give him strength but that he must curb the anger in his heart, he is essentially saying that the warrior class to which Achilles belongs is made up of physical specimens whose genetic inheritance is to be stronger than the rest of the community, by virtue of which they must watch their natural and acculturated inclination to act out their feelings in acts of mayhem. One can only pity such a class of young men who are trained to be the warriors and defenders of the community, whose very attributes make them dangerous to their society. Both poems are filled with the stories of young men who inadvertently kill a kin and must flee to another community (for instance, the description of Patroclus's background in the *Iliad* [23.86–87]: "I killed the son of Amphidamas. I was just a child, I didn't mean to do it, but I got so angry when we were playing chess").

The Homeric poems have become the property of Western Europe's middle class, and, as such, their characters have been reread as proper young

The Trojan Horse; relief from a storage jar, circa 675 B.C., found in Mykonos (Archaeological Museum, Mykonos)

men. But that is the necessary accommodation any society makes in order to assimilate a work of art to the culture's needs. The Diomedes who slits the throat of a young man to whom he has just promised freedom or the Odysseus who determines to hang in his palace vulnerable young women who have been forced into sexual service by the rowdy suitors are far more reminiscent of Mafia figures on the streets of Manhattan's Lower East Side in the 1920s than gentlemen to be found in the drawing room. Certainly Leo Tolstoy in *War and Peace* (1862–1869) and Margaret Mitchell in *Gone with the Wind* (1936) have modeled their tales of a society besieged by war on the *Iliad,* but there is no Prince Andrey or Ashley Wilkes to be found among Homer's gallery of heroes. They would long since have been muscled out of the action by their Bronze Age prototypes.

The poets of these poems depict a society that survives to a large extent on plunder, whether it be the sacking of cities or the rustling of cattle (as reflected in the decoration of Achilles' new shield [*Iliad,* 18.491ff.], in which the archetypal city is portrayed as the city of peace and the city of war). Such a society is dependent on its physically powerful young men. The *Iliad* is a cautionary tale for these young men, and one can see how valuable such a narrative would have been in furthering the interests of the community. It tells the story of Achilles' great anger at his superiors, who make demands of him that he feels are unjust, of his leaving the battlefield and staying apart in his tent, and then, when his friend has died, of his returning to fight, acting out in a kind of surreal burst of murderous physical frenzy the rage that he feels in his loss. What is important to note is that Achilles is described in formulaic language, as are all the other young warriors of the poem; when he returns to fight one has the sense that for this young man, as for all the others, there is no other language in which he might be described, no other setting in which he might be portrayed, and, in so symmetrical a story line, no other

place in which he could be. The truth of his stereotypical existence is that Achilles was born to live and die as a warrior. A great sense of weary desperation overcomes almost all the heroes, and especially Achilles, as the poet describes them in the *Iliad.* Henry David Thoreau says in *Walden* (1854) that most men "lead lives of quiet desperation." In the *Iliad* the men shout out their desperation all the time; nonetheless, it is perhaps this desperation that explains why this poem has been so immensely popular with generations of readers.

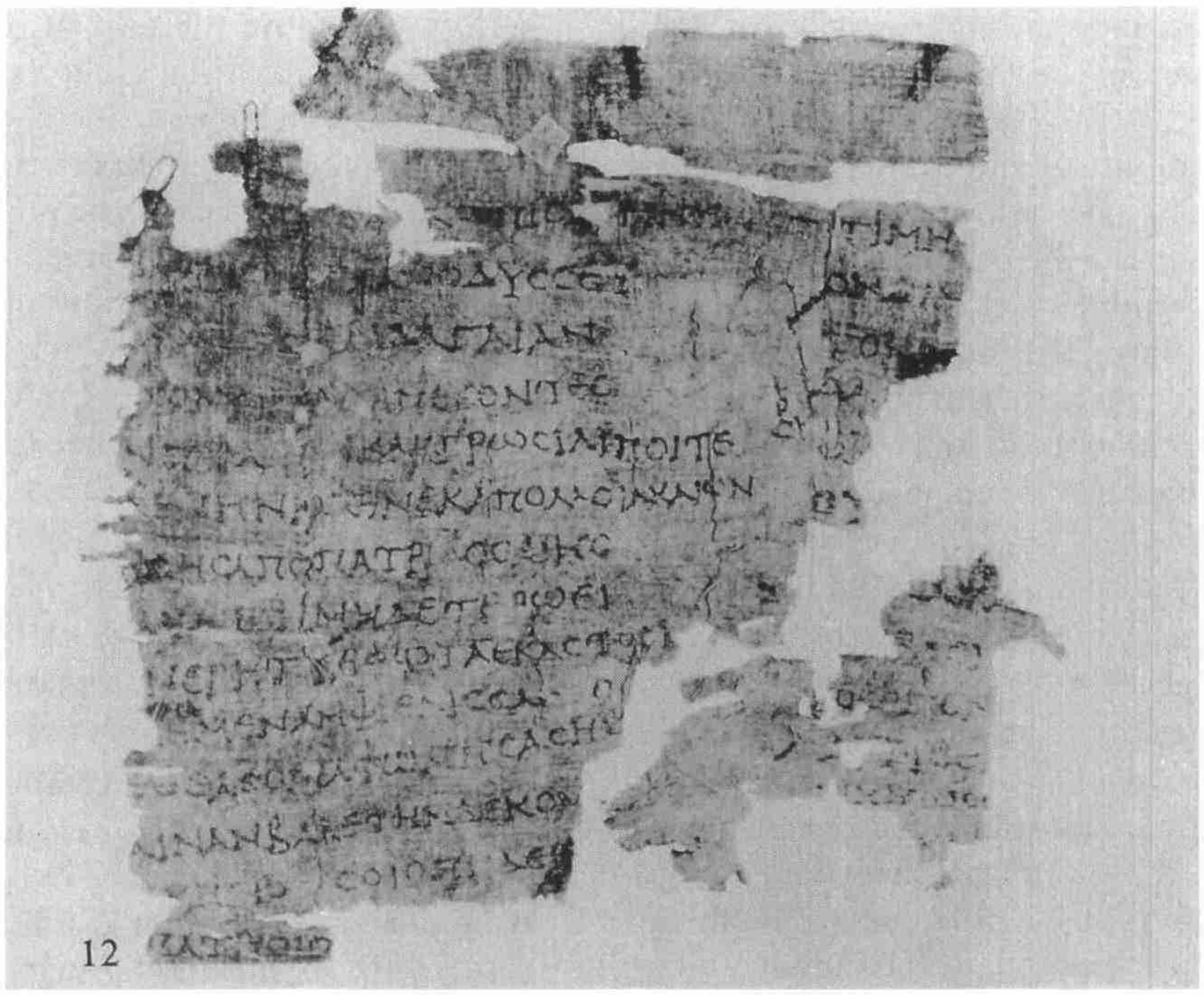
A narrative that presents everything in typical scenes with stereotypical characters described in conventional, formulaic language relies on monolithic, bold, almost caricature-like renderings of persons. Rather than an elaborated display of details such as one finds in the characterizations of the French novelist Gustave Flaubert, Homer limits, isolates, and emphasizes some single feature. From time to time Homer speaks of a man's areté or even an object's areté. This word is somewhat hard to define but seems to mean, more than anything else, a defining quality. Thus, although a knife may be richly embellished and have an ivory handle it is, nonetheless, defined only by its cutting surface. That is its areté. The areté of a young male of the class of Achilles, as he would be defined in the Homeric narrative, is his capacity to triumph on the field of battle. The community valorized him, as does the poem, for this one particular capacity. It follows that such a male warrior is exercising his arête to the utmost in the moment when he is committing all his superb strength and intellect against the one supreme force that will finally overpower him.

Thus, a male warrior realizes himself most completely by exerting himself to the utmost in that one moment before dying. The sixteenth book of the *Iliad* describes the star turn of Patroclus as he stands in for Achilles, fights brilliantly, kills such celebrities as Zeus's son Sarpedon, and finally is himself slain by Hector, the principal Trojan warrior, in a hero's death made all the more glamorous because the first blow struck against him was from the hand of the god Apollo. Hence it is that all Homeric heroes have the melancholic subconscious awareness that they are doomed to die. The poem presents this awareness in the dilemma of Achilles, who tells the others in book 9 of the *Iliad* that his goddess mother Thetis gave him the choice of living to old age in obscurity back home in Phthia or dying with glory on the field of battle of Troy. For the stereotype of which Achilles is representative that is, obviously, no choice at all. The poem demonstrates his relentlessly moving from his protest withdrawal back to the field of battle, in other words, away from life and back to death. That is the melancholic truth of this poem, a true precursor to Athenian tragic drama of the fifth century.

Some six hundred years later a critic whose writings have come down under the name Longinus claimed that the *Iliad* was the poem of Homer's youth and the *Odyssey* of his old age. While his reasons are less than compelling, it is possible to see the anguish of the young warrior in the *Iliad* as representative of any young male's sudden realization that all the vital energies on which his tremendous strength, courage, and daring rest are more than likely doomed in the incessant warfare and killing that define his culture. In ages that no longer have such bloodshed as part of their daily fare, the poem remains popular because it speaks to the anguished realization of the great nothingness of death that besets the young, by whom nothing yet has been accomplished, and lays to rest the compulsion to perform.

It is far more immediately apparent why one can style the *Odyssey* a poem of Homer's old age. It is the tale of a man who has survived the war at Troy where so many of his mates perished, who has wandered the world for ten years, encountering and surmounting all manner of real and fairy-tale obstacles, and who finally returns to his home, fights the forces arrayed there, and wins back to his arms a wife and son who have remained faithful to his memory throughout this period. In sum, it is the tale of surviving into old age. Unlike the constant self-pitying assessments of the characters of the *Iliad,* the hero of the *Odyssey* exudes satisfaction. The poem is about success and triumph in life.

From another perspective one could say that the *Odyssey* is yet another version of the Cinderella story. A hero who is the victim of a malign deity passes years of his life suffering one calamity after another because of this celestial ill will, and yet he has a protector goddess who follows his footsteps as he makes his way painfully through his life's journey. When, finally, a contest is held for the possession of the princess, it is he, disguised as a beggar, abused and mocked by all at the court, who manages to string the bow and shoot the arrow through the axe holes. Odysseus in this story is Cinderella among the ashes; the angry god Poseidon is the wicked stepmother; Athena is the Fairy Godmother; the suitors are the snickering, disbelieving ugly stepsisters; Penelope is Prince Charming; and, finally, the contest of the bow is the trying on of the glass slipper.



Fragment of a second-century-B.C. papyrus text of Homer's Iliad *(University of California, 2390)*

Modern students of romance narratives from the early Christian era draw attention to features of those stories that are found in the *Odyssey,* as though it were a prototypical romance. The common romance plot in which star-crossed lovers struggle to regain each other's side – he traveling across vast territories, surmounting all manner of plights and obstacles, she fending off one assault after another on her chastity – does resemble the story of Odysseus struggling to get home to his wife and of Penelope struggling to keep the suitors who want to marry her from achieving their ambition. Coupled with this pattern is a story line that is associated with what is called the comic sensibility, defined not as a view of the world as funny but as one that says yes to life – especially to eating and to sex: a story line that ends happily with the reunion of persons long thought to be dead, a reunion achieved through the revelation of identity through tokens. In the *Odyssey* the hero travels the world; he passes seven years on the island of Ogygia as the unwilling bed partner of the nymph Calypso; after a year of coupling quite happily with the witch Circe on the island of Aeaea, he has to be forcefully hastened on his way by his impatient crew. Shipwrecked on the island of Scheria, he meets and is attracted to the virgin princess Nausicaa, who would like nothing better than for the stranger cast up by the sea to end up as her husband. The story turns on arrivals and departures, occasions associated with lavish banquets and with strangers identifying themselves. These episodes culminate in the scene in which Penelope, always suspicious of arriving strangers – especially when they are dressed as beggars – provokes the masterful Odysseus into revealing himself through tokens so intimate (the secret construction of their conjugal bed) that only a husband would know them.

These analogies to Cinderella and to early romance narratives indicate how different a poem the *Odyssey* is from the *Iliad* and thus invite speculation about the former's authorship. For centuries it was assumed that the two poems were from the hand of the same author; but modern oral theory has encouraged the view that the *Odyssey* is not only from another tradition of storytelling but also, perhaps, from a somewhat later time than the *Iliad.* The two poems can be seen as two halves of a human reality: the tragic and the comic, the young and the old, the heroic and the fairy-tale – even the masculine and the feminine: the *Iliad* is a story of violence, dominance, destruction, and competition, whereas the *Odyssey* is filled with powerful women characters and with relationships and events in which women play an important role, such as marriage, banquets, suitors, and contests for princesses.

It is also noteworthy that the narrator of the *Odyssey* never alludes to any event that occurs in the

Iliad and that several ideas prominent in the *Iliad* are upset or rejected in the *Odyssey*. For instance, in the final scene in the *Iliad* Achilles offers Priam a kind of consolation, bleak and desperate though it may be: there are, he says, two jars in Zeus's palace, one filled with evil and the other filled with good; Zeus sometimes sprinkles evil and sometimes good mixed with evil upon the heads of humans far below. The implication is that the universe is indifferent, arbitrary, and wanton. This dark view is in keeping with the narrator's perspective throughout the poem. The *Odyssey,* by contrast, begins with Zeus complaining to the other gods that humankind have the habit of ascribing all their troubles to the gods when, in fact, they bring those troubles on themselves. He cites the example of Aegisthus, who was told not to seduce Clytemnestra, disregarded this heavenly advice, and was killed in revenge by her son, Orestes. The implication is that there is some system of good and evil in the universe and that the good and prudent man will triumph, and by the end of the poem Odysseus has killed the evil suitors who have wasted his resources with their constant partying and their attempts to get into his wife's bed. Other indications of a kind of dialogue between the two poems are the scene in the *Odyssey* in which the shade of Achilles says that he would rather be a laborer on earth than king of the Underworld, and the long description of Achilles' funeral with which the *Odyssey* ends as its hero rests at home with his wife and son. The glamorous embrace of death with which the glory-seeking killers of the *Iliad* justified their existence has been replaced by the less sensational but far more satisfying pleasures of hearth and home earned by the tired old traveler.

The narrative structures of the two poems differ considerably as well. The *Iliad* focuses on a small moment – approximately forty days – in the ten-year siege, capture, and destruction of the city of Troy; the story takes place mainly on the shore and plains before the great citadel and occasionally in Troy itself. But, as Aristotle remarked, the poet of the *Iliad* manages to weave into his narrowly focused moment almost all the other episodes of the war, which convey the panoramic sense of immensity that has thenceforth defined the word *epic.* Of course, modern critics assume that the Homeric audience had already heard the *Iliad* story and similar stories, so that they had a rather well-developed notion of the context before the performance began. In the *Iliad* there are also allusions – sometimes rather superficial, sometimes fuller – to other mythological systems, such as the stories associated with the hero Heracles. These allusions suggest a wide range of knowledge on the part of the audience of what passes for history in a preliterate society. The *Odyssey,* on the other hand, begins on Olympus with a council of the gods, then follows Telemachus as he journeys from Ithaca to the mainland Peloponnisos in search of news of his father. After another divine council in Olympus the story moves to the island of Ogygia, where Odysseus is introduced, then goes with him through a sea storm until he is washed up on the shores of the Phaeacians' island. While among the Phaeacians, Odysseus delivers a first-person account of his adventures during the ten years since he left Troy. The Phaeacians take Odysseus home, after which begins the tight, narrowly focused, temporally confined type of narrative that is associated with the *Iliad.*

The *Iliad* is about Achilles' reaction to being forced to yield. In the opening book his overlord Agamemnon demands that Achilles give up a young woman awarded to him as a prize for his valor. He is stayed from murderous anger by a common sense that tells him to yield to Agamemnon. He compensates for this humiliation by refusing to fight any longer, and he retires from the field of battle to his tent. His mother, the goddess Thetis, wins from Zeus the promise that the Achaeans will lose in battle so grievously as to leave no doubt of her son's overwhelming importance to their cause and of Agamemnon's folly in abusing him so. This promise is kept in books 8 through 16, until Achilles' friend Patroclus, in a desperate attempt to make up for his comrade's defection, takes the field and is killed by the city's principal defender, Hector. Thereupon Achilles' wrath against Agamemnon is converted into anger at his fate and at human destiny in general.

In the nineteenth book Achilles and Agamemnon reconcile their differences before an assemblage of the troops. Achilles wishes to rush out to the fight; but Odysseus delivers a crucial speech advising him to accept the necessity of stopping to eat, arguing that nothing will bring back the dead and that the living must get on with the process of living, a process most obviously represented by the act of eating. Eating is also a way of acknowledging the necessity of yielding to the body, whether in hunger or in death. Achilles proceeds to fight wantonly and brutally, expelling the demons from his psyche, until he kills Hector before the walls of Troy. It is only at the end, when Hector's father, Priam, comes to ransom his son's body, that Achilles yields to the demands of human existence: he gives back the body and encourages the old man to stop crying and to eat dinner. Achilles'

The Apotheosis of Homer; marble relief, circa second or first century B.C., by Archelaos of Priene (British Museum)

encouraging the grief-stricken old king to eat is the final revelation of his own yielding to death, a process that began so dramatically in his anger at Agamemnon's haughty behavior twenty-four books earlier.

At the beginning of the poem the narrator introduces a series of events that seem more suited to other moments in the chronology of the Trojan War, but he lodges them securely into the nexus he is creating in his more restricted story line. Thus, in the second book there is a catalogue of the ships and crews that sailed from Aulis, masquerading as a review of the forces on the beach at Troy; in the third book there is a duel between Menelaus and Paris that obviously belongs to the beginning of the war. Aristotle praises Homer for this technique because it keeps the focus on the briefer moment, whereas some of Homer's contemporaries and successors managed to bring off nothing more than a dreary chronicle of events strung together by the mechanical connective "and then." And, as Northrop Frye remarks in his *Anatomy of Criticism* (1957), there are many narratives from military cultures, not unlike the one depicted in this poem, in which the high courage and manly power of young men are sung in praise and glory; but the *Iliad* also portrays a great city on the verge of absolute and inevitable destruction, with its principal defender, Hector, bravely resigned to the doom that he knows will come. It is this added dimension that gives the *Iliad* the intimations of tragedy that make it unique in its genre.

The "ring" form of narration – events that create the beginning return at the end – is much in evidence in the *Iliad.* In the third book, for instance, the scene of Helen and Priam on the walls, gazing down on the opposing army chieftains, followed by Menelaus and Paris fighting below, comes back with great tragic irony in the twenty-second book

when Priam and Hecuba watch from the walls in horror as Achilles kills their son Hector, after which Hector's wife mounts the walls to watch her husband's corpse being dragged behind Achilles' chariot.

The *Odyssey* has an entirely different structure, consisting of three discrete elements: the *Telemachia,* or story of Telemachus's search for his father; the father's travels; and the homecoming. One might otherwise categorize the *Odyssey* narrative in terms of heroic or saga material, folktale or fairy-tale material, and domestic comedy. The early portion of the narrative focuses on Telemachus, Odysseus's son, as he sets out to get news of his father; what he learns from Nestor and Menelaus are a series of heroic-saga legends in which his father plays a role. The tone changes when Odysseus himself enters the narrative in the fifth book as the captive of a nymph on a seagirt island – hardly the posture of a hero of the *Iliad.* Shortly thereafter he finds himself at the court of the Phaeacians, where he delivers a first-person narrative several thousand lines long describing his adventures prior to that moment. These adventures incongruously place a male of the heroic-warrior tradition into the context of fairy tale. When, about halfway through the poem, Odysseus arrives on the shores of Ithaca, yet another narrative tone is introduced as the Iliadic hero enters a world of domestic intrigue in which the loyal servants, his son, his wife, and he himself in the disguise of a lowly beggar slowly position themselves, whether knowingly or not, for the final conflict with the suitors and the beggar's revelation of himself as master of the house.

The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* were long regarded as the first poems in the Western literary tradition. In the nineteenth century, however, tablets in Akkadian, Sumerian, and Hittite were discovered that, when assembled, present a coherent story about a great king, Gilgamesh (there are records of an actual king of that name in the third millennium B.C.), whose adventures have a striking similarity to events in the two Homeric poems. Gilgamesh, for instance, has a dear friend, Enkidu, with whom he travels, and whose death halfway through the narrative plunges Gilgamesh into profound despair. This situation reminds one of the relationship of Achilles and Patroclus in the *Iliad;* there is, in fact, a striking parallel between the two texts when the grieving survivors are compared in simile to a mother deer who has lost her young. Also, Gilgamesh rebuffs the overtures of the goddess Ishtar, as Odysseus, in the *Odyssey,* declines the gift of immortality from Calypso. Furthermore, Gilgamesh rejects the advice of the barmaid Siduri, who encourages him to give up his quest for immortality and stay with her to eat, drink, and make babies, which one suspects is the subtext of Odysseus's visit to the court of the Phaeacians and the interlude with Nausicaa. Gilgamesh has a goddess mother, Ninsun, who is not the *mater dolorosa* that Thetis is to Achilles but is, nonetheless, a hovering, nervous presence. Gilgamesh and Enkidu kill a giant, Humbaba, an act that earns them the enmity of the gods, much as Odysseus's blinding of the giant Polyphemus causes him to incur the wrath of Poseidon. Gilgamesh's journey through the Underworld to the old wise man Utnapishtim, who foretells his future, is similar to Odysseus's journey through the underworld to meet with Tiresias. All these similarities suggest a kind of Mediterranean story tradition – and several scholars extend it to the relationships of Jesus, his disciples, and the women in the Gospel narratives. The greatest difference between the Gilgamesh story and the Greek poems is the profound sense of despair that colors every action in the former.

The reader can project certain values from the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* onto the putative narrators of the poems. These values are an allegiance to hierarchy, the absolute superiority of the male sex, and the overriding obligation to pursue glory. The aristocratic males of the *Iliad* are constantly boasting of their genealogies, jockeying with one another so as to determine their ranking. The only occasion in the *Iliad* when a male who is other than an aristocratic warrior speaks is in the second book, when Thersites speaks against Agamemnon. Thersites, the narrator says, is a brute, ugly man. This description is, of course, true to the facts of this period in which the absence of good prenatal care, then later of superior diet, as well as the body-deforming experience of hard labor, would clearly distinguish the ordinary man from the aristocracy and its cult of the body beautiful.

There is a further distinction in the response to Thersites' verbal attack. Odysseus strikes him harshly with his staff; Thersites sheds a tear of shame and humiliation; and his fellow soldiers snicker. In the *Odyssey,* Odysseus's constant contempt for his crew, his indifference to their welfare, indeed, his willingness to subject them to fatal risks, underscores the haughty and cruel nature of the overlords in these poems. The principal heroes of both poems are descended of family lines that contain some births in which one of the parents was a god. Furthermore, the major figures in these narratives, if they cannot actually converse with a god,

are nonetheless under the benign and special protection of some deity. Another aspect of hierarchy in both poems is the large class of slaves who perform the daily labor in the army camps, in the citadel of Troy, and in the palaces. More often than not these are women who were taken when a settlement was pillaged and destroyed and the males were put to death – all part of a system of enrichment, it must be remembered, rather than strategic necessities of warfare.

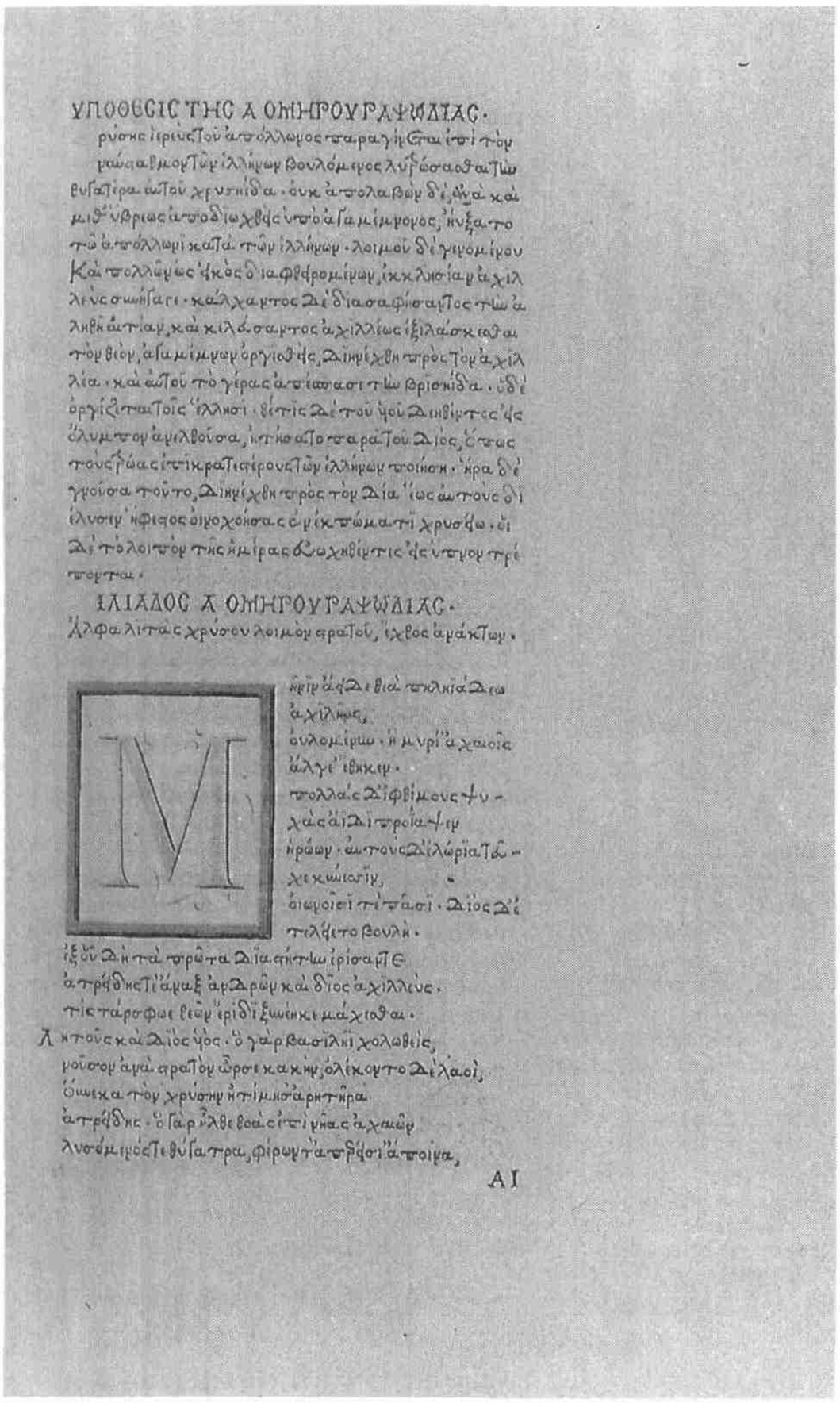
Rejecting the priest Chryses' request for the return of his daughter, taken in just such a raid, Agamemnon remarks that he intends to bring her home to work at the loom and service him in bed, since he has concluded that she is in no way inferior to his wife, Clytemnestra. Agamemnon's casual and public appraisal of his wife as though she were no more than a paid concubine underscores the great separation between the sexes. Each had a function, and more emotional and altruistic relations between them seem not to have developed. On the other hand, Achilles, as the narrator makes abundantly clear, deeply loves Patroclus. While in fifth-century-B.C Athens this relationship would ordinarily have had a physical, sexual basis, there is no evidence of that here. Rather, the extreme valorization of males likely made only male relationships significant; thus, the loss of a companion who had shared one's life since childhoood, who had lived in the same tent, where each man's female sexual partner was enjoyed – a species of homoeroticism that would clearly produce the deepest bonds – would be just as devastating as, in modern culture, would be the loss of a beloved partner of either sex. These poems are written from the male's point of view, and women are denied a sympathetic treatment.

For instance, the scene in the sixth book of the *Iliad,* when Hector goes into Troy, has been set up as an occasion to view the women of the city – for whom, to some degree, Hector is fighting. He meets his mother, Hecuba, who offers him a glass of wine and asks him to rest; he meets his brother Paris's woman friend, Helen, who asks him to sit down and rest; he meets his wife, Andromache, who, using her son as a kind of emotional blackmail, begs her husband to stay within the walls. He rejects all three women's solicitations and returns to battle. To Andromache he says, in effect: "Go back to the loom and your household tasks and leave the fighting to me," underscoring the rigid separation of gender-defined activities as they were perceived by the narrator and presumably his audience. (Ironically, Andromache's advice makes strategic sense, and Hector's return to the field of battle ends in the twenty-second book with his standing before the walls, facing Achilles' last mad dash, and wishing he were inside.) In this episode the male narrator presents women in the narrowest, most typical, most minimally defined fashion as they figure in a male's life: the nurturing mother; the companiable, sensuous woman; and the emotionally demanding wife.

Furthermore, there seems to be a pattern of women trying to hinder males from the natural exercise of their inherent goals or ambitions. Hecuba, Helen, and Andromache try to keep Hector from dying in glory on the field of battle. Likewise, in the *Odyssey* there are three women who attempt to prevent Odysseus from returning home, which in this poem is the equivalent of the glorious death in battle. These are Calypso, who attempts to get him to stay with her by offering him immortality; Circe, whose sexual charms are such that he cannot bear to leave her side until his crew force him; and Nausicaa, whose young, fresh, erotic presence, coupled with the desirability of life on Scheria, represents, although in an understated way, another challenge to the tired old hero's determination to get back to Ithaca.

The women of the *Odyssey* are so portrayed as to suggest the fundamental fear and dread that women generated in males of the time. Instead of representing the pleasure of the nurturing woman or the sexual woman, these female figures appear to be projections of the male fears of dependency on nurture and of losing control in orgasm. The mixture of nurture and sexuality in the Circe story (the episode almost fills the tenth book) is clear for all to see. Circe offers men food and then turns them into swine. When Odysseus approaches Circe's house, however, the god Hermes appears and gives him a magical charm that will ward off her dangerous power. He tells Odysseus that she will try to drug him and that, when she is about to tap him with her transforming wand, he is to pull his sword, after which she will invite him to bed. Still, he finds this bed so wonderful that after a year it is only his crew's pleadings that get him to leave.

Penelope, although she is presented entirely sympathetically as the proper counterpart to her clever husband, is not unlike Circe. Her palace swarms with young males who wish to marry her on the assumption that after ten years of silence it is legitimate to presume her husband to have died at sea. They pass their days and possibly their nights in the ground-floor quarters of Odysseus's palace, drinking, eating, playing games, carrying on with the servant women, generally debauching themselves – it is a picture of males kept at the point of sexual tension day in



ΥΠΟΘΕΣΙΣ ΤΗΣ Α ΟΜΗΡΟΥ ΡΑΨΩΔΙΑΣ.

ρόνος ἱερεύς τοῦ ἀπόλλωνος παραγίνεται πρὸς τοὺς
μαλμοὺς τῶν Ἑλλήνων βουλόμενος λυτρώσασθαι τὴν
θυγατέρα αὐτοῦ χρυσηίδα· οὐκ ἀπολαβὼν δέ, ἀλλὰ καὶ
μισθὸν ὑβριωσ ἀποδιωχθεὶς ὑπὸ Ἀγαμέμνονος, ἠύξατο
τῷ ἀπόλλωνι κατὰ τῶν Ἑλλήνων· λοιμοῦ δὲ γενομένου
καὶ πολλῶν ἡκόντων διαφθειρομένων, ἐκκλησίαν ἐποίη
σεν ὁ Ἀχιλλεὺς καὶ χαλχαντος δὲ διασαφήσαντος τὴν α
λήθειαν, καὶ χιλιάσαντος ἀχιλλέως ἐξιλάσκεσθαι
τὸν θεόν, ἀγαμέμνων ὀργισθείς, διεμέχθη πρὸς τὸν ἀχιλ
λέα· καὶ αὖθις τὸ γέρας ἀποστάσης τὴν βρισηίδα· ὃ δὲ
ὀργίζεται τοῖς Ἕλλησι· θέτιδος δὲ τοῦ υἱοῦ διαβιβαζούσης
ὅλυμπον ἀφικνεῖται, ἱκετεύσασα τὸν διός, ὅπως
τοὺς Τρῶας ἐπικρατεῖς ποιήσῃ τῶν Ἑλλήνων τοσούτων·
ἥρα δὲ
γενομένου τούτου, διαμέχθη πρὸς τὸν δία· ἕως αὖτους δι
ίλυσεν ἡφαιστος οἰνοχοήσας ἀμβροσίᾳ χρυσέῳ· εἰ
δὲ τὸ λοιπὸν τῆς ἡμέρας ἐδαιτύμων τε εὐτυχῶν τρέ
πεται.

ΙΛΙΑΔΟΣ Α ΟΜΗΡΟΥ ΡΑΨΩΔΙΑΣ.

Ἄλφα λιτὰς χρύσου λοιμοῦ ἀρατοῦ, ἴχλος ἀμάκτων.

Μῆνιν ἄειδε θεὰ Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος,
οὐλομένην· ἡ μυρί' Ἀχαιοῖς
ἄλγε' ἔθηκεν·
πολλὰς δ' ἰφθίμους ψυ-
χὰς Ἄϊδι προΐαψεν
ἡρώων· αὐτοὺς δὲ ἑλώρια τεῦ-
χε κύνεσσιν,
οἰωνοῖσί τε πᾶσι· Διὸς δ' ἐ
τελείετο βουλή·
ἐξ οὗ δὴ τὰ πρῶτα διαστήτην ἐρίσαντε
Ἀτρεΐδης τε ἄναξ ἀνδρῶν καὶ δῖος Ἀχιλλεύς.
τίς τάρ σφωε θεῶν ἔριδι ξυνέηκε μάχεσθαι·
Λητοῦς καὶ Διὸς υἱός· ὁ γὰρ βασιλῆϊ χολωθείς,
νοῦσον ἀνὰ στρατὸν ὄρσε κακήν, ὀλέκοντο δὲ λαοί,
οὕνεκα τὸν Χρύσην ἠτίμασ' ἀρητῆρα
Ἀτρεΐδης· ὃ γὰρ ἦλθε θοὰς ἐπὶ νῆας Ἀχαιῶν
λυσόμενός τε θύγατρα, φέρων τ' ἀπερείσι' ἄποινα,

AI

First page of the editio princeps (1488) of the Iliad, *the* Odyssey, *and the Homeric hymns*

and day out over a long time – and they resemble nothing so much as Circe's swine. Penelope keeps them excited by indicating that she will remarry one day in the near future; she sends them messages, and at one point she is described as descending the stair from the women's quarters and so exciting them sexually that they rush home to bring still more presents to her in their suit. She is the same fairy-tale, malign witch that Circe is, although dressed by the narrator in the proper psychological and behaviorial habiliments of a noble squire's wife.

Two small details in the two epics are particularly telling: Briseis, the girl who was captured and enslaved and given to Achilles for his sexual needs, is described crying along with the other slave women over the corpse of Patroclus. She speaks out, telling of his kindness to her, and then the narrator remarks that the women cried for Patroclus only as a pretext; in reality, they were crying for themselves. At the close of the *Odyssey* Odysseus determines to put to death by hanging all the women slaves who had been sleeping with the suitors. Only a patriarchal male who considers all the females of his palace private property, to be used and exploited by himself alone, would so overreact to the sexual violation of these women. That they no doubt had been coerced into sex, probably raped – they were no more than slaves; the young men were the bully aristocrats of the neighborhood – is never a consideration. They are the master's property and are now damaged goods; as such, they need to be disposed of. The suitors, who are male, are killed in a dignified fashion; these slaves, who are women, are humiliated and degraded even in death. Perhaps the most telling detail of all is that Penelope, for whom the hero has been yearning and to whom he has been struggling to return throughout the poem, disappears from the narrative once Odysseus has managed to get back into her bed and into her embrace. Penelope as a person does not really figure for him.

These two poems have exercised enormous influence on the art, literature, and thought of the Western world. The *Odyssey,* in particular, stands as the model for all the stories of a hero who travels and overcomes obstacles until he finally reaches his goal. Clearly, that is a story line congenial to Christian thinking, and one finds it used often – for instance, in John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (1678). Yet Odysseus's duplicity, already a strike against him in fifth-century-B.C. Athenian tragic drama, causes Dante to place him well down in the circles of his hell. The Roman poet Virgil's epic poem, the *Aeneid,* was a work of striking originality that is, among other things, a reading of the moral, ethical, spiritual, and theological implications of the two Homeric poems. Thereafter direct knowledge of the Homeric poems was less common, and the *Aeneid* provided a template for epic narrative. Through the centuries critics, scholars, and informed readers have carried on a quarrel over the relative merits of the Homeric and the Virgilian epics. The extraordinarily polished style of the *Aeneid,* its intimations of Christianity, and its emphasis on empire made it a favorite at Christian courts where, by and large, the populace spoke languages that had evolved from Latin. In nineteenth-century Germany, however, a revival of interest in folk art and folk legends produced a wave of sympathy for the Homeric poems, which were thought somehow to be more populist.

This assessment is undoubtedly true. While one must imagine that the poets who created the tradition that lies behind the Homeric poems were sup-

ported and thus controlled by powerful figures such as the ones who populate their narratives, there is nonetheless strong evidence to suggest that their performance was available to the assembled throng, and to that extent the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* could be said to be popular art. The *Aeneid,* by contrast, was created by a highly educated man writing for a refined audience of cognoscenti at the court of Augustus Caesar, the most powerful figure in the Mediterranean world. No one would have imagined that this poem would become popular, yet within a generation it had become a school text, and thereafter it was known to every educated person in the Western world. The final irony, of course, is that in the twentieth century, to the extent that there still exists a reading public, the Homeric poems are far more popular and accessible than the *Aeneid* because their gripping story lines and penetrating portraits of the archtypal figures of humanity come through in English translation as the Latin of Virgil does not. Contemporary college students read the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* in translation, and thus yet another generation goes forth secure in the knowledge that it knows something about a certain Homer, who, though often referred to as one of the world's great poets, is probably no more than a construct or a myth.

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Flavius Josephus

(A.D. 37 – 100)

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MAJOR WORKS: *Jewish War* (A.D. 79–81);
Jewish Antiquities (A.D. 93–94);
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Translation in English: *The Genuine Works of Flavius Josephus . . . Translated according to Havercamp's . . . Edition; Containing Twenty Books of the Jewish Antiquities; with the Appendix, or Life of Josephus Written by Himself; Seven Books of the Jewish War; and Two Books against Apion,* translated by William Whiston (London, 1737).

Josephus is by far the most important source for the history of the Jews from the close of the biblical period in the fifth century B.C. to his own day. He is indispensable to an understanding of the political, social, economic, and religious background of the rise of Christianity and of the other Jewish sects of the era, as well as of Jewry of the Diaspora. He is the most complete source for the history of ancient anti-Judaism, as well as the most important literary guide to the geography, topography, and monuments of Palestine, so that the archaeologist must dig with a spade in one hand and a copy of Josephus in the other. As the author of the earliest systematic paraphrase-commentary on the historical books of the Bible, he is crucial for an understanding of Jewish law and lore, antedating the codification of the Mishnah by a century and the Midrashim by several centuries. He is valuable as a historian of the Greco-Roman world who sheds light on events of the last century of the Roman Republic and the first century of the Roman Empire. His influence on literature, music, and art – particularly because of his importance for Christians, who saw fit to preserve all of his works – has been profound.

Flavius Josephus, whose Hebrew name was Yosef ben Matityahu HaKohen, was born in the first year of the reign of Caligula (A.D. 37). On his mother's side he was descended from the Hasmonaean kings; on his father's side he was not only of priestly ancestry but belonged to the first of the twenty-four courses of priests. Not averse to boasting, Josephus relates that he made great progress in his education and gained a reputation for such an excellent memory and understanding that while he was only fourteen he was universally applauded for his love of letters, and the chief priests and leading men of the city constantly consulted him for precise information on the laws. Starting at the age of sixteen he spent three years gaining personal experience as a Pharisee, a Sadducee, and an Essene, after which he spent three years living with a hermit named Bannus. Finally, he began a political association with the Pharisees.

At the age of twenty-six he went on a successful mission to Rome to gain the release of certain priests from prison. Two years later, though he had no military experience, at the beginning of the Jewish revolt against Rome he was chosen by the revolutionary council to be general in Galilee, where he eventually surrendered to the Romans, predicted that the general Vespasian would become emperor, and received Roman citizenship, a pension, and other amenities. He spent the last thirty years of his life in Rome in the emperor's house, dying about A.D. 100.

Josephus's autobiography, the earliest that has survived from antiquity, is a defense, for the most part, of his experience as a general in Galilee and an attack on his rivals – notably his military rival John of Gischala and his literary rival Justus

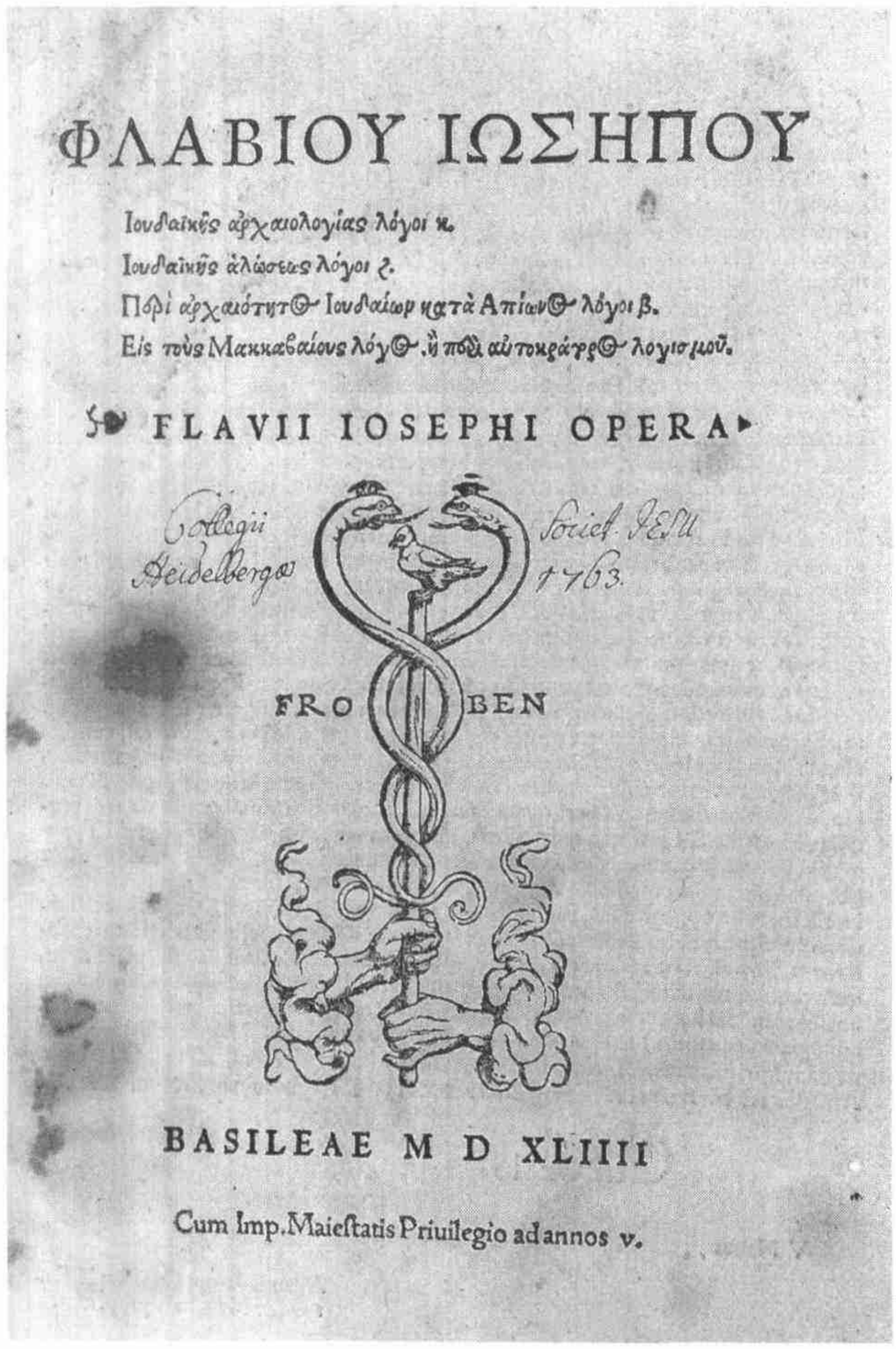
of Tiberias. He indicates that he was appointed with the intention that he would try to induce the Jewish rebels to lay down their arms, whereas in the *Jewish War* (A.D. 79–81) he claims to have been appointed to conduct the war actively.

The latter work, in seven books, was originally written in Aramaic (though nothing remains of that version); Josephus himself translated it into Greek with the aid of some assistants. It is an extremely detailed account of the war of the Jews (A.D. 66–73) against the Romans, though it actually begins in the first book with a summary of the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes of Syria (175–164 B.C.) and the Maccabean revolt and with a long account of the reign of Herod the Great (37–4 B.C.). The second book, which presents the immediate background of the war, has a well-known account of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and, at greatest length, the ascetic Essenes whom many have identified with the Dead Sea Sect. Book 3 tells of the Roman general Vespasian's campaign in Galilee and the siege of Jotapata, where Josephus had fortified himself only to be captured. Books 4, 5, and 6 narrate the rest of the history of the war, and in particular the siege and capture of Jerusalem and the burning of the Temple, which, according to Josephus, was carried out despite the orders of the Roman general Titus. Book 7 tells of the aftermath of the war, the triumphal procession in Rome, and, most famous of all, the siege of Masada and the suicide of its defenders, several of the details of which have now been confirmed by the excavations by Yigael Yadin in 1963–1965, though some discrepancies remain.

Josephus's magnum opus is his *Jewish Antiquities* (A.D. 93–94), in twenty books, corresponding to Dionysius of Halicarnassus's *Roman Antiquities,* likewise in twenty books. It covers the period from Creation to the outbreak of the war against the Romans. Though Josephus declares that he has neither added to nor omitted anything from the biblical narrative – which he paraphrases in the first eleven books of this work – he has vastly expanded certain episodes, notably portions of the Joseph story (his dreams and subsequent enslavement, the episode of Potiphar's wife, and the final test of Joseph's brothers), the introduction of a pericope describing Moses' achievements as a general in a campaign against the Ethiopians and his marriage to an Ethiopian princess, the rebellion of Korah, the episode of the Israelite men and the Midianite women, and the reign of Zedekiah. Certain personalities, notably Jethro, Balaam, Ehud, Saul, David, Joab, Solomon, and Jeroboam, are given much more attention than others. Extraordinarily little attention is given to still others, notably Aaron, Deborah, Jonah, and Nehemiah.

Josephus; miniature from a twelfth-century Latin manuscript of Antiquities *(Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Lat. 5047)*

The case of Zedekiah is striking in that in the Bible (2 Kings 24:19) he is said to have done what was evil in the sight of the Lord, whereas Josephus (*Antiquities,* 10.103), while admitting that Zedekiah was contemptuous of justice, places the blame upon his impious advisers and upon the masses. Similarly, Josephus presents a more balanced portrait of Ahab, shifting more of the blame to his role model Jeroboam and to his wife, Jezebel. Most remarkable of all is Josephus's treatment of Kings Jehoash and Jehoiachin: in the former case, the Bible (2 Kings 13:11) uses its familiar formula that "he did



Title page for the first edition in Greek of Josephus's works (courtesy of the Lilly Library, Indiana University)

what was evil in the sight of the Lord," whereas Josephus (*Antiquities* 9.178) says that he was a good man. In the latter case, whereas the Bible (2 Kings 24:9; 2 Chronicles 36:9) describes Jehoiachin in the same negative terms, Josephus describes him as kind and just.

When Josephus assures his readers that he has not modified the sacred text, his readers would presumably understand such a promise to mean that the author has followed in the tradition of his many predecessors – Greek tragedians, the pseudepigraphic Book of Jubilees, the Dead Sea Genesis Apocryphon, Pseudo-Philo's *Biblical Antiquities,* and rabbinic Targumim and Midrashim – who did not feel guilty about taking often considerable liberties with their sacred texts. That some of these radical departures from the biblical text are paralleled in rabbinic literature is a strong argument for the thesis, supported by Josephus's own remarks, that he was influenced by the oral rabbinic tradition.

The main factor explaining Josephus's modifications of the Bible is apologetics answering anti-Jewish charges. In this respect the *Antiquities* may be viewed as a preliminary version of the essay *Against Apion* (after A.D. 93–94). In particular, Josephus takes great pains to defend the Jews against the charge that they hate non-Jews by diminishing, mostly through omissions, the conflict between Jacob and Esau, the respective ancestors of the Jews and the Romans, and by maximizing the scene in which Jacob and Esau are reconciled, likewise by highlighting the humanity of Joseph in opening the Egyptian granaries to all people (a particularly effective answer, since Egypt was the hotbed of anti-Jewish propaganda during this period) and of Solomon in asking that God accept the prayers of all people and not merely of Jews. Particularly significant is the fact that Josephus in several instances avoids mentioning incidents in which Israelites, such as Gideon, Asa, Jehoshaphat, and Josiah, desecrated altars, statues, and temples belonging to non-Jews.

One of the most serious charges against the Jews was that of dual loyalty. Consequently, Josephus makes every effort to dwell on the fidelity of Jews to their rulers, as seen particularly in the case of Joseph. Moreover, he shifts the emphasis from the covenanted land of Israel, with the implication of an independent state, to the biblical personalities themselves. He is especially wary about messiah-like figures or ancestors of messiahs (who, by definition, would bring about an independent state). He reiterates that not to accept the authoritative governance of the ruler of the state is to thwart the divine plan. Nationhood, he stresses, is not a necessity for Judaism; rather, subservience to the superpower will bring peace and prosperity.

A serious charge addressed by Josephus is that Jews have failed to produce wise men. In response, he presents hero after hero as possessing the attributes of outstanding genealogy, precociousness, physical attractiveness, wealth, the gift of leadership, and, in particular, the four cardinal virtues of wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice, together with the fifth virtue of piety. Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and Solomon turn out to be, in effect, syntheses of Pericles as depicted by Thucydides, a philosopher-king as described by Plato, and a Stoic sage.

Josephus generally downgrades the role of God in order to emphasize the virtues and achievements of his biblical heroes. He frequently rationalizes miracles, such as those performed by or in connection with Moses, Samson, Elijah, Elisha, Jonah, and Daniel, or, as in the crossing of the Red Sea, points to a historical parallel, namely

Alexander's similar crossing of the Pamphylian Sea, or, as in the case of Daniel, asserts that he was saved by divine providence, employing a term that was a favorite with the Stoics. Moreover, on several occasions, he specifically leaves it to the reader to decide how to understand a given miracle.

For the postbiblical period Josephus's account is uneven. He has little to say about the Persian period after the time of Esther, since he apparently had few sources. He has an extensive account of the translation (known as the Septuagint) of the Pentateuch into Greek, which is based on the pseudepigraphic *Letter of Aristeas;* but though it closely adheres in content to the original it constantly modifies the language, particularly with Stoic terminology. Josephus also closely parallels the First Book of Maccabees; his additions are generally geographical and topographical; he supplies particular data, such as the names of participants, the number of casualties, and motives, obtaining his information from a source such as Nicolaus of Damascus, Herod's executive secretary.

For the Roman period Josephus reproduces decrees he found in the imperial archives (though there is dispute about their authenticity). Josephus, as a Hasmonaean, is clearly prejudiced against Herod, about whom he writes at extraordinary length, presumably dependent upon Nicolaus of Damascus. Josephus's information about the period thereafter may sometimes be checked against other sources. Thus, the *Antiquities* relates that in the year A.D. 19 the Jews were expelled from Rome because four Jewish scoundrels pocketed the gifts for the Jerusalem Temple that a certain noble Roman proselyte, Fulvia, had entrusted to them. More credible is the account of Dio Cassius, who declares in his *Roman History* (A.D. 150–235) that the Jews were expelled because they had succeeded in converting many of the native Romans to Judaism. The fact that Tacitus's *Annals* (circa A.D. 115–117) asserts that the expulsion was restricted to proselytes would seem to confirm that Dio's account focusing on the proselytizing activities by Jews as the cause is the more likely explanation; the reader may surmise that Josephus, being so indebted to the Roman imperial family and being sensitive to the Roman concern about the inroads of the successful proselytizing by Jews during this period, omits this factor, hinting at it only by his statement that Fulvia was a proselyte.

If Josephus devotes so much attention (almost three-quarters of book 19) to the account of the assassination of the emperor Caligula and the accession of Claudius – which is only tangentially related to Jewish history – it is probably because of Josephus's close friendship with Agrippa II, the son of Agrippa I, who, according to Josephus, was responsible for Claudius's success in becoming emperor, as well as to the accessibility of extensive information about this incident.

The chief reason for the survival of Josephus's works in their entirety is that they contain references in the *Antiquities* to John the Baptist (18.116–119); James, the brother of Jesus (20.200); and, above all, to Jesus himself (the so-called *Testimonium Flavianum,* 18.63–64), all of which are favorable toward their subjects. Few readers have doubted the authenticity of the reference to John, since the language is particularly typical of this part of the *Antiquities.* If a Christian had interpolated it, it is hard to explain why he would have made it almost twice as long as the passage about Jesus, why he should have contradicted the Gospels' account as to why John was put to death, and why he should have said nothing about the connection of John with Jesus.

As to the passage about Jesus, which is found in all forty-two of the extant Greek manuscripts containing this portion of the *Antiquities* (the earliest of which dates from the eleventh century), as well as in all 171 extant manuscripts of the Latin translation, which was done in the sixth century under the sponsorship of Cassiodorus, most scholars have rejected its authenticity in whole or in part. It says that during the procuratorship of Pontius Pilate "there lived Jesus, a wise man, if indeed one ought to call him a man." It notes that he wrought miracles and won over many Jews and many of the Greeks and then bluntly states that "he was the Messiah." It reports that Pilate had him crucified upon hearing him accused by men of the highest standing among the Jews. It then adds that on the third day Jesus appeared to his followers restored to life, in accordance with the prophecies of the prophets. That Josephus speaks of Jesus in *Antiquities* 20.200, in his reference to James as the brother of "the aforementioned Christ," a passage whose authenticity has been almost universally acknowledged, indicates that Jesus had been mentioned previously. That Justin Martyr's *Dialogue with Trypho* in the middle of the second century attempts to answer the charge that Jesus had never lived and was a mere figment of Christian imagination should have made the reference in the works of Josephus, a respected historian and a Jew at that, extremely effective in Christian hands; and yet of eleven Christian church fathers who lived prior to or contemporary with the fourth-century Eusebius of Caesarea and who cite various passages from Josephus, including

Captives carrying spoils from the Temple after the Sack of Jerusalem; relief from the Arch of Titus, Rome

Josephus presents his work to the emperor Vespasian; miniature from a Latin manuscript of Antiquities, *circa 1181–1188 (Hessische Landesbibliothek, Fulda, Codex, C1, fol. 1v)*

the *Antiquities,* none cites this passage. Not until Eusebius does anyone mention it, and even after Eusebius it is after a full century and five additional church fathers before there is another reference to it in Saint Jerome's *Concerning Illustrious Men* (circa A.D. 340–420), which cites Josephus as saying not that Jesus was the Messiah, but that "he was believed to be the Messiah." Moreover, Origen, whose author certainly knew book 18 of the *Antiquities* and cites five passages from it, explicitly states in *Against Celsus* (A.D. 185–254) that "the wonder is that though [Josephus] did not admit our Jesus to be Christ he nonetheless gave witness to much righteousness in James" and that Josephus "disbelieved in Jesus as Christ."

A possible clue to the original wording of the *Testimonium* may be found in a tenth-century history of the world in Arabic by a Christian named Agapius. He omits "if indeed we ought to call him a man," as well as the reference to Jesus' miracles, and to the role of the Jewish leaders in accusing Jesus; and he says not that Jesus appeared to his disciples on the third day but that his disciples reported this event. Most important, his version declares not that Jesus was the Messiah but that "he was perhaps the Messiah." Two centuries later a twelfth-century chronicle in Syriac by a Christian named Michael the Syrian, in its version of the *Testimonium,* has language similar to that of Jerome: "He was thought to be the Messiah."

The essay *Against Apion,* in two books, is stylistically Josephus's most polished work. It explains why the Jews are mentioned by only a few of the Greek historians and proceeds to cite several authors, notably Pythagoras, who acknowledge their indebtedness to the Jews; Josephus cites Aristotle as going so far as to compliment the Jews as a nation of philosophers. He counterattacks by asserting that the Greeks cannot claim antiquity for themselves and that the Greek historians have regard for style rather than accuracy, whereas the Jews bestow great care in safeguarding the accuracy of their records. Moreover, even the anti-Jewish writers among the Egyptians, such as Manetho, concede that the Jews are ancient in origin. As to the calumny – found in writers such as Manetho, Chaeremon, and Lysimachus – that the Jews were expelled from Egypt because they were lepers, Josephus highlights various absurdities

in these tales, remarking in particular that Moses' laws on leprosy could not have been made by a leper.

Josephus is particularly concerned to answer Apion's charge that the Jews have no claim to Alexandrian citizenship, noting in how great regard they had been held by the ruling Ptolemaic kings. As to the contention that the Jews are unpatriotic because they do not worship the kings, he replies that Jews pay earthly rulers homage of a different sort, namely offering sacrifices on their behalf. He reduces to absurdity the charges that Jews worship an ass's head and that, to show their hatred of mankind, they capture a Greek annually and murder him. Finally, to refute the malicious indictment of Moses and his code made by such an influential rhetorician as Apollonius Molon, Josephus replies by summarizing the Jewish constitution and demonstrating how superior it is to that of the Greeks.

Josephus's works have been enormously influential, especially the *Testimonium Flavianum,* which gave witness to the historicity, the messiahship, and the resurrection of Jesus, as well as to the role of the Jews in condemning him, but also the *Jewish War,* with its vivid description of Jewish suffering, which was regarded as evidence for the punishment meted out to the Jews for the alleged crime of deicide. The fourth-century paraphrase of the *Jewish War* ascribed to Hegesippus, the Latin translation by the school of Cassiodorus in the sixth century, the tenth-century Hebrew paraphrase known as Josippon, and the eleventh-century Slavonic paraphrase attest to Josephus's popularity. During the Middle Ages he was regarded as an authority in such diverse fields as biblical exegesis, Jewish theology, chronology, geography, arithmetic, astronomy, natural history, grammar, and etymology, and he was often catalogued in libraries with the church fathers. He was a guide to Palestine for Christian pilgrims and crusaders. From 1450 to 1700 more editions of his works were published than of those of any other Greek historian; the translation into English by William Whiston, published in 1737, has been reprinted at least 217 times.

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Longinus

(circa first century A.D.)

Brian G. Caraher
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MAJOR WORK: *On the Sublime* (circa first century A.D.)

Editio princeps: *Dionysii Longini . . . liber de grandi sive sublimi orationis generi,* edited by F. Robortellus (Basel: G. Oporinus, 1554).

Standard editions: *Longinus,* second edition, edited and translated by W. Rhys Roberts, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1907); *Longinus On Great Writing (On the Sublime)*, edited and translated by by G. M. A. Grube (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1957).

In the estimation of many literary critics and critical historians who have surveyed the rich offerings of classical literary criticism and theory, the treatise *On the Sublime,* written probably in the first century A.D., often ranks second in importance only to Aristotle's *Poetics* (circa 335 B.C.). Aristotle's analytic work succinctly maps the terrain of literary genre, character, structure, and rhetoric; but the highly compact *On the Sublime* explores with intensity the nature and occurrence of a certain kind of writing – specifically writing whose expressive power appears to transgress the rules of artistic and rhetorical composition and to achieve what in Greek is termed *hypsos,* a word that denotes greatness, excellence, or sublimity.

The author of this singular literary analysis, however, remains shrouded in such a veil of obscurity and competing claims regarding his identity that it may be impossible to know with certainty who he was or where and when he lived. From 1554, the date of the treatise's first publication in modern times, until the discovery of some anomalies in the attribution of authorship some two and a half centuries later, in 1809, *On the Sublime* was unquestionably assumed to be written by Dionysius Longinus – otherwise known as Cassius Longinus. The oldest extant manuscript, a tenth-century manuscript housed in the National Library in Paris, displays the name "Dionysius Longinus" in Greek on the title page but "Dionysius or Longinus" in an accompanying table of contents. At least two other fifteenth-century manuscripts of On the Sublime exhibit the latter, indeterminate attribution. As a result, at least three major competing claims have been advanced regarding the identity of the writer known as "Longinus"; and, though none is ultimately satisfactory, each still merits attention.

The first major claim argues that Longinus is indeed the Cassius Longinus whose connection with the treatise had been assumed by classicists and literary scholars of the late Renaissance and Enlightenment. The most recent champion of this view has been G. M. A. Grube, who presents his case eloquently in the "Translator's Introduction" to his *Longinus On Great Writing (On the Sublime)* (1957). According to what little is known about him, Cassius Longinus was a Greek living under Roman rule in the eastern Mediterranean, and he wrote in Greek. He was born circa A.D. 213, educated in Alexandria, and appears to have taught for some time in Athens. Cassius Longinus, moreover, earned a reputation as "a living library and a walking museum," in the words of the historian Eunapius; and he was extolled also by Porphyry, his friend and pupil, as the finest critic of his time. Toward the end of his life he moved to Asia Minor; became an important adviser to Zenobia, queen of Palmyra; and was executed by order of the Roman emperor Aurelian in 273 after being caught up in a conspiracy with Queen Zenobia to challenge Roman imperial power. This Cassius Longinus, a Greek bearing a Roman name, may also have had a more clearly Greek first name – Dionysius. However, this hypothesis remains mere supposition.

Some meager but intriguing internal evidence, nonetheless, seems to chime well enough with this

supposition. In chapter 39 of *On the Sublime* Longinus declines to discuss the role of emotion, which he has characterized as one source of greatness or sublimity in writing, because, he writes, he has "adequately presented [his] conclusions on this subject in two published works." (All translations are by G. M. A. Grube, from his *Longinus on Great Writing,* 1957.) It is known that Cassius Longinus wrote an *Art of Rhetoric* (circa mid- to late-third-century A.D.) and several other nonextant works on rhetoric have been ascribed to him. Moreover, in chapter 12 of *On the Sublime,* Longinus identifies himself "as a Greek" while naming his interlocutor and his cohorts as "You Romans," setting his nationality; he also emphatically underscores his clear preference for the Athenian Demosthenes over the Roman Cicero.

A second major claim is that Longinus was yet another famous Greek scholar and rhetorician of the eastern Mediterranean, Dionysius of Halicarnassus. This claim is largely based on the inscription to "Dionysius or Longinus" in the table of contents of the earliest extant manuscript. The most recent exponent of this view has been the Italian scholar Demetrio St. Marin, but the position has drawn a variety of supporters ever since the case for Cassius Longinus was opened to doubt. There are a handful of resemblances between the Halicarnassian's known writings and *On the Sublime;* moreover, Dionysius, who flourished around 30–7 B.C., was roughly contemporaneous with the Roman rhetorician Caecilius of Calacte (first century B.C.), whom the author of *On the Sublime* criticizes at the outset of his treatise. Furthermore, the philological evidence indicates a mid-first-century-A.D. date of composition, a good half century or more too late for Dionysius of Halicarnassus; views resemble those attributed to Caecilius of Calacte more than those of Longinus.

A third major claim regarding the identity of Longinus essentially concedes that it is impossible to determine with any certainty who the author of *On the Sublime* may have been. John H. Crossett and James Arieti have concluded in their essay "The Dating of Longinus" (*Studia Classica,* 3 [Department of Classics, Pennsylvania State University, n.d.]) that the author's identity is impossible to fix but that the treatise very probably dates from the reign of the emperor Nero (A.D. 54–68). The topic of cultural decline that Longinus develops at some length in chapter 44 was a major rhetorical commonplace in the first century A.D., especially during the period of Nero, and does not seem to occur with any frequency in the third century. Moreover, *On the Sublime* contains no references to authors, literary works, or historical events – such as the massive eruption of Vesuvius in A.D. 79 – that may be dated past the mid first century A.D. This third claim may be the most conservative and defensible; but it nevertheless depends, like the others, upon a fragile network of somewhat tenuous philological probabilities.

Whoever authored *On the Sublime,* a general portrait of the writer materializes from a reading of his treatise. He appears to be a well-educated and thoroughly cosmopolitan Greek of the eastern part of the Roman Empire, one who shows a keen interest in several literatures, including the first chapter of Genesis. His Greek is fluent and assured and not that of a Roman citizen writing in the more cultured tongue of the conquered. This Longinus finds Greek and eastern Mediterranean discursive techniques preferable to Roman, and he pointedly quotes Homer and Plato rather than Virgil and Cicero. His frequently discussed rhetorical set piece on cultural decline in chapter 44 also appears to be an implicit critique of the "slavery" and "world-wide sterility of utterance" endemic to imperial rule.

Moreover, this Longinus seeks some measure of release from the "endless war" spawned by "the desires which surely rule our present world like an army of occupation." This Longinus turns from the typical preoccupations of Roman and Greco-Roman orators and rhetoricians and toward the intensive cultivation of critical skills and refined literary judgment in the pursuit of expressive power and intellectual transport.

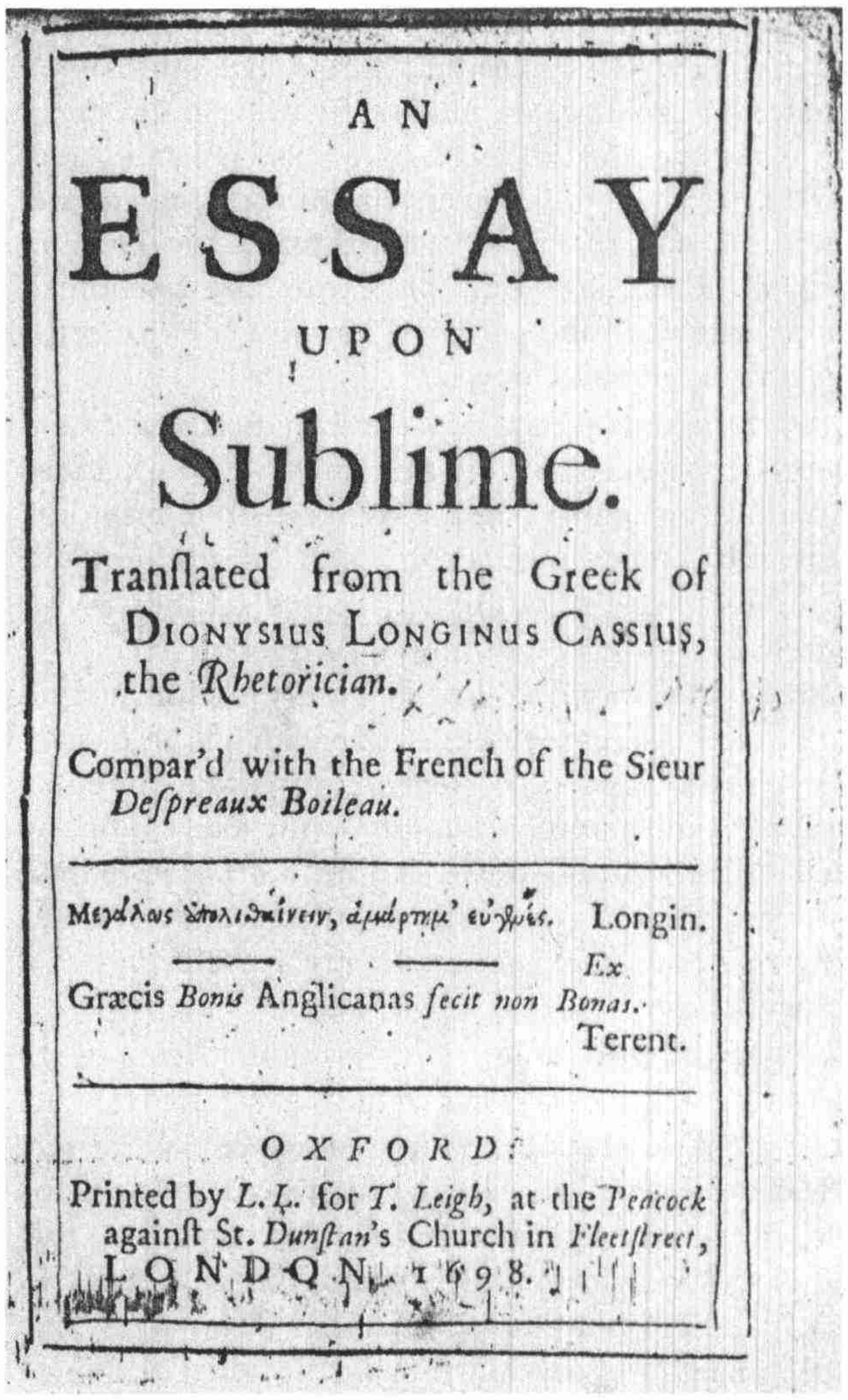
The text of *On the Sublime* is in a fragmentary state. In addition to various lacunae sprinkled throughout the existing text, the work ends abruptly just as the author turns to take up the topic of "emotions or passions, which we earlier promised to treat as the main topic of a separate work." Even with the text in such a fragmentary condition, the careful and attentive reader will find a strong measure of coherence and integrity. (It is here worth noting that editors of *On the Sublime* since the sixteenth century have divided the text into forty-four sections, or chapters. The extant manuscripts of the text do not stipulate chapter breaks.)

Longinus skillfully dramatizes the rhetorical situation of *On the Sublime* at the outset of the work, where he pitches the text as an epistolary address that involves an extended set of meditations directed to a friend saluted as "my dear Postumius Terentianus" and "my dear friend." This friend, as Longinus recalls in the first sentence, once accompanied him in a study of "Caecilius [of Calacte]'s

monograph on Great Writing"; but both friends found the work greatly lacking in the treatment of its subject matter and in the attitude it took toward its readers. Longinus requires that "every specialized treatise . . . should clarify its subject," and, second, "it should tell us how and by what methods we can attain it and make it ours." Both these aims Longinus intends to serve, and he requests that his friend and interlocutor assist him "with frank criticism of the points [he is] about to make." Longinus adopts a rather amiable, intimate, yet soberly critical attitude here and views his inquiry into the nature of the sublime or greatness in writing as a collaborative enterprise. His work, deliberately and intertextually dependent upon another work of the same title, appears to originate in a scene of collaborative critical reading; it also appeals to an act of critical reading as the measure of its success.

Though this rhetorical situation is most evident during the course of the first eight chapters, or sections, of *On the Sublime,* it nonetheless is apparent and appealed to throughout – even at the outset of the often troublesome forty-fourth and final chapter – as Longinus periodically returns to address his interlocutor and reader as well as to mention how and why he departs from what Caecilius has said in his treatise. The mise-en-scène unifies this five-stage rhetorical structure for what can be called the argument of the work. Even in its fragmentary condition the text of *On the Sublime* seems to respond productively to this imposition – or perhaps recovery – of a viable rhetorical organization. In his letter to his friend and critical interlocutor, Longinus rehearses the form of an expository argument, replete with a careful posing of the problem to be studied, possible methods of study, and a clearly segmented exposition of the stages of his thought.

The first of the five stages is the first chapter of the work. As already noted, Longinus here poses the rhetorical situation from which his work departs; yet he also succinctly limns his own position on what constitutes greatness in writing. Longinus quickly concedes the topos, or commonplace, that "great passages have a high distinction of thought and expression to which great writers owe their supremacy and their lasting renown." What Longinus seeks to argue, though, goes beyond this commonplace view. Greatness, grandeur, excellence, nobleness, or sublimity in writing – the host of terms by which the Greek word *hypsos* can be rendered – does not involve mere persuasion or skillful arrangement of words and ideas for Longinus: "Great writing does not persuade; it takes the reader out of himself. The startling and amazing is more powerful than the charming and persuasive, . . . [and] greatness appears suddenly; like a thunderbolt it carries all before it and reveals the writer's full power in a flash." In offering his definition of great writing, Longinus here departs dramatically from the rhetorician's usual concern with skillful invention, careful arrangement, and decorum.


AN
ESSAY
UPON
Sublime.
Tranſlated from the Greek of
DIONYSIUS LONGINUS CASSIUS,
the *Rhetorician.*
Compar'd with the French of the Sieur
Deſpreaux Boileau.
Μεγάλως ἐπολιδύνειν, ἀμιάρτημ' εὐγλῶς. Longin.
Ex
Græcis *Bonis* Anglicanas *fecit non Bonas.*
Terent.
OXFORD:
Printed by *L. L.* for *T. Leigh,* at the *Peacock*
againſt St. *Dunſtan's* Church in *Fleetſtreet,*
LONDON, 1698.

Title page for a seventeenth-century English translation of Longinus's On the Sublime

The second stage of the rhetorical structure of *On the Sublime* issues sharply from this characterization of great writing. In the next five chapters of his work Longinus addresses the following question: Can greatness in writing be "a matter of art" and open to critical study under the terms offered at the outset? He refrains from the view that greatness, sudden and forceful and miraculous as it is, remains opaque to study and critical understanding. In a passage that became important to neoclassical writers, Longinus contends that "natural talent, though generally a law unto itself in passionate and distin-

guished passages, is not usually random or altogether devoid of method." Greatness involves "a matter of art" because method or study trains talent to make the most of itself. The neoclassical ideal of balance, of the judicious harmonizing of talent and method, nature and art, genius and critical knowledge, finds an important pretext here in Longinus's qualification of the potential unruliness of his sense of great expressive power.

Longinus then charts several of the errors and faults that occur in writing that fails to achieve greatness, gleaning passages that illustrate turgidity, puerility, false enthusiasm, and frigidity in discourse. This discussion can appear tedious and is often overlooked; yet Longinus tries to exemplify here several ways that an apparently artistic method has failed to nurture talent and yielded hollow, tawdry, even unseemly rhetoric instead. Longinus counsels the careful study of artistic expression; he argues that "clear knowledge and critical judgment of what is truly great" allows the discerning writer and reader to make and to understand effective rhetorical choices.

In the third stage of his argument (chapters 7 and 8) Longinus considers the pragmatic tests for and the possible sources of great expressive power. He first offers three experientially oriented tests for the presence of greatness and then classifies "five sources" that are "most productive of great writing." Longinus argues that social value, psychological impact, and canonical or institutional authority offer distinct ways in which to probe for and recognize great writing. Social value is implicated in the discerning judgment of great writing because a sound pragmatic test for greatness follows a socially focused measure of moral value: "nothing is noble which it is noble to despise." Sheer wealth, social status, and political power, for Longinus, do not embody greatness because "men admire those great souls who could possess them but in fact disdain them." Besides this implicitly Stoic test of value, Longinus advocates a second pragmatic test for greatness or sublimity in writing. Whatever is memorable, whatever makes an enduring psychological impact upon a hearer or reader, constitutes great writing. In addition to the test of memory, Longinus espouses a third pragmatic test – the long-standing consensual agreement that tends to canonize or institutionalize writing as great. Greatness in writing purportedly "satisfies all men at all times," and "the agreed verdict . . . acquires an authority so strong that the object of its admiration is beyond dispute."

Longinus then itemizes and justifies briefly five sources that produce sublimity or greatness in writing. The first two sources are attributed to "innate dispositions," and they involve "vigor of mental conception" and "strong and inspired emotion." Longinus does not discuss emotion further; his treatise ends just at the point where he turns to consider the topic of the passions. However, his digression on Caecilius's omission provides a clear sense of the direction that he might have taken: "nothing contributes to greatness as much as noble passion in the right place; it breathes the frenzied spirit of its inspiration upon the words and makes them, as it were, prophetic." This passage becomes a touchstone for the Romantic conception of sublimity as inspired diction and as a quality that is transcendental in import.

The three other sources of great writing for Longinus involve "artistic training" rather than an innate temperament. All three also owe greatly to the sorts of categories often discussed by classical rhetoricians. For Longinus "adequate fashioning of figures" (tropes), "nobility of diction" (diction), and "dignified and distinguished word arrangement" (composition) all yield significant sources for the production of sublime writing. All three, moreover, are studied at some length in subsequent chapters of the treatise. What Longinus has nonetheless managed to establish in the seventh and eighth chapters – the third stage of the rhetorical structure of his work – are forthright classifications of the possible tests and sources of great expressive power.

The fourth stage of his argument (chapters 9–43) is the largest one, sometimes rather gap ridden, comprising sequential analyses of four of the sources of great writing that Longinus has classified in chapter 8. Longinus does not treat emotion, but the other four receive substantial discussion. These four sources include, first, mental conception (chapters 9–15); second, fashioning of figures (chapters 16–29, 32, 37–38); third, diction (chapters 30–31, 43); and fourth, music, rhythm, and word arrangement (chapters 39–42). Chapters 33 through 36 are a digression on the question of how great but flawed writing can and should be recognized as superior to flawless yet moderate or humble writing. These thirty-five chapters offer some of the most interesting writing and virtually all of the arresting examples and commentary found in the treatise.

As noted before, Longinus believes that "Great writing does not persuade; it takes the reader out of himself." He emphasizes the experience of the sublime as a felt effect and as a show of great power from without, from beyond the realm of the audience. However, Longinus also indicates the lineaments of the particular kind of ecstasy and

mastery that characterize the experience of the sublime. The experience of great writing involves a sudden, ecstatic transport of the hearer or reader; but this delightful uplifting turns upon an exchange of roles between the speaker and listener, between the writer and reader. One who undergoes the experience of greatness is moved and uplifted as if he or she has spoken or written the words that transported, as if he or she were the creator of the words that are read or heard.

A good deal of Longinus's commentary upon and appraisal of his chosen examples throughout chapters 9 through 43 reflects this psychologically intricate conception of the experience of sublimity. For instance, in discussing the use of well-conceived and vivid images in two passages from Euripides, Longinus comments that "the poet himself sees the Furies, and very nearly compels his audience to see what he has imagined." Longinus insists that Demosthenes' imaginative conceptions seek to compel an audience to see and feel "an imaginative picture which conceals the actual argument by its own brilliance." The auditor sees as if through Demosthenes' or Euripides' eyes; and, as Longinus says of Demosthenes' oratory, "when two things are joined into one, the stronger diverts to itself the power of the weaker." There is a sudden fusion and subtle exchange of roles in the felt experience of great expressive power.

When Longinus turns to consider the same psychological model of the experience of the sublime in his discussion of figures or tropes and rhythmic composition as sources of greatness in writing, he stresses the manner in which Demosthenes' figures of speech impact "upon the minds of his hearers." Through his effective and inspired choice of tropes, Demosthenes "grips his audience and carries it along with him." Similarly, the notion of sudden, ecstatic transport "often makes the reader feel himself in the midst of the dangers described." As he quickly places his reader in the midst of three passages that dramatically exemplify his point, Longinus addresses the reader: "Do you see, my friend, how he [Herodotus] gets a hold on your mind and leads it through these places and makes you see what you only hear? Such passages, by addressing the reader directly, place him in the middle of the action." Similarly, about metaphors he notes that their "swift onrush naturally drives and sweeps everything before them; they make the comparisons appear quite inevitable; and the hearer who shares the inspiration of the speaker is not given time to examine the number of metaphors."

The fifth and final source of great writing also shares in the same model of the experience of sublimity. The skillful and rhythmical arrangement of words, according to Longinus, "appeals not to the ear only but to the mind itself" and in so doing "instills the speaker's feelings, by the blended variety of its sounds, into the hearts of those near him so that they share his passions."

Longinus's accounts of the various sources of greatness in writing and the underlying qualities of the experience of sublimity also betray his sense of the violence or uncompromising affective force of truly great writing. Quite often Longinus speaks of superb figural language as being engaged in an assault upon the readers or hearers. For instance, in contrasting the different kinds of rhetorical greatness found in the Greek Demosthenes and the Roman Cicero, Longinus contends that "the tense greatness of Demosthenes is more suited to moments of intense and violent passion when the audience must be altogether swept off its feet," while "the right time for the Ciceronian copiousness is when the audience must be overwhelmed by a flood of words." Longinus portrays the sort of affective stylistics involved in the experience of great writing as one of continual assault by the writer or orator upon the emotions and expectations of the audience. In chapter 34 he delights in the violent effects that Demosthenes achieves with rhetorical inversions, or hyperbata.

But the question remains: why does Longinus employ terms of violent assault upon the emotions and expectations of a reader or an auditor, and how does this characterization link up with the psychology of the sublime experience? An answer may lie within the hidden art and thematics of Longinus's own choice of tropes or figures for expressing the power of greatness. Time and again he selects and skillfully forces upon his reader similes, images, and metaphors that surreptitiously suggest his desire to *naturalize* the experience of the sublime – that is to say, his desire to describe the effects of great writing as if those felt effects were the actions of nature itself.

In the impassioned metaphors of chapter 34, the awesome power of Demosthenes' oratory is likened not only to the intimidating din of thunder but also to the power of the sun. The passage places the scale of oratorical power among the most startling and violent of nature's displays. Elsewhere rhetorical and poetical greatness is likened to a flood, to underground vapors, to a river, and to the "gusts of a hurricane." The hidden art of Longinus's subtle weaving of similes, images, and metaphors seems to

suggest, finally, that the writer or orator is to his or her audience what nature is to the whole of mankind. Both nature and the creator of great writing can create an experience of sudden transport and exhibit awesome control and mastery over the perilous and exhilarating effects of unleashed energy and light. The natural sublime of Edmund Burke, Immanuel Kant, William Wordsworth and the Romantics finds its source in this Longinian conception of the experience of greatness.

The role of the reader or auditor, though, needs further clarification. The experience of great writing may be likened to the awesome and violent displays of nature's power, but the bearing of this concealed thematics upon the purported psychology of the sublime may not be clear. With regularity Longinus characterizes the "noble exaltation," "dignity of mind," and "high spirit" of the authors of great works, and he considers a great work "the echo of a noble mind" and the "outpouring of divine spirit." Indeed, the expressive power and passion commanded by such a speaker as Demosthenes appear "like dread gifts from the gods (for they cannot be called human)." The sudden, ecstatic transport into which the work of a noble mind can propel an audience also achieves a sense of greatness and transcendence that goes beyond the usual orbit of experience. The experience of the sublime allows, demands, imposes with sudden awesomeness a sense of one's fusion and intimate interconnection with the greatness outside as well as potentially within oneself.

For Longinus the very nature of the individual moves him or her to witness the great performances not only of the natural world but also of those "most ambitious actors," such as Homer, Plato, or Demosthenes, who summon individuals time and again to answer to that "invincible love" of transcendence that is the natural proclivity of a human being. Longinus expands this idea by writing:

> Anyone who looks at life in all its aspects will see how far the remarkable, the great, and the beautiful predominate in all things, and he will soon understand to what end we have been born. That is why, somehow, we are by nature led to marvel, not, indeed, at little streams, clear and useful though they be, but at the Nile, the Danube, or the Rhine, and still more at the Ocean. . . . We may say of all such matters that man can easily understand what is useful or necessary, but he admires what passes his understanding.

This analysis leads to the fifth and final stage, presented in chapter 44, which is Longinus's much-discussed rhetorical set piece on the causes of the decline of rhetoric and great writing. In responding to the view that a "world-wide sterility of utterance" has descended upon the Roman Empire because democracy and freedom no longer flourish, Longinus asserts:

> perhaps it is not the peace of the world [Pax Romana] which destroys great talents, but much more so this endless war which occupies our passions and, beyond that, the desires which surely rule our present world like an army of occupation and drive everything absolutely before them.

The tyranny that conquers and subdues greatness is not necessarily imperial Rome; yet the imperial presence nonetheless dictates the metaphors and similes through which Longinus names the tyrannies that block or destroy greatness. The "endless war" of the struggle for material gain and the "army of occupation" that people's mundane desires have become do more to sterilize greatness than the Roman legions now stationed in lands once plentiful with political diversity. "We are the slaves of money, which is an insatiable disease in us all, and also the slaves of pleasure; these two violate our lives and our persons." The love and slavery of wealth and of selfish pleasures "breed ruthless tyrants in our souls: violence, lawlessness, and shamelessness." Such tyranny of the soul, body, and mind constricts and turns the self inward: "great qualities of soul wither, waste away, and are no longer esteemed; and men come to admire what is mortal within them, for they have neglected the growth of the immortal."

Instead of yielding to the tyranny of one's own self-involved desires, Longinus seems to suggest that human beings need to be open to the liberating force of sublimity or greatness. The experience of the sublime feeds the soul with a sense of what goes beyond the mortal and the mundane; it reveals an unexpected pathway leading outward from the prison of selfhood. Nature's, the poet's, or even the orator's sublime violence intrudes as a self-annihilating liberation of the soul to greatness. *On the Sublime* seems not to posit an "Oedipal structure" between quotation and commentary, prior author and refiguring critic, as Neil Hertz argues in his 1983 essay, "A Reading of Longinus" (*Critical Inquiry,* March 1983), or to project a dispersion of the subject as Suzanne Guerlac maintains in "Longinus and the Subject of the Sublime" (1985). Longinus appears to espouse a Stoic view of the self and the world. He castigates decadence, servile self-contentment, and self-enslavement; and he laments the self-centered blockage of higher aspirations and "great

qualities of soul" that might otherwise release themselves toward self-transcendence and greatness. Indeed, the phrase "the growth of the immortal" faintly echoes the conception of the soul and its immortality spun out by the figure of Socrates in Plato's *Phaedrus* (circa 350 B.C.). Instead of Socrates' myth of the soul and the growth of the wings of immortality through philosophical discourse and love, Longinus in *On the Sublime* advances the view that the experience of greatness is an avenue of access to that which passes understanding. The sublime, for Longinus, is in several respects an intriguing literary and psychological reconception of Plato's philosophic rhetoric and Socrates' myth about the soul.

On the Sublime has been an influential model of close reading and the notion of organic unity, hallmarks of Longinian criticism that are evident throughout chapters 9 through 43, which have greatly influenced twentieth-century critics of literature. Allan H. Gilbert has stated in *Literary Criticism: Plato to Dryden* (1940) that "the method of the book [*On the Sublime*] has entered into all our judicial criticism of the details of literature. If Aristotle may be said to have determined our view of the structure of a literary work, Longinus has shown us how to approach an individual passage." In one of the most famous sections of the treatise, for instance, Longinus quotes in its entirety a lyric poem by Sappho that begins "Peer of gods he seemeth to me." He then proceeds to study with exacting precision the skillful composition and appropriate attention to detail shown by the poet. Longinus argues that it is Sappho's "selection of the most vital details and her working them into one whole which produce the outstanding quality of the poem." The poem is carefully contrived in order to produce a particular sort of experience, and the well-integrated effects involved in that experience are both the poet's task to produce and the critic's job to understand and appreciate.

Longinus emphasizes the felt effects induced by great mental conceptions or figures of speech or well-chosen diction. Frequently such an emphasis produces a subtle and illuminating close reading of lines and phrases. He traces the techniques by which Sappho's poem enacts an astonishing fit of passion, one in which the lover undergoes the sudden shock of seeing her beloved as a "peer of gods" and herself succumbs to a series of violent transformations under his gaze. The lover loses a sense of her own boundaries and identity, as the manifest pronomial confusion makes clear, and is precipitately thrown into a rapid series of metaphors and images that present her experience as a series of natural cataclysms (raging fire, roaring waves, rampaging river, unsettling earthquake, the painful descent of autumn). Sappho's lover is herself a sudden "close reader" of the sublime, and she undergoes the violent felt effects of the greatness and self-transcendence that can befall one "lost in the love trance."

Finally, regarding the poem's organic structure or organic unity, Longinus asks "How does [Sappho] excel?" He immediately responds that her excellence has to do precisely with her organic conception and composition, "her skillful choice of the most important and intense details and [her] relating them to one another." Writers such as Sappho and Homer "have sifted out the most significant details on the basis of merit, so to speak, and joined them harmoniously without inserting between them anything irrelevant, frivolous, or artificial; such additions spoil the total effect."

This conception of organic structure and unified wholeness sounds much like that of Socrates in Plato's *Phaedrus* and that of Aristotle in his *Poetics.* The originality and critical importance of Longinus in this matter may lie in the direction toward which he refines the notion. Longinus recognizes that not all writing or oratory exhibits organic unity; however, the utilization of organic structure and wholeness, both in the creation and in the critical reception of literary discourse, heightens the "dignity," "distinction," and extraordinary character of that discourse. In a passage that owes much to the same analogy that Socrates uses in the *Phaedrus,* Longinus writes that:

> [one of] the factors which give most dignity to discourse is structure, which corresponds to the arrangement of the limbs of the body. One limb by itself, cut off from the others, is of no value, but all of them together complete and perfect the composition of the whole. So it is with great expressions: scattered here and there, apart from each other, they lose their own value and undo the greatness of the whole, but when they form a whole in close association, joined together by the bonds of melodious word-arrangement, then in the rounded structure of the whole they find their voice.

Organic structure and unity, thus, is a combined and cumulative source of greatness in writing. It combines the sources of mental conception, appropriate diction, and fine word arrangement in order to engender the consummate figure of sublimity: the "voice" that appears suddenly yet resoundingly as the felt effect of the experience of well-bonded words. This voice that issues from within the wholeness of the words gathers up the limbs and

scattered fragments of ordinary and mediocre articulations and infuses them with an expressive power that transports the reader out of the confines of selfhood toward that sudden flash of greatness found time and again in the works of affective genius.

On the Sublime is not mentioned or discussed by any Greco-Roman writer or later Latin scholar through the Latin Middle Ages. This strange lack of circulation and reception speaks incontrovertibly about the highly marginal status of the treatise's ideas during the fifteen centuries following its probable date of composition. The first modern edition of *On the Sublime* appeared in Europe in 1554, and a handful of other editions emerged during the next hundred years; and the reading and critical understanding of this masterwork of antiquity was fundamentally a product of the modern writers and critics who recognized the intellectual energy of this subtle, iconoclastic work.

The English poet John Milton may well have been familiar both with Gerard Langbaine's Latin version of the text, an edition issued in 1636 at Oxford, and the first publication of Longinus in England. Milton, moreover, cited Longinus as one of several classical authorities on the matter of style in his 1644 treatise *Of Education.* However, it was the publication of Nicolas Boileau's French translation and edition of *On the Sublime* in 1674 that galvanized widespread interest in Longinus and his analysis of the nature of sublimity. This vernacular translation, as well as Boileau's preface, so popularized *On the Sublime* that it became a major classical basis for critical formulations of both the French and the English neoclassical ages. With Boileau the first modern reading and first critical appropriation of Longinus commences. Boileau emphasized and paraphrased what Longinus meant by the idea of the *sublime:* it is "the extraordinary and the marvelous which strikes us in terms of language, and causes a work to carry away, ravish, transport us" (translation by Ernest Dilworth in *Boileau: Selected Criticism,* 1965, p. 49). This characterization of the kind of eloquence that Longinus celebrates became a significant formulation for succeeding neoclassical authors. In the wake of Boileau, Longinus's ideas about the powers of sublimity became a counterpoint to and balance for the prevailing critical emphasis upon the rhetorical treatises by Aristotle and Horace.

Neoclassical criticism in England often honored Longinus as one of the most astute classical preceptors. Joseph Addison, for instance, relied upon *On the Sublime* to account for the grandeur and sublimity of Milton's *Paradise Lost* (1667); and Alexander Pope, in his *Essay on Criticism* (1711), echoed Boileau's formulations in praising Longinus as one of the model critics of antiquity. Longinus also figured prominently in the work of such less well known neoclassical writers as Robert Lowth, who engaged in an extensive and influential study of the elevated style and sublimity of the poetry of the Hebrew Bible, and Edward Young, who in his *Conjectures on Original Composition* (1759) pitted genius against slavish imitation and strict adherence to the rules of artistic composition.

Though the neoclassical writer John Dennis was the first English critic to produce a general theory of the sublime on the basis of the work of Longinus, later-eighteenth-century writers such as Edmund Burke and the German philosopher Immanuel Kant developed more significant and influential philosophical critiques of sublimity – Burke in his *Philosophical Enquiry into the Origins of Our Ideas of the Beautiful and the Sublime* (1757) and Kant in his *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (1790; translated as *Critique of Judgment*). Both writers contrasted the well-formed and tasteful features of what might be called the merely beautiful or the aesthetic with the astonishing and unsettling nature of the experience of the sublime. Though Burke privileges the idea of the sublime in his philosophical aesthetics and Kant seems to favor the beautiful in his philosophy of aesthetic judgment, both thinkers draw deeply upon the sense of greatness or sublimity found in *On the Sublime.* Both writers also favor Longinus's pragmatic critical orientation, one that focuses on the experiencer, the perceiver, the reader of the passages that demonstrate sublimity. Though Kant often takes Burke to task for his conceptions of both the beautiful and the sublime, Burke's pragmatic critical orientation and its appeal to the universality of the felt experience of sublimity still remains an aesthetic stance that Kant shares both with Burke and with Longinus.

Though perhaps less important for Romantic and modern critics and theorists than he was for neoclassical and Enlightenment thinkers, Longinus continued to be read and appropriated during the same nineteenth-century period in which his historical identity was put in question. For the Romantics, Longinus was principally important for his attempts to discover, if only fleetingly and ineffably, the singular quality that infuses the greatest poetry. For such poets as William Wordsworth and Percy Bysshe Shelley, and especially for many of their critics and readers, the sublime was the quality that marked supreme poetic diction and prompted correspondingly grand emotion in the presence of inspired eloquence. Then from the latter half of the

nineteenth through the twentieth centuries, *On the Sublime* continued to influence the theory and practice of modern literary criticism. In "The Study of Poetry" (1880) Matthew Arnold recommends the choosing and use of literary "touchstones" for "detecting the presence or absence of high poetic quality, and also the degree of this quality, in all other poetry which we may place beside them." This method owes much to the critical practice of Longinus, who detects the presence or absence of sublimity by garnering a selection of passages and testing them against one another. This close attention to textual passages and their qualities also carries over into the critical practice of the American "New Critics" and the Chicago "Neo-Aristotelians" of the twentieth century such as Elder Olson. Longinus has been variously read by these groups as exemplifying ways that critical readers can and should attend to the features and qualities of style in lyric poetry.

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Lucian

(circa A.D. 120 – 180)

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MAJOR WORKS:
Mock Tragedy:
Podagra.
Sophistic declamations:
Phalaris 1 and 2;
Tyrannicide;
Disinherited.
Discourses:
Dionysus;
Electrum;
Harmonides;
Heracles;
Herodotus;
Prometheus in Words;
Scythian;
Thirsters;
Zeuxis.
Epideictic works:
Hippias;
The House;
Praise of the Fatherland;
Praise of the Fly;
Defending a Lapse in Greeting.
17 **Epistles**/pamphlets;
36 **Dialogues**;
Epigrams [questionable authorship].

Editio princeps: *Lucianou Samosatews Dialogoi,* edited by J. Lascaris (Florence: L. de Alopa, 1496).

Standard editions: *The Works of Lucian of Samosata,* 4 volumes, edited and translated by H. W. Fowler and F. G. Fowler (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905); *Lucian,* 8 volumes, edited and translated by A. M. Harmon, K. Kilburn, and M. D. Macleod (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1913–1917); *Luciani Opera,* 4 volumes, edited by Macleod, Oxford Classical Text (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972–1987).

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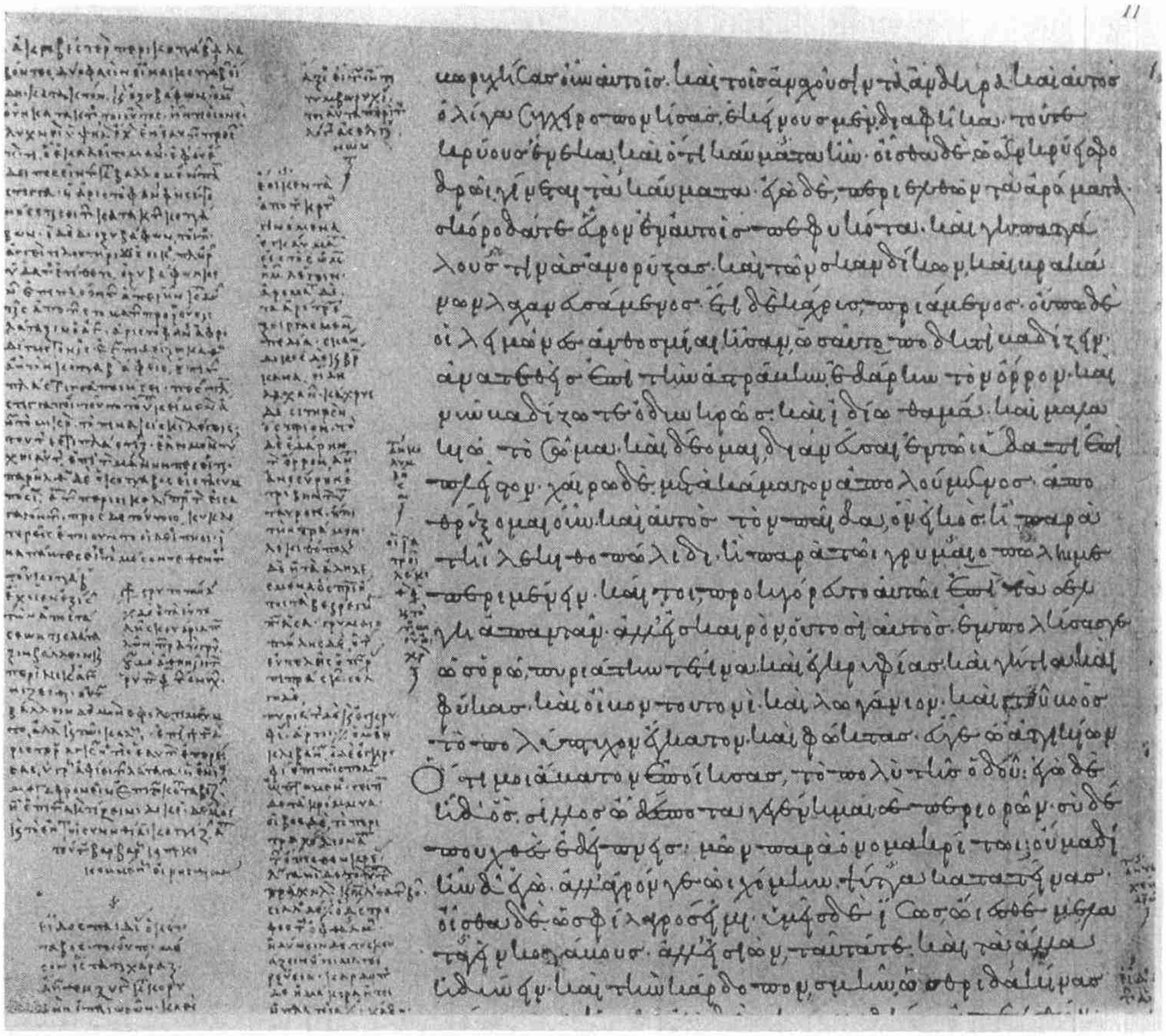
Lucian of Samosata (in ancient Syria) was one of the most original and engaging figures of post-classical Greek culture. Like other Greek writers in the Roman Empire, he is difficult to classify generically or ideologically. A Hellenized Syrian, Lucian, according to Douglas J. M. Duncan in *Ben Jonson and the Lucianic Tradition* (1979), "out-Greeked the Greeks, [as] a writer of the Christian era who brought a thousand years of Greek culture to life as though it were contemporary." Lucian was nonetheless not simply a traditionalist. Indeed, in *Lexiphanes* he parodied the classicizing literary fashions (such as Atticism) that Greeks in the empire practiced, and he treated Greek ethnocentrism and the easy idealization of the classical past as targets ripe for satire, as in, for example, his *Anacharsis* and *Philosophers for Sale!* Although long associated with philosophy, Lucian was not himself a philosopher but rather a Sophist, satirist, and parodist who, following Plato, the Cynics (such as Menippus), and Aristophanes and the Old Comic Poets, took philosophers and their discourse as one of his principal subjects.

In a lengthy career as a writer and performer giving public readings of his work throughout the empire, Lucian produced a large, diverse, and singular corpus that is comparable in size to that of Plato. It consists of seventy-six authentic *libelli* in the Oxford edition, written in a basically Attic vocabulary that is actually larger than Plato's. Of the literary forms that Lucian employs, it is the dialogue (in both Platonic and Cynic, or Menippean, forms) that dominates his work (thirty-six of sev-



Page from a tenth-century manuscript, with commentary, of Lucian's Dialogues *(Harleianus 5694, E fol. 73v)*

enty-three prose works); but his highly variegated oeuvre also contains memorable satiric narratives; tall tales à la Baron Münchausen (*A True Story*); satiric diatribes (*On Mourning*); and many lectures or critical essays such as *The Ignorant Book Collector* and *How to Write History*. More than a thousand years after his death, Lucian was taken as a model of the witty, erudite cultural critic by the humanists of the Renaissance. He is historically significant for transmitting the Cynic and Skeptic traditions to Europe – the English philosopher David Hume is said to have read Lucian's comic *Dialogues of the Gods* on his deathbed – and also as one of the principal sources of satiric literature in Europe.

Few facts of Lucian's biography have been established with certainty, and only one anecdote about him that does not derive from his own work is known. Galen reported that Lucian forged some dark sayings that were actually meaningless, attributed them to the philosopher Heraclitus, then used some intermediaries to induce a respected local philosopher to expound their meaning. Still, what can safely be inferred from his own works is tantalizing. Lucian was born on the edge of the Roman Empire, near the Euphrates River, where the world of the East met that of the West. In all probability his native tongue was Syriac, although he obviously mastered literary Greek later (and picked up some Latin as well). He refers self-consciously in such apologetic dialogues as *The Double Indictment* and *The Fisherman* to his non-Greek origins and his foreign accent. If his autobiographical *The Dream* can be believed, he was a sculptor's apprentice before seeking his fortune by literary means. But he quickly learned how to convert his peculiar combination of an outsider's perspective with an insider's knowledge into a powerful and flexible satiric technique that he applied to the most venerable cultural and social institutions of Greece.

The shape of his career is clear enough. After receiving an education in rhetoric (probably in Asia Minor) he began to cultivate an audience using the more-conventional rhetorical forms – though even these he pushed to parodic extremes – and he soon sought patronage whenever he could find it. Eventually he was evidently able to support himself by performing his own works on tour (as did other famous Sophists, according to Philostratus's early-third-century-A.D. *Lives of the Sophists*). There is no proof that Lucian acquired pupils, as successful

Sophists often did, but he does show a lively interest in the proper and improper ways of teaching and practicing rhetoric, as is evident in his *The Master of Rhetoric.* Toward the end of his career he accepted a Roman administrative post in Alexandria, presumably as a sinecure.

As is often the case with satirists, it is difficult to maintain a distinction between Lucian's literary accomplishments and his larger ideological or cultural significance. With that proviso in mind, Lucian's work is ideologically significant in at least three senses. First, it is important as a source of ostensibly eyewitness accounts of contemporary philosophical and religious figures such as the Cynic-Socratic Demonax of Cyprus, whom Lucian claimed as a teacher (in his *Life of Demonax*), the notorious Cynic Peregrinus of Parium, and the false prophet Alexander of Abonoteichus. Both of these latter men were extremely influential figures in their day and were, as such, mercilessly anatomized in satiric narratives (for example, *On the Death of Peregrinus* and *Alexander or the False-Prophet*) in which Democritus and Epicurus provide the philosophical armature. Some of Lucian's supposedly eyewitness accounts, such as that of the Platonist Nigrinus, may well be fictitious, but they are nonetheless revealing of what philosophy was taken to be in the culture of the high empire. The attacks on Alexander and Peregrinus are particularly instructive because they show that Lucian was engaged in satirizing the dominant cultural figures of his day, although he does so at a safe distance – after both were dead. Both men were, in fact, at the center of popular religious movements. Alexander succeeded in establishing an oracle at Abonoteichus that was consulted even by the emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, while Peregrinus was a Cynic renegade who sought to establish a new cult by immolating himself – ostensibly in imitation of Heracles – at the Olympic Games (A.D. 185). Lucian's powerful critique of religious ideology in these and related texts (for example, *On Sacrifices*) reverberated through the centuries and ultimately led to the proscription of his works by the church in the sixteenth century.

The second sense in which Lucian's cultural criticism is significant is as a general commentary on, and evaluation of, the reception of classical philosophical traditions in the polyglot cultural landscape of the Roman Empire. Lucian was suspicious of the inflated value of traditions in a classicizing culture; accordingly, his works satirize the experience of "conversion" to classical philosophical traditions (to Platonism in the *Nigrinus,* to Stoicism in the *Hermotimus,* to Cynicism in *The Cynic* and *The Runaways*). Similarly, the hilarious *Philosophers for Sale!,* in which the founding fathers of Greek philosophy are auctioned off as slaves, uses parody and caricature to satirize all the idols of the philosophers' tribe. Lucian takes no prisoners: neither Diogenes the Cynic nor Pyrrho the Skeptic are spared satiric scrutiny, despite their own credentials as critics of philosophy. The philosophical import of texts in these first two categories is more or less explicit.

Most important for assessing Lucian as a cultural critic and model satirist, however, are the philosophical implications of his practice as a seriocomic (*spoudogeloios*) writer of dialogue, narrative satire, and various forms of parody, which are generally Cynical or Skeptical in tendency. In Lucian's *Anacharsis,* for example, two legendary sages, Solon the Athenian and Anacharsis the Scythian, engage in a dialogue, but instead of generating philosophical insight, the two seem to speak past each other, unable to inhabit a culturally alien point of view. Similarly, in his *Symposium* Lucian constructs an ironic counterimage to the myth of philosophy as an ascent to timeless wisdom, a view memorialized by Plato in his legendary *Symposium* (circa early fourth century B.C.). No less subtle are the reworkings of Cynic and epic topoi in the *Dialogues of the Dead* and the *Dialogues of the Gods.* While the concept of the seriocomic text is originally Cynic, Lucian extends it into forms of parodic scrutiny that transcend Cynic interests; in his hands, parody becomes a means of reflecting on the value of inherited forms of discourse in a belated, postclassical culture. This is one of the reasons Lucian was so attractive to the postclassical authors of the Renaissance and eighteenth century.

Lucian's parodic treatment of philosophers and their discourse makes him indispensable reading for any student of the history of philosophy; but the value of good parody resists summary by its very form, as does a literary repertoire of more than 170. Lucian's own philosophical stance is elusive and is never stated directly (even in the *Demonax*). If his oeuvre as a whole is considered, however, there are clear patterns of aversion and affinity. Lucian is attracted to the Epicureans for their rational hedonism and critique of religious ideology; to the Cynics for their courageous practice of *parrhêsia* (free speech) – the moral basis of satire – and their unflinchingly satiric perspective on the ancien régime; and to the Pyrrhonean Skeptics for their "suspension of judgment" on such questions as the value of philosophy as an activity or an institution. It makes sense, therefore, that Lucian has been of most inter-

est to satirists such as François Rabelais, Ben Jonson, Jonathan Swift, and Voltaire; to skeptics such as David Hume; and to highly literary thinkers of skeptical tendency, such as Michel de Montaigne, Denis Diderot, and Friedrich Nietzsche, who do not fit easily into the history of philosophy or literature. From Desiderius Erasmus to Thomas Babington Macaulay, Lucian was regarded as "the last great master of Attic eloquence and Attic wit." In a modern age as awash in parody, cynicism, and religious entrepreneurs as it is alienated from its own traditions, Lucian's work continues to find new audiences.

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Lysias

(circa 459 B.C. – circa 380 B.C.)

W. Jeffrey Tatum
Florida State University

MAJOR WORKS: *On the Murder of Eratosthenes* (undatable);
Against Eratosthenes (403 B.C.);
Olympiac (388 B.C.).

Editio princeps: *Orationes horum rhetorum,* 3 volumes, edited by Aldus Manutius (Venice: Aldus Manutius & Andreas Asulanus, 1513).

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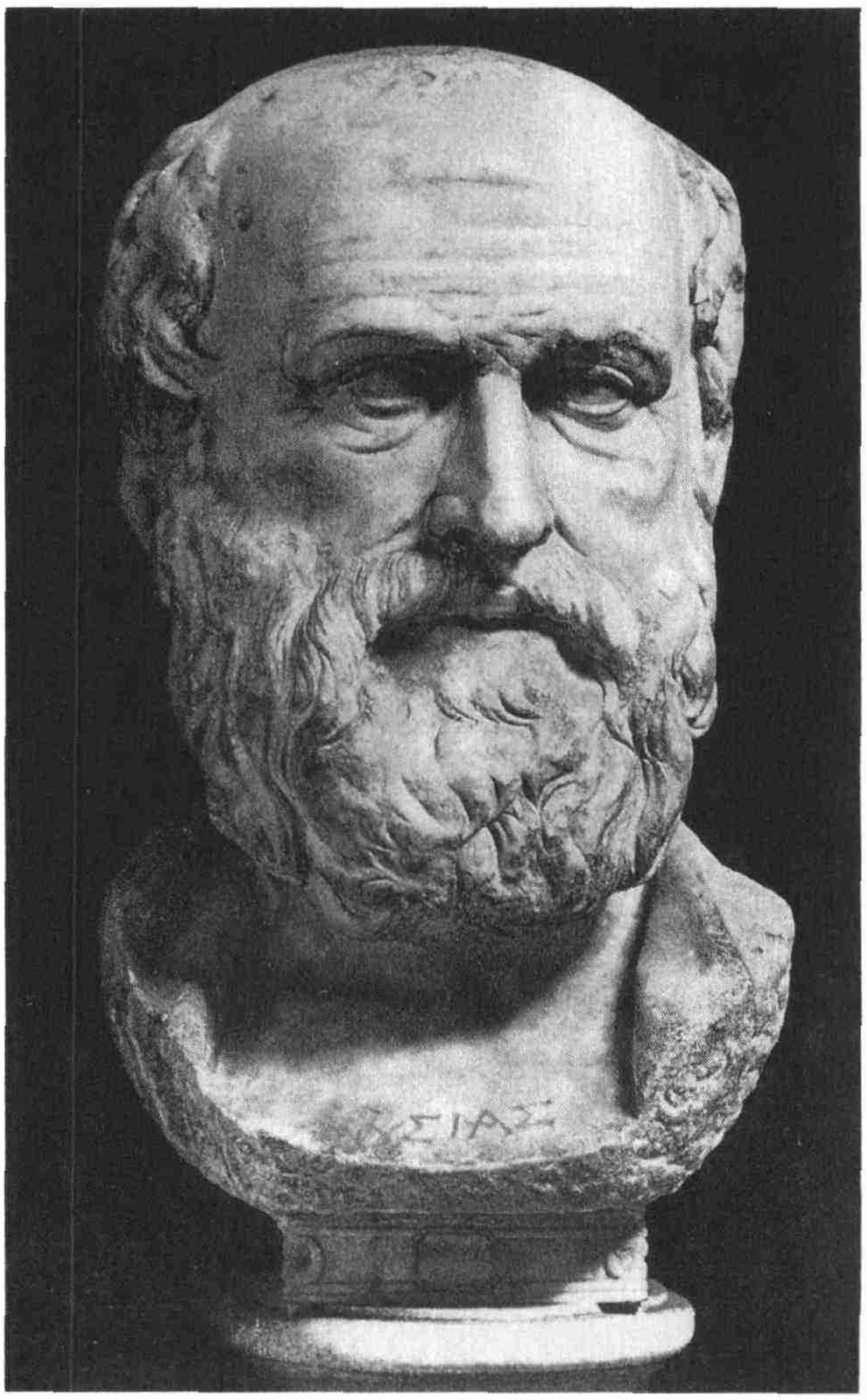
Homer's Odysseus reveled in his crafty disguises and in his heaven-sent articulateness, a paradigm of the man skilled in fitting his words to the occasion. No less gifted was Lysias, nor less storm-tossed his eventful career. From the beginning the Greeks admired and venerated excellence in speech, and when the tradition of Greek oratory found its critical articulation, Lysias emerged as one of the ten canonical Attic orators and, ultimately, as the emblem of Atticism.

The sources for Lysias's life are few but authoritative, principally the critical essays of Dionysius of Halicarnassus; the comments found in Demosthenes' *Against Neaira;* Lysias's twelfth speech, *Against Eratosthenes* (403 B.C.); and his fragmentary *Against Hippotherses* (*Papyrus Oxyrrhincus,* 1606), though one cannot ignore the biographical material preserved in the pseudo-Plutarchan *Lives of the Ten Orators*. Lysias was born around 459 B.C. in Athens and was one of the four children of Cephalus, who was a *metic* (resident alien) from Syracuse. Lysias had an older brother, Polemarchus; a younger brother, Euthydemus; and a sister. That Cephalus was himself a notable figure can be inferred from his friendship with Pericles and from Plato's decision to make Cephalus's home the setting of his *Republic* (circa 347 B.C.).



Lysias (National Museum, Naples, no. 6130.G.1116)

The consensus and consistency of the ancient biographical tradition have not spared it skeptical scrutiny. Many scholars prefer a later date for Lysias's birth, largely on the grounds that the traditional date places Lysias's literary activities at too late a period in his life (his sexual pursuits as well, inasmuch as this date would have Lysias enjoying a mistress at the age of seventy). Whatever estimation such assumptions merit (they may most charitably

be described as quaint), it is impossible to lower Lysias's birth beyond the mid 440s in any case.

At fifteen Lysias, along with Polemarchus, joined the colony of Thurii in southern Italy, where they were citizens until their expulsion by an anti-Athenian faction that arose in the aftermath of the Sicilian Expedition (415–413 B.C.). The brothers returned to Athens in 412 or 411, after which they prospered in the manufacture of shields. The Spartan defeat of Athens brought with it the establishment, in 404, of the oligarchy known as the Thirty Tyrants, under whose regime Lysias and Polemarchus, along with other wealthy metics, suffered the confiscation of their property and found themselves destined for execution. Though Polemarchus was arrested and put to death, Lysias escaped to Megara, where he assisted the exiled democrats who subsequently overthrew the tyrants. A decree of Thrasybulus awarded Lysias Athenian citizenship, but the measure was quashed, so that Lysias remained a metic, though a highly privileged one (*isoteles*). After the restoration of the democracy, Lysias sought vengeance by prosecuting Eratosthenes, one of the Thirty, for the murder of Polemarchus. It was in the restored democracy that Lysias, never impoverished even during his exile, renewed his fortunes through the teaching of rhetoric and by composing speeches for hire. He was active until 380, it seems, and he may have lived into the 370s.

Lysias's reputation resides in his capacities as a logographer, a speechwriter. Skill in public speaking was a vital commodity in Athens, not so much for the necessity of influencing public affairs through the assembly, but rather owing to the intensively litigious nature of Athenian society. Athenian juries were enormous by modern standards – normally, several hundred jurors would hear a single case – and possessed extensive powers and independence. Custom required litigants to represent themselves in uninterrupted speeches, circumstances bound to favor the pleader who had greater technical competence.

However glib the image of the typical Athenian, not every citizen had the fluency of a Demosthenes or even the opportunity to acquire rhetorical training. Many litigants therefore depended on professional assistance. In the absence of attorneys, the Athenians turned to logographers, who either provided advice or actually composed an oration to be delivered by a client as if it represented the client's own words. It was the task of the logographer to craft a speech at once persuasive and yet appropriate to his client's personal situation, there being an Athenian prejudice against forensic professionalism and, especially, a disapproval of the hiring of another's eloquence, which might wreck the prospects of a defense couched in an unsuitable style. Paradoxically, however, the Athenian reading public seems to have appreciated the products of the logographer's art when they were circulated as texts independent of a particular trial. Hence the popularity of the logographers, whose works tended to be grouped by ancient critics with those of actual orators, although the latter were faced with the additional challenges of performance.

It was evidently common practice for logographers to publish speeches. In the first century B.C., 425 speeches circulated under Lysias's name. Of these Caecilius of Calacte accepted 233 as genuine works, an astonishingly high figure. The extant corpus of Lysias comprises 35 speeches, some of which are fragmentary. One is a funeral oration (number 2), another a fragment of an epideictic speech delivered in the Assembly (number 34). In 388 Lysias composed and probably delivered his *Olympiac,* an oration attacking Dionysius of Syracuse and warning against the dangers of discord. The remainder of his speeches are judicial in nature. Since the logographer worked in secret collaboration with his client, it remains impossible to refute absolutely the unlikely assumption that only the twelfth oration, composed and delivered in propria persona, represents undiluted Lysias. It is generally agreed that the sixth, eighth, and twentieth orations are spurious; stylometric analyses, even with the assistance of computers, have failed to improve matters appreciably due to the restricted quantity of indubitably Lysian material. In fact, the parody of Lysias in Plato's *Phaedrus* (after 369 B.C.) constitutes fascinating testimony at once to Lysias's imitability and to his distinctiveness.

The various aspects of Lysias's style are catalogued and commented on by Dionysius of Halicarnassus in his important essay, and the stylistic self-definition asseverated by the poet Paul Claudel would aptly suit the ancient poet: "Les mots que j'emploie / Ce sont les mots de tous les jours, et ce ne sont point les mêmes!" (The words I use / Are the words of everyday life, yet they are by no means the same!). Lysias belongs to the reaction against the grandiose manner of Gorgias, whose prose was extremely ornate, ostentatiously artificial, and poetical in expression. Lysias, on the other hand, resorts to a dignified but wholly contemporary register: archaisms are avoided, and metaphor is rare, as are poetic or unusual formulations. The overall effect remains one of fluid artlessness. Of

the common Gorgianic rhetorical figures, only antithesis attracted Lysias, though in this respect the logographer is plainly a specimen of his time, and the effect was doubtless less striking to contemporaries than to modern Hellenists.

Dionysius lauded Lysias's purity of diction, his unfailing correctness of dialect, and his capacity for employing common language to create a dignified impression. He is also much taken by Lysias's lucidity, brevity, and simplicity. Lysias, however, did not eschew the long sentences with abundant subordination characteristic of the periodic style; such sentences are to be found in the proems and in argumentation. What Dionysius refers to is Lysias's penchant for reducing ideas to their essentials in order to express them concisely, a technique ascribed by Dionysius to Lysias, though Theophrastus attributed it to Thrasymachus. Still, an unrelentingly periodic style can become monotonous, and Lysias avoids this pitfall in his narration by using simple sentences that follow one another in what the Greeks called *dialelymene lexis* (the loose style). When Lysian narrative resorts to a more complex sentence structure, the normal pattern is to place the main clause early and to add subordinate clauses subsequently, the effect of which is to suggest spontaneous composition during the actual performance. In this way Lysias's simplicity contributed to his vividness, another virtue on Dionysius's list.

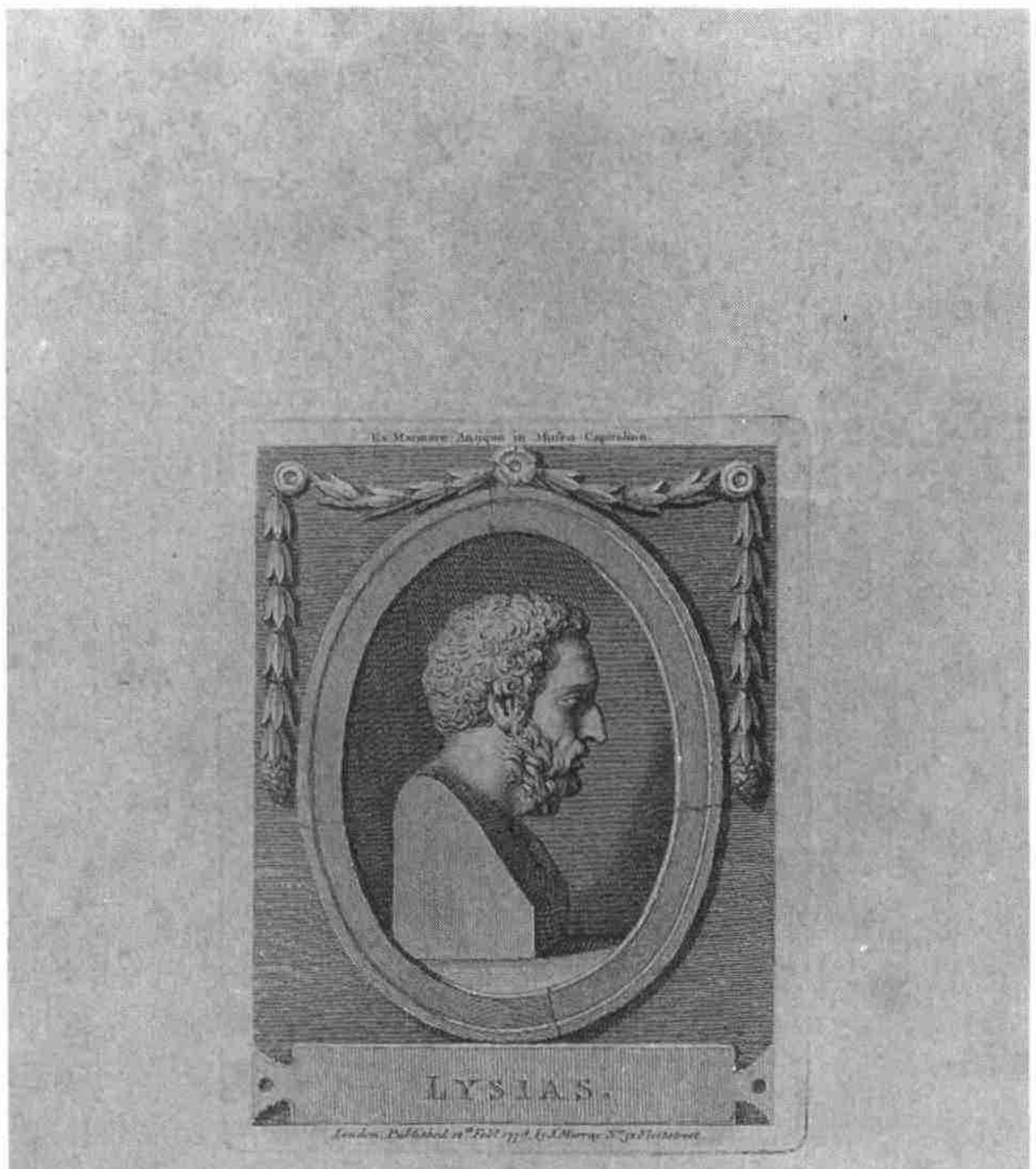
A central challenge to the speechwriter's talent is the construction of a disquisition that remains plausible when delivered by the client. Lysias's simplicity and vividness represent the happy outcomes of this necessary concern, but the consistency of his character portrayal does not end there. As Dionysius noted, propriety is another Lysian virtue: speakers say what they ought to say in a manner fitting to the expectations and prepossessions of their fellow citizens. This success at dramatic characterization has been termed *ethopoiia* by modern scholars (in antiquity the term referred to the establishment of the speaker's own good character, a vital consideration if the speaker hoped to be credible). Appropriate characterization was a practical requirement of the speechwriter's art, but it also constitutes Lysias's principal claim to oratorical fame.

The organization of a Lysian oration regularly follows a simple format: proem, narrative, arguments, peroration. Though his proems were judged outstanding, it was in composing the narrative that Lysias excelled, being "incontestably the best of all orators," as Dionysius claims. Selection of material combines with simplicity of style to produce an account of events that is highly plausible, extraordinarily pleasing, and, as a consequence, persuasive. It was in the narrative especially that Lysias's charm could prove its most captivating. The same cannot be said for his conclusions, however. The main criticism of Lysian style focuses on its failure to make a powerful emotional appeal. The grand style eluded Lysias, and, inasmuch as vigorous emotion is appropriate to the peroration, Dionysius judged him deficient in this aspect of the orator's art.

The first speech in the Lysian corpus is *On the Murder of Eratosthenes,* an undatable speech whose authenticity is undoubted. It was written for a modest citizen named Euphiletus, who found himself under indictment for killing a young man named Eratosthenes. Euphiletus claimed that, unbeknownst to him, his wife had for some time carried on an affair with Eratosthenes, who had noticed her at a funeral and had subsequently seduced her. Euphiletus had learned of the affair from a discarded mistress of the young man; investigation led him to discover the treacherous slave woman in his household who had assisted the lovers. The contrite slave agreed to inform Euphiletus of the lovers' next tryst. Several days later Euphiletus was awakened by this woman, who said that Eratosthenes was in the house. Euphiletus slipped out, collected some friends, and caught Eratosthenes with his wife. The young man confessed to his crime and was killed by Euphiletus.

Athenian law allowed a cuckolded husband to kill an adulterer if he was caught in flagrante delicto. To exercise this right, however, the adulterer had to be killed immediately upon discovery; nor was the husband permitted to lay a trap for the adulterer. To kill with guile or outside the heat of the moment exposed one to a charge of premeditated murder. Eratosthenes' relatives claimed that Euphiletus had enticed the youth into his house in order to kill him. They probably also argued that Eratosthenes was not an adulterer, though Lysias's speech does not recognize such a claim on their part. They further insisted that Eratosthenes was slain at the family hearth, a sacred place.

In composing this defense, Lysias had to deal with the legal issues involved in the precise prescriptions of the laws on homicide and on adultery. It was not enough in an Athenian court simply to file the best brief in terms of the letter of the law, however, especially in such a case. It was apparently quite remarkable for an aggrieved husband to avail himself of the right to kill, even when an adulterer was discovered in the act. Other means of address-



THE

ORATIONS

OF

LYSIAS AND ISOCRATES,

TRANSLATED FROM THE GREEK:

WITH

SOME ACCOUNT OF THEIR LIVES;

AND

A DISCOURSE on the HISTORY, MANNERS, and CHARACTER of the GREEKS, from the Concluſion of the PELOPONNESIAN War, to the Battle of CHÆRONEA.

By JOHN GILLIES, LL. D.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR J. MURRAY, FLEET-STREET; AND J. BELL, EDINBURGH.

MDCCLXXVIII.

Frontispiece and title page for an eighteenth-century English translation of Lysias's orations

ing the crime were available, which means that a jury was likely to view Euphiletus as unnecessarily harsh to a miscreant whose youth might have been supposed to mitigate matters. The potential hostility of the jurors had to be overcome if the legality claimed for Euphiletus's position were to be recognized.

Lysias meets both challenges in his superb narrative, which constitutes nearly half the speech. Euphiletus's account of the events emphasizes their accidental and unforeseen nature. Yet even as the narrative makes its casual progress, every action taken by the defendant emerges as wholly in conformity with the law. Even more effective is Lysias's portrayal of Euphiletus. He appears a simple man, concerned for his wife's welfare, not overly bright and consequently unlikely to have concocted a plot of the type for which he is standing trial. He is not a perfect man, as he obliquely confesses, for he has had his fling with a slave girl (conduct perhaps subject to mild disapproval by the most severe, but completely legal). When his wife playfully locked him in his room, he failed to discern her motive. Although the doors banged in the night and his wife appeared in the morning still wearing makeup, he docilely accepted her contrived explanation.

In short, the narrative exploits a familiar literary stereotype: the gullible cuckold, familiar from lyric and from Old Comedy. Lysias has assimilated his client to this figure in order to take advantage of instincts about people held by the jury at an unconscious level: a literary type, when shaped to particular circumstances and articulated by an actual fellow citizen, yields in this speech what seems to be a real and genuine character, one too naive and sympathetic to be a calculated murderer. Still, Lysias cannot leave his client a figure of fun – the death of Eratosthenes is too serious – and so, outside the account of his betrayal by his wife and even in some respects within it, Euphiletus is made to be a modest but dignified citizen, the salt of the earth. Euphiletus, as Lysias characterizes him, is not a complex man, but his persona is the product of sophisticated and careful literary art. It is recognizable and persuasive characterization for which Lysias strives in his speeches, not verisimilitude for its own sake or

realism. Though one may fairly deem Lysias's portrayal of Euphiletus among his masterpieces, this habit of subtle characterization, achieved by dramatic means rather than by variations in actual diction and thoroughly insinuated into the speech's narrative and arguments, is typical of Lysian oratory and certainly constitutes one of its most persuasive aspects.

Lysias's reputation remained high throughout antiquity. His severe critics were few, though one of them was no less a figure than Theophrastus. For purity of diction he remained ever the model, and his charm was much vaunted. Caecilius of Calacte preferred him to Plato, though the author of *On the Sublime* (late first century A.D.) regarded such a view as heresy. The classicizing tastes of imperial Greek authors encouraged many of them to cultivate the grace and Attic purity of Lysias.

Lysias was a stylistic icon even in Rome. Although it remains difficult to penetrate the abundant presence of Cicero in order to recover a sense of the alternative rhetorical practices of the late republic, it is plain that the great orator felt compelled to defend his style against critics from a younger generation. The new orators deemed Cicero, wrongly in his view, an "Asianist," a Greek term meant to stigmatize recent rhetorical trends arising in Asia Minor, the best-known embodiment of which was Hegesias. The essay titled *Orator* (46 B.C.) represents Cicero's defense, though it is not Cicero's only reaction to these criticisms. His younger rivals, the "Atticists," advocated the chaste simplicity of early Athenian oratory. Indeed, one prominent Atticist – and one of Cicero's more formidable rivals in the courts – was Licinius Calvus, who certainly took Lysias as a model. Other Atticists, Cicero complained, took Thucydides for their guide in oratory, and, of course, it is on the impropriety of that choice that Cicero fastens. The Roman controversy had a keen impact on Greek tastes, as Dionysius reveals. An Atticist himself, Dionysius draws careful attention to Lysias's excellences. Despite this, however, in the end Dionysius selected Demosthenes as the ideal model for the attainment of the complete Attic style; interestingly, Cicero made the same claim in his critique of his so-called Atticist rivals.

Yet if he was not the supreme example of Atticism, Lysias's stature among later classicists never diminished, and his value as a literary model exceeded even the genre of oratory. The superiority of Lysias resided not merely in his technical perfection, but rather in something transcending compositional technique. Dionysius called it *charis,* graceful charm. What most characterizes Lysias's style, he observes in *On Lysias* (late first century B.C.–early first century A.D.), is this charm: "None of his successors surpassed him in this, nor indeed imitated him with complete success." The Sturm und Drang of Demosthenes may dazzle the student of oratory or of Athenian history, but few readers can peruse *On the Crown* (330 B.C.) or the *Olynthiacs* (349 B.C.) with the same delight that they find in Lysias's unaffected gems.

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Menander

(342–341 B.C. – circa 292–291 B.C.)

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MAJOR WORKS:
Anger (*Orge*) 321 B.C.;
The Grouch (*Dyskolos*) 316 B.C.;
The Arbitrants (*Epitrepontes*);
Farmer (*Georgos*);
The Hated Man (*Misoumenos*);
The Samian Woman (*Samia*);
The Shield (*Aspis*);
The Shorn Girl (*Perikeiromene*);
The Sikyonian (*Sikyonios*);
Twice Deceiving (*Dis Exapaton*).

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Standard editions: *Menander. Reliquiae, Pars II,* second edition, edited by Alfred Korte and Andreas Thierfelder (Leipzig: Teubner, 1959); *Menander,* three volumes, edited and translated by W. G. Arnott, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1979–); *Menandri reliquiae selectae,* second edition, edited by F. H. Sandbach (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

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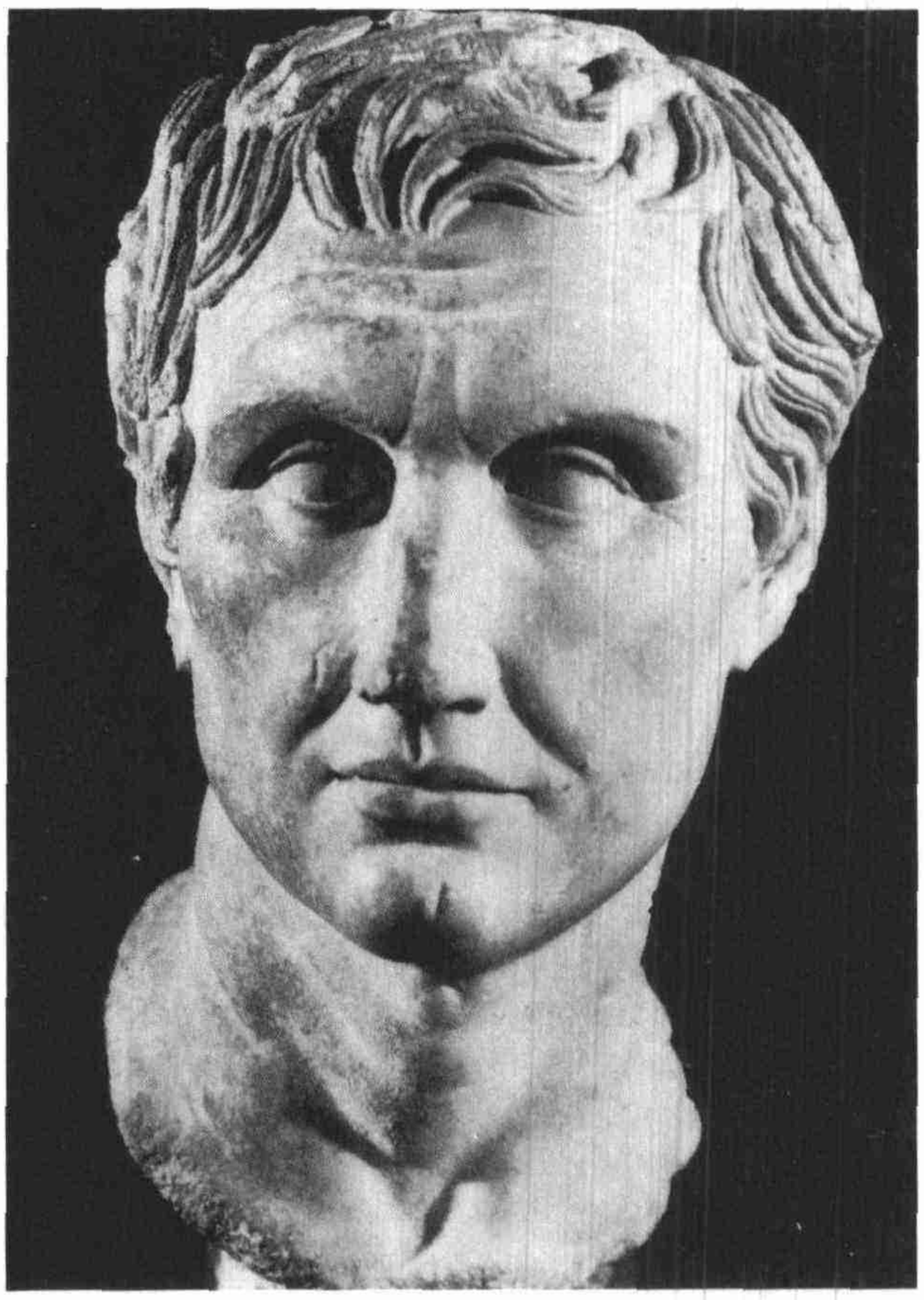

Menander (Dumbarton Oaks Collection, Washington D.C., inv. 46.2)

The comedy of fourth-century Athens, which inspired the Roman plays of Plautus and Terence and, through their own revival in the Renaissance, modern traditions of comedy from William Shakespeare and Molière to Georges Feydeau and George Bernard Shaw, has itself been conspicuously absent from critical consciousness–and for good reason. Whereas Aristophanes continued to be read–albeit with increasing difficulty–from classical times to the present day, the so-called New Comedy of the next century gradually vanished from sight. Plutarch may have preferred Menander, greatest practitioner of the genre, to Aristophanes, but by the eighth century A.D. Menander was only a name and a set of disjointed verses that scholars would eventually find among the anthologists and grammarians of late antiquity. Thus, when modern theorists such

as George Meredith and Northrop Frye wrote about New Comedy and Menander, they could really mean only Plautus and Terence, spiced with what little they had deduced (not always correctly) from the hodgepodge of Greek testimony. All this changed for good in 1959, when the first complete play of Menander surfaced in a papyrus book of the late third century A.D. Since then, discoveries of other papyri have restored substantial amounts of his comedy, and for the first time since antiquity Menander can be discussed as a literary figure in his own right.

Details of his life remain sketchy. Menander the Athenian, son of Diopeithes and Hegestrate, from the deme Kephisia, was born in 342–341 B.C. and died in his early fifties. He wrote more than one hundred comedies in that time, beginning with a play called *Anger* (*Orge*) in 321. *The Grouch* (*Dyskolos*), his one play to survive virtually intact, won first prize at Athens in 316. By about 292–291 he was dead. These facts are fairly certain. Other components of the traditional biography are more dubious. Some are at least credible: that his plays reflect the influence of the older dramatist Alexis (whom some call his uncle); that he studied with the philosopher Theophrastus, Aristotle's successor as head of the *Peripatos* (the Peripatetic School); and that he had at least social connections with Demetrius of Phaleron, who headed an aristocratic (and pro-Macedonian) regime at Athens from 317 B.C. to 307 B.C. Other, more colorful details probably reflect the ancient practice of manufacturing biography from an author's work. Thus, it is told that Menander was prone to romantic infatuations (as are the youths of his plays), that he loved the courtesan Glykera (a name appearing in several comedies), that he was effeminate (his style is refined), and that he drowned while swimming in the Pireaeus (like the mythical lover Leander). There is also a set of revealing (if unhistorical) anecdotes about him and some entertaining works of fiction, such as the correspondence of Menander and Glykera composed by the Sophist Alciphron in the third century A.D. Such material tells one rather more about how Menander was read by later generations than about the life he actually led. As with most ancient authors, the material for any meaningful biographical criticism is lacking.

Much more can now be said about his genre. In 1898 publication of a leaf from an ancient book gave scholars the first continuous scene of New Comedy, some eighty lines of Menander's *Farmer* (*Georgos*). Then in 1907 came publication of a second book, the so-called Cairo codex, which included portions of five plays, including substantial sections of *The Arbitrants* (*Epitrepontes*), *The Shorn Girl* (*Perikeiromene*), and *The Samian Woman* (*Samia*). Some fifty years later came publication of *Dyskolos,* followed by the rest of the Bodmer codex, which also contained *Samia* (now almost complete) and *The Shield* (*Aspis*), of which about one-third now exists. Other papyri published in the 1960s, including a papier-mâché mummy case disassembled at the Sorbonne, have produced significant bits of *The Hated Man* (*Misoumenos*), *The Sikyonian* (*Sikyonios*), and *Twice Deceiving* (*Dis Exapaton*), which became the model for Plautus's early-second-century *Bacchis Sisters.* As a result of these discoveries (and more are always possible), fundamental characteristics of New Comedy, once topics of keen scholarly debate, have become clear.

In the course of the fourth century – the process is already discernible in later plays of Aristophanes such as *The Congresswomen* (392 B.C.) and *Wealth* (388 B.C.) – comedy began moving from the raucous, exuberant, and often political style of what came to be called Old Comedy to a more sedate, bourgeois drama of family relationships and erotic entanglements. Style and form changed accordingly. Whereas fifth-century plays are deliberately fantastic and illogical, fourth-century plots are comparatively well made. Plutarch in his *Moralia* (late first century A.D.) tells the story of how, when a friend worried that the festival was approaching and his comedy remained unwritten, Menander replied that it was indeed nearly finished: he had worked out the plot and needed only fit the lines to it. Storytelling is in fact a key ingredient of Menandrean comedy and was facilitated by development of a true act structure, which developed the plot from exposition to climax to denouement in five sections punctuated by unscripted (and apparently unrelated) choral performances. Papyri regularly mark these breaks with the laconic note "choral song" interrupting the column of text. Menander shapes his action around these act breaks with a skill of which the practitioners of the *pièce bien faites* (well-made play) would approve, and he invariably resolves his dramatic problems in satisfying, often unexpected ways.

Though his happy endings are frequently the result of manipulation – lucky encounters, timely recognitions, and the like – the motivating force behind his plots comes from his carefully delineated and essentially realistic depictions of human character. Against a background of stock comic types such as cooks, doctors, and advisers full of familiar

Menander and the courtesan Glykera, with dramatis personae (from Anton Hekler, Greek and Roman Portraits, *1912)*

attitudes and even more familiar jokes, Menander develops serious and recognizable moral dilemmas for the parents and children, husbands and wives, and anxious careerists who are the focus of his interest. Their basically good intentions are nearly wrecked not by external circumstances, but by their own failure to recognize the limits of their knowledge and by the natural weaknesses of their own character. The tradition apparently supplied each figure with a recognizable mask and costume and a name appropriate to the dramatic role, but Menander turns the central figures of each play into individuals who make credible and often poignant responses to the challenges they face. The real sense of closure in a Menandrean play therefore comes not from the external manipulation of its plot, but from the internal process by which characters face the limits of their capabilities and deal honestly with the absurdity of their pretensions. It was doubtless this combination of careful plotting and acute characterization that fueled later speculation about Menander's links to Theophrastus and Aristotle and eventually caused the Alexandrian critic Aristophanes of Byzantium to ask of Menander and life which had imitated the other.

To enhance the reasonable qualities of his characters, Menander employs language based upon the common speech of educated Athenians. His diction, syntax, and rhythms (usually iambic and trochaic, only occasionally sung or in recitative) are designed to recall the language of everyday life. Lead characters are often given particular quirks or mannerisms of speech, a favorite device for vivid characterization, but there is little of the color and earthiness typical of Aristophanic diction. Menandrean characters are strikingly refined even when angry, which is one reason his plays continued to be read and performed throughout the Greek world long after Aristophanes had become too obscure to read without notes and too embarrassing to read without blushing. The main plays and fragments amply illustrate these traits.

No play by Menander, claimed the Roman poet Ovid in *Tristia* (early first century A.D.), lacks a love interest, and there is truth to the remark – but not the whole truth. To characterize *The Grouch* as the story of how the rich young Sostratos goes hunting in the country and is matched by the god Pan with a farmer's poor but pious daughter is to miss much of the play's dramatic interest and all of its

significance. The real center of attention is old Knemon, the title figure, whose misanthropy led him to abandon social contacts of all kinds and, even more important, to forget his responsibility as a parent. When a series of artfully designed catastrophes breaks the barrier of his seclusion, he must accept not just the marriages of his daughter to Sostratos and his honest stepson Gorgias to Sostratos's sister but also his own inclusion in the wedding celebration. Knemon is thus not simply the traditionally dour blocking figure critics such as Frye delight in calling an *agelast* (one who never laughs); he is a man made to face the consequences of his choices in life and the need to change his ways. The play's relative simplicity – only Knemon is a character of any complexity, and the dramatic problem has a straightforward solution – has not endeared it to critics, but even in this relatively early work, Menander shows his ability to develop meaning through dramatic action and to create surprise in the fifth act by exploring the moral ramifications of his climax.

By the later fourth century, professional soldiers had become common figures of real life as well as the stage, and several plays deal with the problems they face in returning to civilian society. While some – *The Flatterer* (*Kolax*) is a likely candidate – may have made the soldier a figure of fun, the surviving examples avoid the boastful stereotype familiar from Plautus. In *The Shield* Kleostratos, who had left home to serve as a mercenary abroad, is mistakenly reported to have died in battle. Much of the surviving text involves the machinations of his miserly uncle Smikrines to marry his heiress and the counterschemes to prevent this union. All apparently ends happily after Kleostratos returns, as it were, from the dead, though the terms of the resolution are not known. Stratophanes of *The Sikyonian* is a soldier returned to Attica to reclaim his patrimony and free the slave girl he loves. It too is fragmentary. Yet both comedies clearly treat their returning soldiers sympathetically and play out their dramas with heavy tragic allusions. A key monologue in *The Sikyonian,* for example, is modeled on the famous trial narrative of Euripides' *Orestes* (408 B.C.). New Comedy was in fact the spiritual heir of fifth-century tragedy, adopting not only favorite stage devices but also the ethical concerns characteristic of Euripides to the comic medium.

Two other plays show soldiers wrestling with their own proclivities to violence and a painful conflict between their desires and their powers. Polemon of *The Shorn Girl* has punished his mistress Glykera for, as he thinks, flirting with a neighbor. She leaves him in disgust (the neighbor is in fact her brother), and Polemon despairs. *The Hated Man* opens with Thrasonides shut out of his own house by Krateia, who has suddenly come to despise him. He, too, is helpless in the face of a moral rebuke, in his case caused by Krateia's mistaken belief that he has killed her brother in battle. Both plays eventually reconcile the couples and make legal marriage possible between them through elaborate recognitions once again full of tragic overtones, but not before Polemon and Thrasonides face the consequences of their helplessness and their need to conduct affairs in a less impulsive and headstrong way.

In *The Arbitrants* a despairing Charisios moves next door to a slave girl and carouses halfheartedly with her because his wife, Pamphile, has borne a child too soon after their marriage. Meanwhile Smikrines, his father-in-law, arbitrates a dispute between two countrymen over the disposition of a foundling and its birth tokens. One of these tokens turns out to be Charisios's ring, snatched from his finger by the girl he had raped at a festival. The girl is of course Pamphile and the child his own. These discoveries set in motion the inevitable process of revelation and reconciliation, but no truly happy ending is possible until Charisios sees not just the outer truth but also the essential falseness of his moral posturing and unfairness to his wife. The monologue in which he confesses his priggishness is a masterpiece of dramatic writing. Menandrean comedy at its best typically makes the external recognitions that drive its plots secondary to the moral recognitions that make the actions meaningful.

Menander's skill at using plot mechanisms to explore serious issues of human conduct is particularly striking and effective in *The Samian Woman,* where the self-important but rather foolish Moschion nearly prevents his own wedding through fear of being honest with Demeas, his adoptive father. Demeas has arranged a marriage with the poor girl next door, the girl Moschion in fact wants to marry and who has already borne his child. Rather than confess this unpleasant fact to his father, however, Moschion enmeshes Demeas's common-law wife Chrysis, the Samian woman of the title, in an elaborate plan to hide the truth from Demeas and their neighbor, Nikeratos. The scheme nearly wrecks the happiness of both father and son, and even after the emerging truth reconciles Chrysis and Demeas and puts the wedding back on track, Menander has one more trick to spring. In the last act Moschion, in a fit of pique, threatens to leave town as a mercenary unless Demeas apologizes for doubting him. Demeas has in fact been headstrong – he had leaped to

the conclusion that the child was Chrysis's by Moschion–but rightly points to his many years of exemplary behavior: it is not right, he says, to remember only the one day he erred and ignore a lifetime of kindness. Moschion is shamed into agreement and at last confronts his own responsibility for the trouble he has brought on himself and others.

Readers (and viewers) of Menander inevitably experience a moment of shock when the clarity of his moral vision and grasp of human nature suddenly emerge from the formalities of these dramatic roles and plots. Instead of the expected stereotypes, they begin to see individuals facing problems not so different from their own, and doing so no more foolishly–though no more wisely–than they themselves could manage. At such moments it is easy to understand why Johann Wolfgang von Goethe ranked Menander with Sophocles and George Meredith paired him with Molière. It was for such critics an instinctive judgment–there was, of course, no genuine Menander for them to read–but, as it happens, a defensible one. The papyrus discoveries of this century have shaken many scholarly clichés about New Comedy, and details of a new consensus are only now emerging. Its outline, however, is clear. The praise of Menander was well deserved, though the nature and the extent of his achievement is only beginning to be grasped.

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Parmenides

(late sixth – fifth century B.C.)

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MAJOR WORK: *On Nature* [title ascribed in later antiquity]

Editio princeps: *Poesis philosophica,* edited by H. Stephanus (Geneva: H. Stephanus, 1573).

Editions in English: *Parmenides: A Text with Translation, Commentary, and Critical Essays,* edited and translated by Leonardo Taràn (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965); "Parmenides," translated by Jonathan Barnes, in his *The Presocratic Philosophers,* volume 1 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979); "Parmenides of Elea," translated by J. E. Raven and Malcolm Schofield, in *The Presocratic Philosophers,* second edition, edited by G. S. Kirk, Raven, and Schofield (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), pp. 239–262; *Parmenides of Elea: A Text and Translation with an Introduction,* edited and translated by David Gallop (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984).

Parmenides is traditionally called "The Father of Metaphysics"; he was the first Western philosopher to push beyond an inquiry into the nature of things to a consideration of philosophical inquiry as such and thus to an analysis of the deep logic of thinking, of knowing, and of being. Through its defining influence on Plato's thought, Parmenidean metaphysics inaugurated the rationalist tradition, which subsequently dominated Western thought for two millennia. The legacy of Parmenides is unmistakable; however, only the faintest traces of his life appear in the surviving texts of antiquity, making it impossible to construct a biography that truly illuminates the mind and character of this revolutionary thinker.

Parmenides was a native of Elea, a Greek city on the western coast of Italy. Evidence from Plato's eponymous dialogue suggests that Parmenides was born there sometime in the penultimate decade of the sixth century B.C. and that he lived well into the middle of the following century. In his *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* (circa A.D. 200) Diogenes Laertius reports that Parmenides was the son of Pyres and that he came from a prominent and prosperous family. On Speusippus's authority, Diogenes credits Parmenides with a career as a legislator in his native city, but no details of his political activities or fortunes are supplied.

On the topic of Parmenides' philosophical training, Diogenes is more forthcoming, describing Parmenides as a student of the venerable Xenophanes during the latter's final years of exile in southern Italy. However, it is a Pythagorean by the name of Ameinias who is said to have inspired Parmenides to take up the life of a contemplative. Diogenes reports that Parmenides erected a shrine to his Pythagorean mentor after Ameinias's death; of Parmenides' own death, nothing is said.

Whether or not Parmenides actually journeyed to Athens in his old age, or met the young Socrates there – events that Plato represents in his circa-360-B.C. *Parmenides* – cannot be determined. What is certain is that Parmenides' ideas were disseminated throughout the Greek world, and, in the process, permanently altered the character of philosophical speculation. Parmenides was destined to challenge and to transform radically the project of speculative natural inquiry that had defined the first century of Greek philosophy. The sixth century B.C. had been an age of robust and ingenious physical speculation in which the Ionian naturalists – men such as Anaximander, Anaximenes, and Heraclitus – had eschewed animistic and mythic accounts of natural phenomena in favor of rational explanations that relied solely on physical principles, structures, and causes in accounting for the order and the behavior of the sensible world. These earliest natural philosophers conceptually reconfigured the world of the ancients, transforming it from a disordered realm governed by punishing necessity and divine whimsy into a genuine cosmos – a unified, dynamic system that exhibited beauty, order, and rationality in the highest degree.

As Parmenides saw things, however, this rationally ordered cosmos was no more a scientific model of reality than the animistic world that it had displaced. Natural philosophy, Parmenides as-

serted, is grounded in a fatal error: the assumption that the natural world presented by the senses really exists. This assumption, Parmenides claimed, is refuted by reason itself, which establishes that the existence of the phenomenal world is a logical impossibility. Logic demands, he argued, that what exists must of necessity (that is, simply *because* it exists) be perfectly uniform, static, and atemporal. It follows that everything evident to the senses – the entirety of the dynamic natural world of matter, multiplicity, and motion – must be accounted an illusion, a lie, and, in the strictest sense, a nonentity.

Parmenides argues for the unreality of the natural world in his only book, a didactic poem in dactylic hexameter, which in antiquity was sometimes given the generic title *On Nature*. In his verses Parmenides first identifies what he took to be the logical constraints governing any rational inquiry, then derived a distinctive metaphysics of stasis within the logical space defined by these constraints. It is this deduction of a theory of reality directly from the demands imposed by the laws of correct thinking that constitutes Parmenides' great achievement. In order to comprehend the tremendous shock that Parmenides' deduction administered to pre-Socratic philosophy, as well as the profound influence that his ideas would have on every subsequent Greek metaphysician, it is necessary to examine the structure and content of the poem in some detail. Parmenides' book did not, of course, survive antiquity intact, but the extant fragments of his poem are unusually lengthy and complete. This happy circumstance is largely because of the generosity of Simplicius, a Neoplatonist of the sixth century A.D., who copied many continuous lines of Parmenides' verse into his commentary on Aristotle's *Physics* (circa 335 B.C.), which itself contains an extended attack on Eleatic metaphysics.

The poem opens in grand style with a prologue depicting Parmenides' ascent, via a chariot escorted by "the daughters of the Sun" (translations throughout are by J. E. Raven and Malcolm Schofield), from the realm of ordinary experience circumscribed by the diurnal cycle of light and darkness ("the Paths of Night and Day"), onto a path "far from the steps of men" that opens the way to a higher kind of understanding. This path leads Parmenides into the presence of a goddess who promises to teach him "all things, both the unshaken heart of well-rounded truth, and the opinions of mortals, in which there is no true reliance." The remaining lines of the poem are spoken by the goddess, a device that rhetorically elevates Parmenidean metaphysics to the status of a truth beyond the ordinary understanding of mortals. Parmenides believed that philosophical understanding had to transcend ordinary discourse, which he saw as rooted in a kind of naive empiricism and consequently infected, as he would argue, with logical error.

The goddess begins by demarcating a pair of possible paths of inquiry. The first path, upon which Parmenides himself stands, is the "path of Persuasion [which] attends upon Truth." This is the only permissible route for philosophical inquiry, and it starts from one basic and indisputable truth: "It is impossible for [it] not to be." Parmenides' idea is that whenever someone successfully inquires about something, either in the privacy of thought or in conversation with others, there is some real subject of inquiry. One cannot inquire about nothing, nor ask a question about nothing, nor wonder about nothing: to inquire about nothing *is to fail to inquire at all* – just as to think about nothing is to fail to think, and to talk of nothing is to fail to talk. Language and thought, according to Parmenides, are necessarily directed toward and make reference to something real; thus, empty talk is not talk at all, logically speaking, but mere noise, and a thought without an object is a logical impossibility.

The second path of inquiry mentioned in the text is not actually indicated by the goddess, nor could it be. She declares it to be "an altogether indiscernible track," which, being indiscernible, is thus neither definable nor open to pursuit. This nameless path is closed because it requires starting from an assumption that is senseless: "[It] is not and it is needful that it not be." To start down this path would require thinking or talking about something that does not and cannot exist; this amounts to thinking or talking about nothing. Parmenides stresses that a person cannot "know what is not . . . [nor] indicate it." The problem is that "nothing" is not available as an object of thought: "What is there to be said and thought must needs be: for it is there for being, but nothing is not." In order to be available as an object of thought, nothing, *per impossible,* would have to be something; this amounts to demanding that what does not exist and cannot exist (nothing) should nevertheless exist (be something). This demand cannot be met, for the existence of the nonexistent is a contradiction in terms.

This second path of inquiry, then, is worse than a dead end; it is illusory. Thus, when the goddess indicates to Parmenides the way of mortal opinion, "on which mortals wander knowing nothing, two-headed," she points to a third path of inquiry. This route is a real option; it is, in fact, the route that most minds travel in their thinking about the world. Nevertheless, the goddess denounces this

well-trodden path as leading only to confusion and ignorance. This "backward-turning" path is defined by the belief that "to be and not to be are the same and not the same." The goddess warns Parmenides that this belief implies the absurd and impossible claim associated with the indiscernible path just dismissed, the claim that "things that are not are." She commands him, "Hold back your thought from this way of enquiry, nor let habit, born of much experience, force you down this way, by making you use an aimless eye or an ear and a tongue full of meaningless sound"; instead, she says, "judge by reason the strife-encompassed refutation spoken by me."

Parmenides is claiming here that ordinary, habitual ways of thinking and speaking about the world are radically inadequate. As he sees it, human beings routinely confuse the natures of what is (the real) and what is not (the unreal): on the one hand people distinguish them from one another (presumably as opposed in some way), and on the other hand give them some common character. Parmenides says that this endemic confusion involves attributing existence to "things that are not"; evidently, then, the common character imputed to the real and the unreal in ordinary thought and discourse is existence. This is not surprising, given that inquiry demands an existing object in order to proceed; human error, it would seem, lies in a tendency to attribute real existence to a class of pseudo-objects that somehow present themselves to the awareness. These pseudo-objects, as it turns out, enter a person's consciousness through "an aimless eye or an ear" – they are the sensible objects revealed through sight, hearing, sound, taste, and touch. Parmenides is making the radical claim that sensible things are mere appearances and not real objects. He supports this claim by appealing to logic and argument, tools of discrimination that delineate a reality that directly contradicts the pseudoreality – the natural world of multiplicity and change – invoked by the senses.

It is important to note that, although common sense and natural philosophy alike mistake the pseudo-objects of the senses for reality, this error is culpable only when it forms the basis for philosophical speculation. Common sense does not aspire to penetrate or to ground the appearances; natural philosophy does this. Hence, though empiricism is benign as a framework for human opinion, it becomes vicious when it is trusted to discover the deep truth about reality. As a means to refuting empiricism's claims to truth, the goddess leads Parmenides down the remaining path of inquiry, the way of what is or of being. This way is constituted by a deduction of the signs of a proper object of inquiry: it exists; it is uncreated; it is imperishable; it is whole; it is of a single kind; it is unshaken; and it is perfect. That the objects of thought must exist has already been proven; a nonexistent thing is a logical impossibility. Hence, the remaining signs define what Parmenides takes to be the essential properties of every real object or being.

First of all, according to Parmenides, what is must be uncreated; it can have no beginning in time. If one supposes a beginning for what is, he argues, one must then answer the following question: "How and whence did it grow?" Parmenides considers the question in reverse order, asking first where what is could have come from. What exists could not have originated from what is not, for the nonexistent is inconceivable, impossible, and therefore not a cause or origin of anything. To say that something was created from nothing is precisely to fail to explain where something came from. On the other hand, to say that what is came from something existent is to admit that there was no time when what is did not exist. Clearly, there is no need to account for the creation of what has always existed. Therefore, every answer to "Whence being?" is either nonsense or otiose.

Moreover, Parmenides asks, if, per impossible, what is *were* created and *did* have a beginning in time, there can be no explanation of why reality had come into existence at one time rather than another – "What need would have driven it later rather than earlier, beginning from the nothing, to grow?" Parmenides' argument here is simple and devastating: anyone wishing to maintain that something could be created from nothing is faced with the impossible task of attempting to explain the hows and whys of its generation without adverting to any antecedent causes whatsoever. Parmenides dismisses creation ex nihilo as illogical and inadmissible as part of any rational inquiry into the nature of reality. He goes on to assert that what exists is not only uncreated, but imperishable as well. The destruction of the existent is apparently ruled out by the impossibility of anything else coming into being; here Parmenides seems to treat the destruction of the existent as tantamount to the creation of the nonexistent, which is a patent absurdity.

Parmenides draws from the impossibility of creation and destruction of the real an important corollary: that what exists "must either be completely or not at all." There are no degrees of being, no quasi realities, and no demiworlds. This corollary forms the basis for Parmenides' denial of any reality to the world of appearance.

What exists, Parmenides next asserts, must be whole: "Nor is it divided, since it all exists alike." What is must be one and continuous, for on what basis could an inquirer distinguish one part of the real from another? Parmenides has already denied that there are degrees of being that might distinguish one being from another. Here he explicitly denies the possibility of picking out entities by any means, on the grounds that "it all exists alike." Parmenides evidently means to assert that metaphysical pluralism inevitably imports the conception of nonbeing as a background against which a multiplicity of beings emerge as distinct individuals. To distinguish beings one needs, as it were, to open up some conceptual distance between them; but since Parmenides has proven that people can only conceive of what is, the logical space available is already fully occupied. There are no logical interstices between what is and what is: "it all exists alike."

The nature of the existent, as Parmenides sees it, is such as to exclude the possibility of any other nature; hence, what is real is of a single kind. "Nor is it more here and less there, which would prevent it from holding together, but it is all full of being." The essence of the real "holds together," for there is only one way to be a being. Everything that is – because it is – shares the same essence: "So it is all continuous: for what is draws near to what is." For Parmenides, existence implies a determinate essence. This is not to say that what exists must have some essence or other to which existence may attach, but rather that what exists must have the essential – that is, the logical – character of the existent: to be at all is to be necessarily, to be one, to be uncreated, imperishable, and continuous. Parmenides deduces from this unity of essence and from the impossibility of making any genuine metaphysical distinction between beings that there is only one being. Eleatic metaphysics is thus a double-strength monism: there is only one kind of being, and there exists only one being of this kind.

Eleatic monism, indeed, is characterized by exceptional rigor and severity. The one being admits of no internal differentiation of any sort; nor is it mutable in any respect. Whatever properties the Eleatic One has, it has those properties eternally and absolutely. Being, argues Parmenides, is "unshaken" – meaning that it is in every way changeless. This conclusion is said to follow from the fact, already established, that the real is neither generated nor destroyed. As Parmenides sees it, in fixing the essential properties of the One, the inquirer thereby fixes all its properties and rules out qualitative change altogether. The absolute character of existence and the impossibility of generation and destruction ensure that the existent as such is not temporally extended, for, metaphysically speaking, it has no past or future, but abides in a dimensionless present, always completely and absolutely real. There can be no change for something that enjoys an atemporal existence. The denial of coming-to-be and passing-away imposes, Parmenides says, a necessity upon the one being and "fixes it" within "great bonds." The image is of something tied down so tightly that it cannot move the least bit in any direction: being is essentially immobilized and rendered metaphysically static – "it remains the same and in the same place" – by the requirement that it always be.

This changeless, eternal, all-encompassing being is, Parmenides adds, perfect. Parmenides expresses the perfection of the One in terms of its completeness – "it is not deficient" – and its perfect self-identity – "there is a furthest limit . . . like the bulk of a ball well-rounded on every side, equally balanced in every direction from the centre." That what exists is complete follows from the fact that it is whole and unique. There is nothing that reality might lack, since there is nothing other than the real – by definition, being cannot lack any part or property of the real; as for its lacking what is not a part or property of the real, that would be equivalent to its lacking something that is nothing at all. Adding nothing to the One, even if this were possible, would not change what is in the least, let alone improve or complete it. When Parmenides says that "if it were [deficient in anything] it would be deficient in everything," he states what is, by now, the obvious: for being as such to be lacking, it would have to be lacking with respect to being; but then it would not be, and would therefore lack everything.

Moreover, what exists is perfectly self-identical: "equal to itself on every side, it lies uniformly itself within its limits." There is scholarly controversy as to whether the limits to which Parmenides refers are meant to be spatial boundaries, or are meant to indicate conceptual limits imposed by the logic of being, that is, by the essence of the real. Parmenides certainly says that being is like a sphere (the solid figure defined by that set of points equidistant in Euclidean space from any given point) in that it is not "somewhat more or somewhat less here or there." All parts of what is are the same and alike: all are equally real, equally immutable, equally timeless. Moreover, the parts are continuous; there intervenes nothing of the "non-existent, which would stop it from reaching its like." Parmenides may have

conceived of the One as a solid, spherical substance, extended in space (if not in time). If so, then his conception of the One presents certain difficulties. There is the immediate question of what bounds and of what surrounds the One: if the real is a finite sphere, then what limits it, and what lies beyond it? There would seem to be no satisfactory answer. Further, if the One has a finite body and a determinate shape, then it has differentiable internal parts – a center, a circumference, and so on. Then being would no longer be all alike and everywhere the same, and there would be different ways of being a being (that is, being this part rather than that part of the One).

Zeno of Elea, a student of Parmenides, seems to have argued as though any attribution of extension to the real, whether spatial or temporal extension, renders the existent paradoxical. In the dialogue *Parmenides,* Plato describes Zeno's paradoxes against motion and multiplicity as mounted in support of Eleatic monism; if so, then the One qua sphere would fall prey to the dialectical attacks of its own champion. Melissus of Samos, generally a staunch defender of Eleatic orthodoxy, later maintained that the One must be both infinite, because nothing could limit the real, and incorporeal, because no material thing could be infinite. Melissus seems to be correcting Parmenides' deduction on these points, perhaps in direct response to objections raised against the One qua finite sphere. Perhaps Zeno and Melissus demoted the finite sphere to a metaphor: when Parmenides compares the One to a sphere "equal to itself on every side," he may be charitably interpreted (or reinterpreted) as making a point about the self-identity of its parts, to wit, that because all parts of the One are the same, the One has no parts.

Under any interpretation of the arguments used to support the perfection of the One, it is plain that Parmenides unequivocally denied the reality of multiplicity, of motion, of change, and of time. Eleatic thought converges on these fundamental ideas: there exists and can exist only one thing, and that thing neither moves nor alters in any way but remains in eternal and perfect stasis. Variation, alteration, and process are not real properties of what is, but mere appearances; experience itself is a fabric of illusions. Eleatic monism thus effectively eliminates the phenomenal world as an object of scientific inquiry.

Oddly, Parmenides follows up his devastating attack on the sensible world by detailing a specimen of natural philosophy of his own. Scholars have long puzzled over why Parmenides has the goddess declare, "It is proper that you should learn all things, both the unshaken heart of well-rounded truth, and the opinions of mortals, in which there is no true reliance." Obviously referring to these mortal opinions, the goddess promises to teach Parmenides "how what is believed would have to be assuredly, pervading all things throughout." Parmenides seems to set himself the task of systematizing the appearances without assenting to the truth of the appearances. The point of this exercise is not clear. Perhaps Parmenides recognized the practical value of natural philosophy to human beings, given that humans are trapped, phenomenologically speaking, in the illusory world of the senses. Or he may simply have presented his cosmology as a means of more precisely delineating the nature and causes of mortal error, thereby buttressing his case against empiricism.

Whatever Parmenides' intentions in explicating the cosmology, many ancient readers of the poem seem to have taken it as a serious effort at natural philosophy. Extant fragments of this part of the poem – because they are comparatively fewer and more truncated than those from the earlier section devoted to the Way of Truth – are generally more suggestive than informative. It is therefore difficult to piece together the precise structure of Parmenides' cosmology, which seems to have been quite elaborate. Sources agree, however, that the system was dualistic, explicating the natural world by reference to the opposition and interaction of two primary physical principles, "light" and "night." Equally important to note is that Parmenides made it clear that this duality is erroneously posited by the human mind: "For [mortals] made up their minds to name two forms, of which they needs must not name so much as one – that is where they have gone astray – and distinguished them as opposite in appearance and assigned to them signs different one from the other." The opposition is apparent, not real; in reality there are no opposing qualities, forces, or principles, but only the unified, static perfection of the One. What Parmenides maps out in the cosmology is not the structure of the real, but the structure of the appearances; this is, in his view, all that any natural philosophy can hope to do.

In Parmenides' cosmology, all the features of the natural world – the elements, the heavenly bodies, the earth, organic life – are created from mixtures of light and night. He seems to have envisioned the cosmos as a series of concentric rings or spheres of alternating composition – some pure fire, others pure night or a mixture of fire and night. One of the mixed rings, according to the second-

century A.D. doxographer Aetius, functioned as the efficient cause of motion in the cosmos, governing the movements and mixings of the other rings. This efficient cause is called Necessity; it is said to steer "all things [and govern] the hateful birth and mingling of all things, sending female to mix with male and again conversely male with female." Heavy bodies are compounded chiefly of night, which is associated with density and coldness; in light bodies, fire predominates. As to the order and mechanics of cosmogony, Parmenides' account does not survive.

A final and tantalizing glimpse of Parmenides as a natural philosopher is provided by Theophrastus, who relates that Parmenides described sensation as the communication of like with like. In other words, humans are able to perceive the phenomenal world because their souls are composed of the same stuffs as the phenomenal world: light and night. It is the luminous element in the soul that perceives the manifestations of light in the world, while the night in the soul perceives what is night born outside it. Here the explanatory circle becomes dizzyingly tight: opposing categories are projected onto the world as a means of interpreting appearances, then those categories are applied to the constitution of the human mind in order to account for the ability to perceive the world in terms of this fundamental opposition. Empiricism, Parmenides apparently believed, could indeed produce an internally coherent picture of the world, but only by abandoning the critical stance proper to a rational account of what is, and which alone can secure a ground for knowledge outside the circle of appearances.

The Eleatic critique did not bring Greek natural philosophy to a halt; rather, it prompted empirically oriented thinkers such as Anaxagoras, Empedocles, and Democritus to develop theories that postulated physical entities and principles with something of the everlasting and changeless character of the Eleatic One. No physicist could deny the reality of multiplicity and change, nor dismiss the evidence of the senses outright, but succeeding generations of Greek natural philosophers did follow Eleatic precedent in denying the possibility of genuine creation or destruction and in stressing the simplicity and immutability of the most fundamental realities. Moreover, the power of specific Eleatic arguments against the reality of sense experience forced later philosophers of nature to produce critical accounts of sensation detailing how sensation works, what role it plays in the formation of concepts, and the extent to which it can or cannot be trusted to provide reliable information about the way things are.

However, the most profound effects of Eleaticism are evident in the metaphysics and epistemology of Plato, who, while rejecting Eleatic orthodoxy concerning the One, was deeply impressed by the standards of logical rigor, the analytic depth, and the extraordinary conceptual coherence of Parmenidean thought. Moreover, in Plato's dualistic metaphysics, the Eleatic marks of being – unity, immutability, and atemporality – became hallmarks of the Forms, those ideal objects that were, for Plato, at once the only proper objects of knowledge and the eternal essences providing structure and reality to the ephemeral objects of the senses. Plato posited a multiplicity of beings or Forms, thus taking a decidedly anti-Eleatic stance in favor of ontological pluralism. However, Plato grounded the being of the Forms in a single, ultimate principle, the Good, which he described as beyond being and hence beyond the reach of language and discursive thought. Though the Good plays a role in Plato's metaphysics of morality and in his cosmic teleology that is quite distinctive (and, again, foreign to Eleatic thought), nevertheless, in its ineffability, perfection, unity, and ontological primacy, the Good bears a strong family resemblance to Parmenides' One.

The Neoplatonists would later collapse the genealogical connection between Plato's Good and its Eleatic forebear into a relation of identity. In the metaphysics of Plotinus, the Good and the One are explicitly synthesized in the First Hypostasis, which is beyond being, yet metaphysically pervasive as the immanent principle of unity which makes the being of each thing – whether intelligible or sensible – possible. From Neoplatonism, the Christian philosophers of late antiquity adopted the idea that goodness, unity, and intelligibility logically converge in a single, necessary, and ultimate ground of reality. Parmenides' metaphysics of the One – that which is and must be – thereby became ancestor to the rationalist conception of God as that unique being in which essence and existence are identical.

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Philo

(circa 20–15 B.C. – circa A.D. 50)

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MAJOR WORKS: *On the Account of the World's Creation Given by Moses;*
On Abraham;
On Joseph;
On the Decalogue;
On the Special Laws;
On the Virtues;
On Rewards and Punishments;
Allegorical Interpretation of Genesis;
On the Cherubim, the Flaming Sword, and Cain the First Man Created out of Man;
On the Birth of Abel and the Sacrifices Offered by Him and by His Brother Cain;
That the Worse Is Wont to Attack the Better;
On the Posterity of Cain and His Exile;
On the Giants;
On the Unchangeableness of God;
On Husbandry;
Concerning Noah's Work as a Planter;
On Drunkenness;
On the Prayers and Curses Uttered by Noah When He Became Sober;
On the Confusion of Tongues;
On the Migration of Abraham;
Who Is the Heir of Divine Things?;
On Mating with the Preliminary Studies;
On Flight and Finding;
On the Change of Names;
On Dreams, That They Are God-Sent;
Questions and Answers on Genesis;
Questions and Answers on Exodus;
On the Eternity of the World;
On Providence;
On Animals;
Every Good Man Is Free;
Against Flaccus;
On the Embassy to Gaius;
On the Contemplative Life;
Hypothetica;
On the Life of Moses.

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Philo was the first to formulate the problem of the reconciliation of faith and reason, which was to dominate the history of philosophy until René Descartes and Benedict de Spinoza shifted the focus to rational thought in the seventeenth century. Having been born approximately two decades before Jesus and having died approximately two decades after Jesus, he is important to an understanding of the spiritual crisis of the first century. While his influence on Jewish thought was negligible until modern times, the history of Christian philosophy begins not with a Christian but with Philo, a Jew; he is also a crucial link in the development of European culture from Platonism and Stoicism to Christianity. His influence on the church fathers Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Eusebius, and Gregory of Nyssa of the third and fourth centuries A.D. is truly profound. Some symbolic recognition of the Christian debt to Philo is revealed in the legend quoted by Eusebius in his *Ecclesiastical History* (circa A.D. 324) that when Philo went on his visit to Rome he met Saint Peter. Indeed, he stands closer to the Christian church fathers of the third century than to the Talmudic Amoraim of that period; in fact, he is much less "rabbinic" in style than Paul. The quantity of surviving manuscripts (including several papyrus fragments) shows how much he was read. In the fourth and early fifth centuries some of his essays were translated into Latin and Armenian. His

only links with Judaism until the sixteenth century, when he is mentioned at length by the Italian rabbi Azariah dei Rossi, are indirect and are with Jewish mysticism.

Despite the large number of his works, almost no information survives about Philo's life. He is nowhere mentioned in the Talmudic corpus. His brother, Alexander, was one of the wealthiest Jews of the world and lent Agrippa I, who was to become king of Judaea, a huge amount of money, according to Josephus's *Jewish Antiquities* (A.D. 93–94). Judging from his vocabulary and from his quotations from Greek authors, Philo must have had a tremendous literary education, especially in the epic and dramatic poets. He was likewise intimately connected with the techniques of the Greek rhetorical schools. Though he relates nothing of his own education, the fact that he declares in *On the Life of Moses* – in a clearly extrabiblical addition – that Moses had Egyptian instructors in arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, harmonics, and philosophy, and Greek teachers for the rest of the Hellenistic school is perhaps an indication of the kind of education that Philo himself received. Furthermore, that the goal of his education was to be a philosopher in the tradition of Socrates may be conjectured from the fact that whereas the Hebrew (Exodus 6:12) describes Moses as of "uncircumcised lips," that is, a stutterer, Philo's *That the Worse Is Wont to Attack the Better,* following the Septuagint's translation, "not eloquent," stresses that Moses was opposed to false sophistry, precisely as was Socrates, whom Plato so much admired.

It may be surmised that he attended a gymnasium from the fact that he speaks often of the gymnasia, as when he declares in *On the Special Laws* that the goal of education of children is not only life but a good life. He elaborates by stating that this goal is achieved through physical training in the gymnasium and through mental training in the liberal arts and philosophy. Though Philo gives every appearance of being an observant Jew in the traditional sense, the games in which students of the gymnasium participated were pagan religious festivals; and Philo presents ample evidence of knowledge of athletics, particularly in his similes and metaphors.

In *On Drunkenness* Philo remarks that he has often been to the theater (despite the fact that, being directly associated with the god Dionysus, it had distinctly religious connotations), where he noticed the diverse effects of the same music on various people. He also notes in *Every Good Man Is Free* how enthusiastically the audience in a theater received a play by Euripides.

Philo does not mention the names of any of his teachers, although, in antiquity, to do so was considered an act of piety. He was a contemporary of Hillel and Shammai, but he mentions neither them nor any other of the Palestinian rabbis. It might be surmised that since he came from such a wealthy family and since Alexandria is not far from Palestine that he would have visited Palestine often, but only once (in *On Providence*) does he mention – and only incidentally – the fact that he went to offer prayers and sacrifices at the Temple in Jerusalem. Nor, for that matter, does he speak of the Jewish education of Moses, though he does say in *On the Embassy to Gaius* that Jews – and presumably this would include Philo himself – were taught "from their very cradles, as it were, by their parents, tutors, and teachers, and – more than that – by their holy Laws and even by their unwritten customs [perhaps a reference to the Oral Torah, eventually codified in the Talmud], to believe that the Father and Creator of the universe is one God." His only other reference to formal Jewish education, in *On the Special Laws,* indicates that on each Sabbath day there stood open in every city thousands of schools, teaching the cardinal virtues.

Philo's knowledge of Hebrew must have been minimal, since, if he had known Hebrew, he would hardly have claimed in *On the Life of Moses* that the Septuagint corresponds literally with the Hebrew original. His quotations from the Septuagint do not always agree with the surviving text of the Septuagint and reflect either an alternate translation or later interpolations inspired by Aquila of Pontus's version in the second century. It seems hard to believe that one who wrote in such detail about biblical episodes would not have consulted the original text and at least occasionally quoted from it, especially where it differed from the Septuagint translation; but in *On the Decalogue* and *On the Special Laws* Philo follows the Septuagint in placing the prohibition of adultery as the sixth commandment, rather than the extant Hebrew text, which places it seventh. Moreover, it is hard to believe that Philo knew Hebrew when he writes in *On the Change of Names* that the change of the name *Sarai* to *Sarah* was brought about by the addition of one letter, *rho* (which would change *Sarai* into *Sarrai*). As to the occasional places where Philo has etymologies of Hebrew names that are not found in the biblical text, he may have relied on an onomasticon, such as has been discovered in a papyrus at Oxyrhynchus in Egypt.

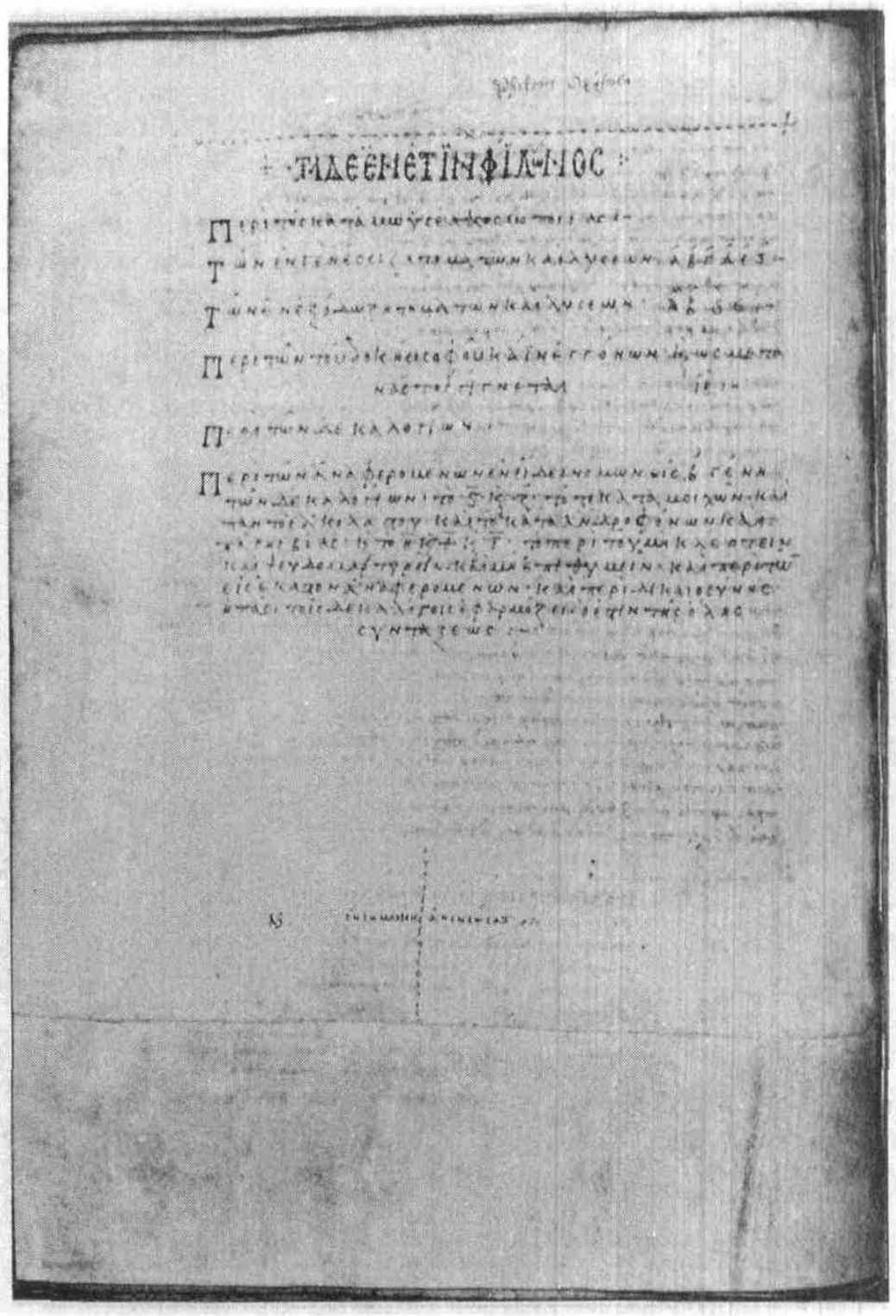
Philo was no recluse. According to Josephus, who describes him as a man held in the highest

honor, he headed a delegation of Alexandrian Jews to the Roman emperor Caligula in A.D. 40 to refute the charge of a delegation headed by the notorious Apion that the Jews had neglected to honor the emperor with statues and to swear by his name. According to Josephus's account Philo, characterized as a true believer, was treated with disdain but told the Jews who had accompanied him to remain of good courage, "for Gaius's wrath was a matter of words, but in fact he was now enlisting God against himself."

Philo is the first Jew who presents proofs for the existence of God. The first of these, in *On Flight and Finding,* is based on Plato's argument in the *Timaeus* (circa 350 B.C.) and rests on the premises that the world came into being and that nothing comes into being without a cause. The second, in *On the Account of the World's Creation Given by Moses,* argues that even on the Aristotelian assumption that the world is eternal, there is proof for the existence of a God who, as the unmoved mover of the world, is also the cause of its existence. The third, in *Allegorical Interpretation of Genesis* (and also found in Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics), is the teleological argument, based on the extraordinary orderliness of the universe. The fourth, in *On the Migration of Abraham,* is based on the Stoic argument for the existence of God in the world from the existence of mind in man. Philo then proceeds to argue that since the human mind exists apart from the human body, whatever is occasionally true of the human body must be true of God at all times.

One of Philo's most important and most original views is that whereas God's existence is knowable, he is unknowable in his essence and is unnameable and ineffable. In asserting that God is providential, Philo reproduces a proof taken from the Stoics, namely that those who grant that the gods exist must acknowledge that they perform some action and that that action is an exalted one. But since nothing is more exalted than the administration of the world, divine Providence must be administering the world. Philo also uses this argument as a proof for creation, since, he insists, there is nothing more exalted than the creation of the world. He is, however, original in insisting on an individual Providence who can suspend the laws of nature as against the Greek philosophical view of a universal Providence subject to the unchanging laws of nature.

Though Philo describes Plato as "most sacred" (in *Every Good Man Is Free*), nevertheless he cannot accept Plato's conception of the eternity of the Ideas and goes beyond the Platonists in putting



Page from an eleventh-century parchment codex copy of several works by Philo; only the first half of On the Life of Moses *remains (Codex Vindobonensis Theologicus Graecus 29, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna)*

God above the Ideas. God, he says, exists without the world; and after bringing the world into existence he continues to exist as an incorporeal being over and beyond the corporeal world. He reconciles Plato's *Timaeus* with the scriptural tradition by endowing the Ideas with a twofold stage of existence: first, from eternity they existed as thoughts of God (Philo is the earliest witness to this doctrine); then, prior to the creation of the world, they were created by God as real beings. Hence, Philo differs from Plato in that the latter considered the Ideas as eternal and uncreated, whereas Philo viewed them as created by God. The matter in and from which the world was created was itself created by God. The intelligible world existed prior to the visible world, but this priority is not temporal, inasmuch as time did not exist before the creation of the world. In *On the Eternity of the World* Philo apparently does not believe in the concept of the creation of the world out of nothing, since he states that nothing comes into being out of the nonexistent.

In order that God may not appear to be the source of evil, Philo draws on Plato's *Timaeus,* in which God is said to create "young gods" or subordinate ministers to carry on his work. Similarly, Philo, drawing upon the use of the plural "Let us make man" (Genesis 1:26), argues that since God cannot be the cause of evil, he made use of assistants to create the mixed nature of man in his intermediate condition. The fact that inferior angels shared in the creation explains the existence of evil; in this Philo foreshadows the Gnostics.

God is eternally creating, ordering matter by his thought. In particular, he is eternally creating the Intelligible World, which Philo calls the Logos, and thus indirectly brings about the reflection of the Logos, namely the sensible world. He looks upon the cosmos as being held together by a great chain of gradations of being, coordinated by a mediator, the Logos. Scholars have debated the question of the degree to which this Logos concept is original with Philo; most likely, however, it was not his invention, judging from the way Philo seems to assume that his readers will understand it. He writes of the Logos, in language that clearly presages Christian theology, as "the idea of ideas" (in *On the Migration of Abraham*); the first begotten son of the uncreated Father and a "second God" (cited by Eusebius, *Evangelical Preparation* [circa A.D. 260–circa A.D. 339]); the pattern and mediation of the Creation (in *On the Confusion of Tongues*); the archetype of human reason (in *Who Is the Heir of Divine Things?*); and "the man of God" (in *On the Confusion of Tongues*). Apparently troubled by the thought that God would descend to attend to earthly matters, Philo indicates in *On the Life of Moses* that it was the Logos who appeared at the burning bush. The Logos apparently dwelt in Moses, who is actually called god and king of the whole nation. Apparently troubled by the notion that God, so far beyond the world and man, would want to create a human being, Philo states that the Logos fashioned Adam out of the dust of the earth and breathed spirit into him.

Philo explains the seeming duplication of accounts of creation in the first two chapters of Genesis by asserting (based on his reading of Genesis 1:2 in the Septuagint) that the earth was "unseen and unformed," whence he concludes, reading Platonism into this passage, that prior to the visible world there existed an invisible archetype of it. Likewise, when the Septuagint declares (Genesis 2:5) that God made "every green herb of the field before it was produced upon the earth, and all grass of the field before it sprang up," Philo interprets this to mean that God first created the invisible idea of the plants and then created the plants themselves. Again, in *Questions and Answers on Genesis,* Philo asks why the Bible mentions the creation of beasts and birds a second time when their creation was noted in the six-day creation story, and he answers that those things that were created in the six days were incorporeal and were symbolically typical species of beasts and birds, but that in the second chapter we are given a description of the production in actuality of the sensible likenesses of the invisible things.

Second only to his reverence for the Bible is Philo's regard for philosophy. Indeed, in an almost ecstatic ode to philosophy from *On the Account of the World's Creation Given by Moses,* he says: "The means of living are provided by the lavish supplies of all that makes for enjoyment; the means of living well by the contemplation of the heavenly existences, for smitten by their contemplation the mind conceives a love and longing for the knowledge of them. And from this philosophy took its rise, by which man, mortal though he be, is rendered immortal." The human mind, he declares, on perceiving the Ideas, is seized by an oxymoronic "sober intoxication." "Wafted by this, to the topmost arch of the things perceptible to mind, it seems to be on its way to the Great King Himself." So enamored is Philo of philosophy that he asks how the Greeks could have arrived at truth – for he is convinced that philosophy arrives at the truth – without revelation. His answer is that the Greeks borrowed from the Bible; thus, he asserts in *Questions and Answers on Genesis* that Heraclitus snatched his theory of opposites from Moses "like a thief." Alternatively, he suggests in *On the Special Laws* that philosophy was God's gift that enabled the human mind to discover by reason what the Jews received by revelation.

It clearly troubled Philo that the Torah was not written in a philosophical manner, and his explanation was that the Torah was intended for the masses, who would not be able to understand it if it were presented philosophically. But Philo was convinced that behind the simple language of the Bible lay a hidden, profound meaning and that this could be discovered by interpreting the Bible allegorically. His own philosophical views are those of Middle Platonism – a highly Stoicized form of Platonism.

In a revealing comment from *On the Life of Moses* on the question of why the Pentateuch begins with the creation of the world, Philo stresses that it is to teach readers that they should live in accordance with the ordering of the universe. In *On Abraham,* answering the implied question as to why God did not give the Torah to Abraham, Philo – influ-

enced by Plato's notion that the visible world is a copy of the invisible Ideas – declares that Abraham actually observed a higher law, of which the *Nomos* (the Septuagint's translation of the word *Torah*) was only a copy. While it is true that the rabbis (Mishnah *Qiddushin* 4:14) speak of Abraham as observing the Torah even before its presentation to all of Israel, for Philo, Abraham's achievement is regarded as superior to that of the revelation at Sinai since he had to deduce the Law for himself. Here again Philo paves the way for the Christian view that the Torah is inferior to the higher Law built into Nature and which, according to most Christian theologians, was reaffirmed by Christianity when it abrogated the inferior Law. And yet, Philo declares in *On Mating with the Preliminary Studies,* philosophy is the servant of wisdom, which he defines as the knowledge of things divine and human and their causes.

Philo is both legalist and mystic, though some scholars have regarded the passages about mysticism in Philo as mere rhetorical flourish. The highest goal, according to Philo's *On the Decalogue,* is not the Ideas or even knowledge of the Torah but rather the knowledge or vision of God himself. The soul has a natural longing for God (in *On Dreams, That They Are God-Sent*), but the first step to reach God is for man to recognize his own nothingness in order to attach himself completely to God (in *Concerning Noah's Work as a Planter*). The goal, according to *On the Posterity of Cain and His Exile,* is to cleave to God, which Philo explains is "making God our own." This love of God is a new element in Greek ethics and religion. *On the Cherubim, the Flaming Sword, and Cain the First Man Created out of Man* describes a mystic experience that Philo had: he perceived a voice within his own soul, which oftentimes was God possessed and divined matters beyond its actual knowledge. *On the Migration of Abraham* describes how, under the influence of divine possession, Philo sometimes found himself filled with corybantic frenzy and thus obtained language, ideas, and enlightenment.

In a rare autobiographical comment from *On the Cherubim, the Flaming Sword, and Cain the First Man Created out of Man,* Philo declares that he was initiated under Moses into his greater mysteries (a phrase borrowed from the Eleusinian Mysteries of Demeter and Persephone). In *On the Special Laws* and *On the Virtues* he refers to Moses as a hierophant, the technical term that designates the highest officer of the heathen mysteries and demonstrator of its sacred knowledge. Erwin R. Goodenough concludes that Philo had thus transformed Judaism into a mystery religion, such as that of the Orphics or Isis; but scholars such as Harry A. Wolfson regard this as merely the language, without the substance, of the mysteries, to be explained by Philo's desire either to impress non-Jewish readers or to demonstrate to Jewish readers that Judaism had all the attraction of a mystery cult and hence that Jews did not have to seek elsewhere for such an experience.

As to how Philo, a strict monotheist, could have based his religious beliefs on the polytheistic mystery religions, the answer would seem to be that what Philo adopted was merely the symbolism of the mysteries. Moreover, *On the Special Laws* speaks of the mysteries as imposture and buffoonery and mummeries and berates the mystics for shutting themselves up in profound darkness, adding emphatically that Moses had banished such lore from the sacred legislation. The fact that Philo does not mention the existence of any special rite of initiation and, in fact, says that the followers and disciples of Moses should neither confer nor receive initiation into such rites would seem to contradict Goodenough, who later admitted that his statement in *By Light, Light* (1935) that Philo was a mystic to whom Judaism was secondary was erroneous.

In his attitude toward marriage, Philo adopted an ascetic stance reminiscent of the Stoics and hardly consonant with the mainstream of Judaism. The institution of marriage – according to a passage in *That the Worse Is Wont to Attack the Better* that is similar to Paul's "better to marry than to burn" (1 Corinthians 7:9) – is only a means of perpetuating the human race. *On the Life of Moses* asserts that Moses participated in marriage only for the lawful begetting of children. Philo's high praise for ascetic groups, such as the Essenes (as in *Every Good Man Is Free* and *Hypothetica*) and the Therapeutae (in *On the Contemplative Life*), confirms this attitude. In using the image of athletic combat to express the fight of the soul against the body and its passions (in *On the Migration of Abraham*), Philo follows the tradition of the Platonists. Indeed, drawing the Platonic implications of the Septuagint's word *psyche,* Philo's *Allegorical Interpretation of Genesis* and *Questions and Answers on Genesis* speak of the soul as dwelling in the body as a tomb, though in *That the Worse Is Wont to Attack the Better* he disapproves of disregarding one's health or actual maltreatment of the body. Nor, Philo stresses in *On Flight and Finding,* should one refuse abundance of wealth; rather, one should use that wealth to help friends and country.

Philo has an extremely derogatory view of women, judging from his comment in *Questions and*

Answers on Exodus that the reason Moses commanded the Israelites to take a perfect male sheep rather than a female is that the female is nothing more than an imperfect male. Again, Philo's contempt for women surfaces in his comment from *Questions and Answers on Genesis* that the "sons of the women and those of inferior descent are certain to be called female and unvirile, for which reason they are little admired as great ones." *Hypothetica* includes a sharp attack on women's wiles in his explanation of why the Essenes do not marry, namely that "a wife is a selfish creature, excessively jealous and adept at beguiling the morals of her husband and seducing him by her continued impostures."

Though Philo adheres to the traditional Greek view that there are four cardinal virtues – wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice – he includes under justice, as Wolfson has pointed out, two new virtues – faith in the revealed teachings of Scripture and humanity in the sense of giving help to those in need. Likewise, on the basis of Scripture, he presents the novel view that prayer and repentance, the latter of which for the Greeks is actually a weakness, are virtues.

While Philo, in *On the Migration of Abraham,* does not deny that one should observe the laws literally, he clearly believes that the allegorical method is superior. Thus, the higher purpose of circumcision, according to *On the Special Laws,* is the excision of excessive and superfluous pleasure, while the baking of dough into unleavened bread for Passover indicates the softening of the passions. The method of allegory was initiated by Theagenes of Rhegium in the sixth century B.C. in order to justify Homer against the detractors of his theology, and it was known to the rabbis – but the emphasis Philo put on it clearly derived from the Stoics, who employed it in Hellenistic times to explain away difficulties in the text of Homer, the Greek equivalent of the Bible. It is this form of allegorization, probably derived through Philo, that influenced Paul's attack on the literalist interpretation of the *mitzvot.*

On the other hand, Philo's *On the Migration of Abraham* is sharply critical of the extreme allegorists for being overpunctilious about seeing symbolism in the laws while they treat the literal sense of the laws with easygoing neglect. It is clear that he has these excessive allegorists in mind when he excoriates those who violate the rules of the Sabbath by lighting fires, tilling the ground, carrying loads, instituting proceedings in court, acting as jurors, and demanding the restoration of deposits or recovering loans. Among the examples he cites are rules drawn from the Oral Torah – later codified in the Talmud – that were apparently treated with less seriousness than those from the written Torah.

Nonetheless, there are several instances where Philo is not in agreement with the Oral Torah as later codified in the Talmud. For example, *On the Special Laws* reveals that he believed in the literal application of the *lex talionis* (Exodus 21:24), whereas the rabbis (*Baba Qamma* 83b) prescribe a monetary penalty. Again, when Philo relates in *On the Decalogue* that an oath is administered to a judge, he may have had the Roman usage in mind, since this statement is not in accord with the practice codified in the Talmud. Finally, in accordance with Philo's reading of the Septuagint (Exodus 22:27), *On the Life of Moses* and *On the Special Laws* – in contradiction to the Pentateuch itself (Deuteronomy 7:25) as the Talmud throughout the tractate *Avodah Zarah* understands it – assert that it is necessary to refrain from speaking ill of other people's religions out of respect for the name of God.

As to political theory, Philo's idealized account in *On the Embassy to Gaius* (21.143–147) of the emperor Augustus's restoration of peace after the battle of Actium in 31 B.C. indicates that in his view monarchy is the only truly reasonable form of government, though ideally the best form of government is that based upon fixed law, not that which is man-made but that which is divinely revealed.

Philo emerges as truly an enigmatic figure. He has been viewed variously as a collateral branch of Pharisaic Judaism who was well aware of the Oral Torah as later codified in the Talmud (Wolfson); as one who was acquainted with many of the interpretations of the Bible as later codified in rabbinic midrashim (Samuel Belkin); as the great representative of Hellenistic Diaspora Judaism and its mystic tradition, as opposed to rabbinic Judaism (Goodenough); and as a representative of Middle Platonism and Neopythagoreanism (David Winston). Was he a Greek in Jewish clothing or a Jew in Greek clothing? There can be no doubt that he regarded himself as a loyal Jew and that he had no intention of compromising his Jewish convictions. The fact, however, is that he viewed the Torah through Greek eyes – not only through the Septuagint, which he regarded as absolutely perfect, but also through the eyes of Plato, the Stoics, the other Greek philosophers, and Greek literature in general. Thus, his Moses emerges as strikingly similar to Plato's philosopher-king, in particular in the curriculum they followed. Yet he saw the dangers in excessive allegorism as he did in excessive literalism. As a leader of the large and diversified Jewish community of Alexandria he was realist enough to see the dangers of extremism.

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Pindar

(circa 518 B.C. – circa 438 B.C.)

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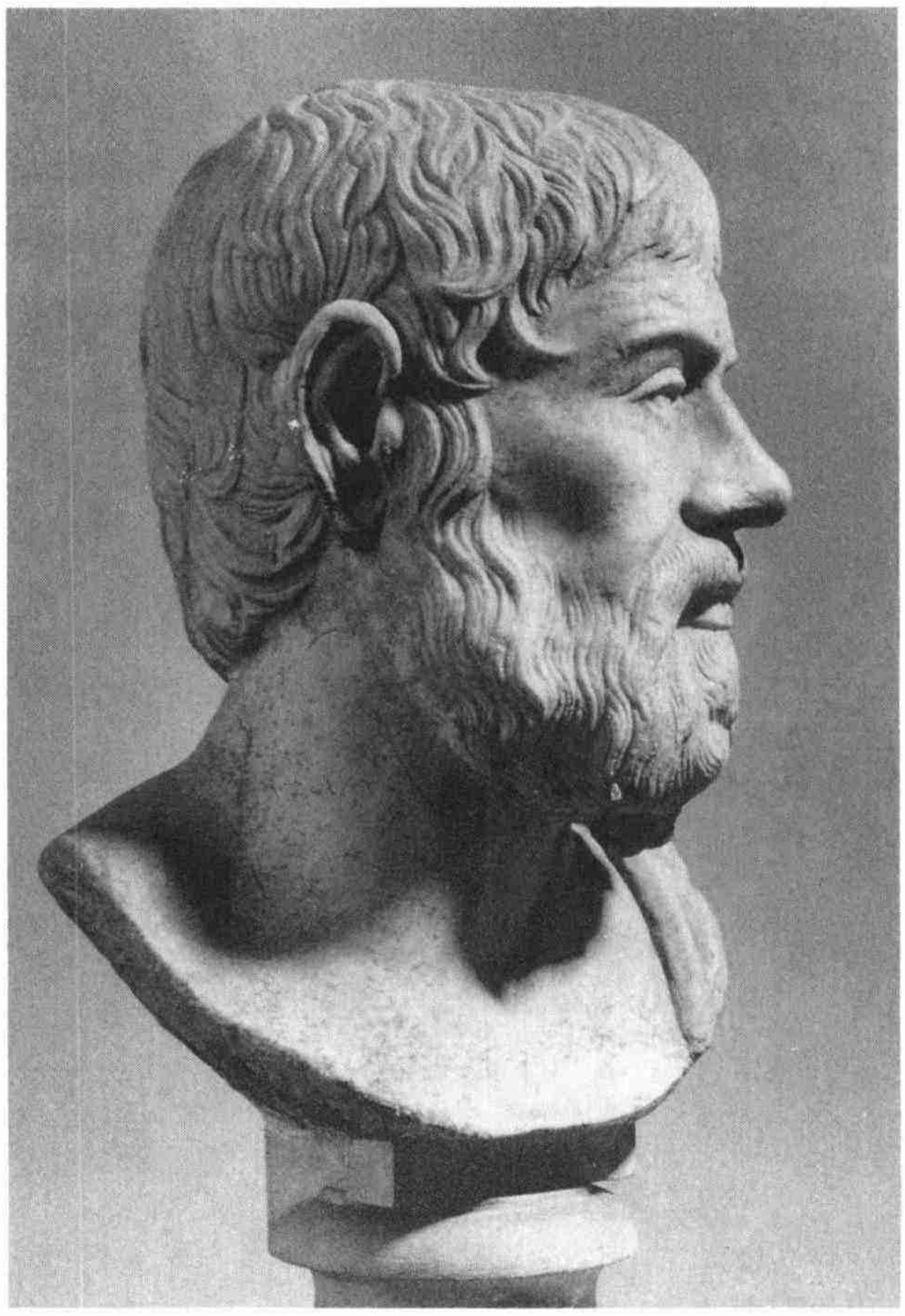
MAJOR WORK: *Epinikia* (Athletic Victory Odes, in four books named for the four Panhellenic festivals: the Olympian, Pythian, Nemean, and Isthmian).

Editio princeps: *Pindari Olympia, Pythia, Nemea, Isthmia* (with Callimachus, Dionysius, and Lycophron), edited by Aldus Poius Manutius (Venice: Aldus Manutius & Andreas Asulani, 1513).

Standard edition: *Pindarus,* 2 volumes, edited by B. Snell and H. Maehler (Leipzig: Teubner, 1987, 1989).

Translations in English: *The Odes of Pindar,* translated by J. E. Sandys (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1937); *Pindar: The Odes,* translated by C. M. Bowra (New York: Penguin, 1969); *Pindar's Victory Songs,* translated by F. J. Nisetich (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1980); *Pindar,* 2 volumes, translated by W. H. Race (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997).

Commentaries: J. B. Bury, *The Nemean Odes of Pindar* (London: Macmillan, 1890); Bury, *The Isthmian Odes of Pindar* (London: Macmillan, 1892); B. L. Gildersleeve, *Pindar: The Olympian and Pythian Odes* (New York: American Book, 1890); C. A. M. Fennell, *Pindar: The Olympian and Pythian Odes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1893); Fennell, *Pindar: The Nemean and Isthmian Odes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1899); L. R. Farnell, *The Works of Pindar II* (London: Macmillan, 1932).



Roman copy of a bust of Pindar made circa 450–430 B.C. (Capitoline Museum, Rome)

"Of the nine lyric poets, Pindar is by far the greatest." This judgment by Quintilian in his first-century-A.D. survey of Greek poets, *Institutio Oratoria,* was the standard evaluation of Pindar throughout antiquity and helps to explain why a substantial portion (about one-fourth) of his work has survived through a continuous succession of manuscripts, while only bits and pieces of the other lyric poets remain. What little is known about Pindar is derived from his own poems and from five brief accounts of his life, the earliest of which was written on a papyrus dating from the third century A.D. and the latest of which is from the Byzantine period. Although these biographies contain some fanciful material and many contradictions, one can, by careful sifting, arrive at the following probable information.

Pindar was born in Cynoscephalae, a village on the outskirts of Thebes in the district of Boeotia. His father was probably Daïphantos, and his mother Kleodike. If a first-person statement in one poem (*Pythian* 5) refers to the poet himself, Pindar

belonged to the clan of the Aigeidai, prominent in Thebes and Sparta. Since one life quotes two verses of Pindar indicating that he was born during a Pythian festival (celebrated every four years), the most likely date of his birth would be 518 B.C. Taking the lifespan of eighty years mentioned in one life as the only one long enough to span his career (the others give fifty-five and sixty-six), one can place his death in 438 B.C.

He studied flute playing with Skopelinos (perhaps his uncle), choral direction in Athens with Apollodoros (or Agathokles), and possibly music with Lasos of Hermione. One of the lives reports that when his instructor Apollodoros had to be away from Athens, he turned over the training of a chorus to the young Pindar, who did so well that he became immediately famous. The papyrus life reports that he won the dithyrambic contest in Athens in 497–496. The earliest victory ode for which dates are given in the ancient sources is *Pythian* 10 (498), and the latest is *Pythian* 8 (446).

Pindar was well established as a poet by the time the Persians invaded Greece under Xerxes I in 480 B.C.; in three odes (*Pythian* 1, *Isthmian* 5, and *Isthmian* 8) he proudly mentions the Greek victories over them. Unfortunately, his own city of Thebes had joined with the Persians, and a story current soon after his death related that by praising Athens's wartime efforts in a dithyramb that began "O shining, violet-crowned Athens, bulwark of Hellas," he so angered his fellow Thebans that they fined him. The Athenians, however, were so grateful that they paid the fine. In celebrating Hieron of Syracuse, Pindar also mentions the victories of the Sicilian Greeks over the Carthaginians in the battle of Himera (480) and over the Etruscans in the naval battle of Kyme (474). His career coincided with the flowering of early classical literature and art and with the development of tragedy in Athens by his illustrious contemporary, the playwright Aeschylus, whose seriousness and lofty style resemble Pindar's.

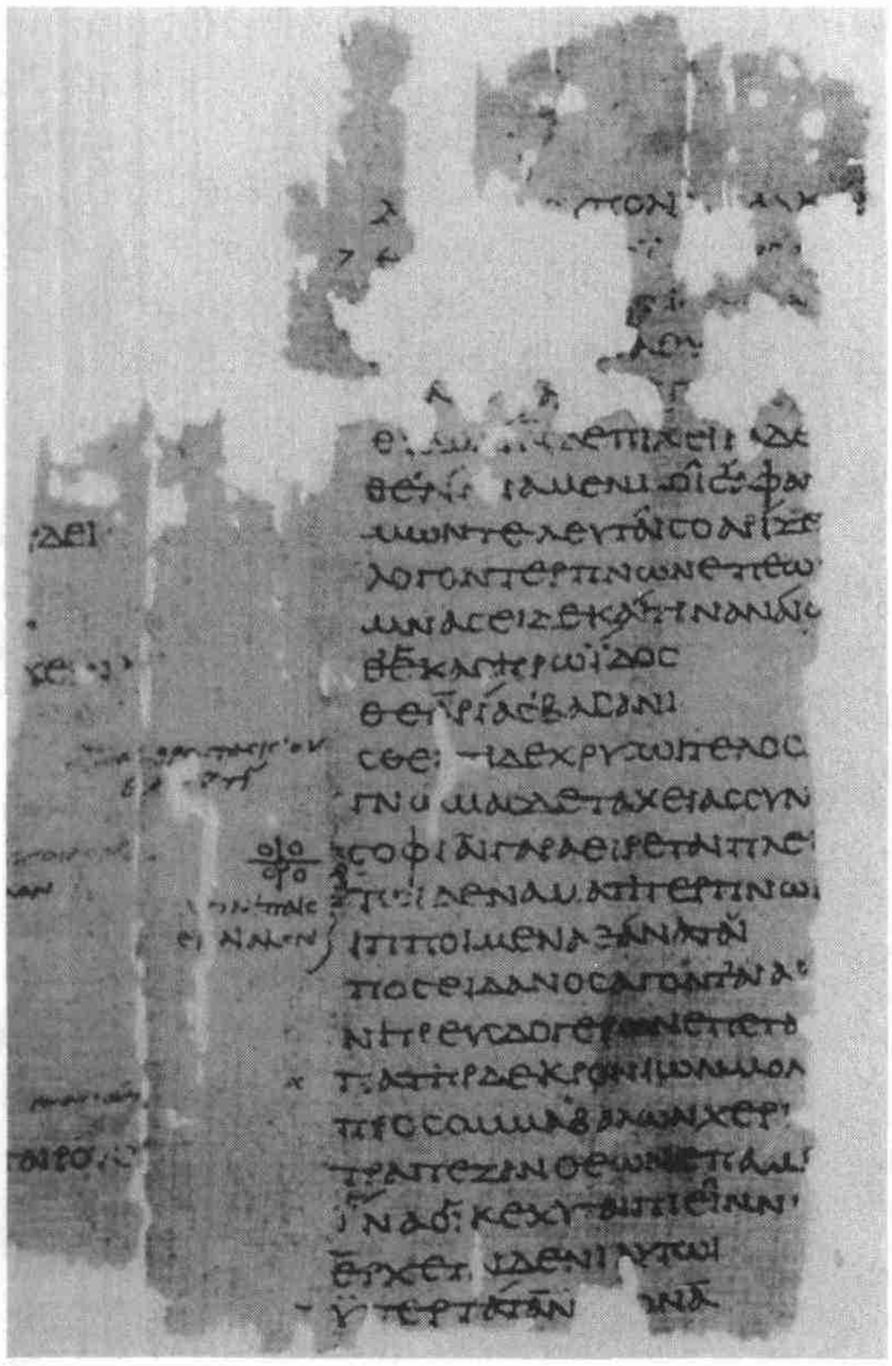
About 150 years after his death Pindar's works were collected and edited by scholars in the library at Alexandria. These scholars divided the large corpus into seventeen books (actually papyrus rolls) containing hymns to various gods (one roll); paeans, hymns addressed mainly to Apollo (one); dithyrambs, hymns addressed mainly to Dionysos (two); *prosodia,* hymns for approaching a god's shrine (two); *parthenia,* hymns sung by maidens (three); *hyporchemata,* dancing songs (two); *enkomia,* lighter songs of praise for men at banquets (one); *threnoi,* songs of lament (one); and *epinikia,* victory songs (four). In late antiquity, when selections were made of classical authors' works, mainly for use in schools, the four books of epinikia were singled out. Around A.D. 250 they, along with many marginal notes called scholia, were transferred from rolls into book form (codex) and recopied many times before becoming the surviving manuscripts, the earliest of which dates from the late thirteenth century.

The four books of epinikia contain odes dedicated to victors in each of the four Panhellenic games: Olympian, Pythian, Nemean, and Isthmian. The odes in each book are arranged by the contests celebrated: equestrian events (chariot race, single horse race, mule-cart race) followed by gymnastic events (pancratium, wrestling, boxing, pentathlon, and footraces). There are forty-five odes in all, ranging from the shortest of 20 verses to the longest of 299. They consist of two basic metrical systems, dactylo-epitritic (a stately meter) and Aeolic (a more varied meter); and the verses are organized into stanzas called strophes, antistrophes, and epodes. A strophe contains from three to thirteen verses. Seven "monostrophic" odes simply repeat the initial strophe two to twelve times; thirty-eight "triadic" odes consist of a strophe, a metrically identical stanza called an antistrophe, and a metrically different stanza called an epode – the three combining to form a triad. Five triadic odes have only one triad; the remaining thirty-three repeat their triads three to thirteen times.

Little is known for certain about the performance of these odes, and there has been considerable controversy over whether they were sung by a chorus or by a soloist. Like the choral odes of tragedy, to which they bear a close resemblance, at least some were probably performed by a choir that sang and danced to the accompaniment of lyres and reed instruments. A late source says that choruses danced the strophe ("turn") in one direction, reversed the steps for the antistrophe ("counterturn"), and stood in place for the epode ("after-song"), but even that must remain a conjecture.

The genre itself was short-lived. Simonides of Ceos, of whose work only fragments remain, was the first to compose epinikia in the generation preceding Pindar. His nephew Bacchylides, probably a few years Pindar's junior, was the last major composer of them; substantial portions of fourteen of his epinikia have survived on a papyrus. Although an occasional victory ode was composed afterward, the genre remained confined to these three poets and was moribund after 440 B.C.

Pindar's odes are notoriously difficult to interpret. One of the reasons for this is the language, a highly artificial mixture of epic, Doric, and Aeolic



Fragment of a second-century-A.D. papyrus text of Pindar's odes (Egypt Exploration Society, London)

forms adapted to complex metrical patterns. Pindar's expression is sometimes so compressed or allusive that it is difficult to understand what is being said; often it is so metaphorical that the literal sense is unclear. Almost every sentence presents interpretive challenges. Chief among his stylistic traits are riddling circumlocutions (for example, a wool coat is a "warming remedy for cold winds"), bold (and sometimes mixed) metaphors (for example, "forge your tongue on an anvil of truth"), complex and often disjointed word order, and great numbers of newly coined compound words. All of these are aspects of his *poikilia* (variety), which makes each sentence unique, even though it may repeat a similar thought expressed in different terms elsewhere. Horace provides the most famous characterization of Pindaric style in his late-first-century-B.C. *Odes* 4.2.5–12: "Like a river rushing down a mountain, which rains have swollen above its normal banks, the deep-voiced Pindar seethes and floods far and wide, sure to win Apollo's laurels when he tumbles new words through his daring dithyrambs, carried along by rhythms without restraint." In the seventeenth century Abraham Cowley echoed Horace: "Pindar is imitable by none: / The Phoenix Pindar is a vast species alone."

Another difficulty is Pindar's train of thought. An ode often changes its subject or direction suddenly and for no clear reason; occasionally a mythical narrative will be told with no apparent connection to the rest of the ode. Scholars have looked outside the poems to historical circumstances and to elements within the poems such as imagery, symbolism, and verbal echoes to unify odes, but without much overall success. The most promising recent approach to understanding a Pindaric ode has been the study of its generic and rhetorical requirements. Beginning with the premise that everything in an ode must contribute to the praise of the subject, E. L. Bundy shows in *Studia Pindarica* (1962) that many passages that had been misunderstood as personal statements by the poet were in fact skillfully designed to praise the victor. The reader of Pindar's odes must be thoroughly acquainted with numerous poetic and rhetorical devices that have been recognized and analyzed by various scholars before and after Bundy's pioneering work.

Foremost among these are *priamels,* lists of often unrelated items that culminate in a subject of immediate importance. The opening of the first *Olympian* ode provides one of many examples.

> Best is water, while gold, like fire blazing
> in the night, shines preeminent amid lordly wealth.
> But if you wish to sing
> of athletic games, my heart,
> look no further than the sun
> for another star shining more warmly by day
> through the empty sky,
> nor let us proclaim a contest greater than Olympia.

The poet is not ultimately interested in water and gold; they exist to highlight the supremacy of the Olympic games.

Also important, especially at the beginnings of odes, are hymns. Twenty-three of the odes open with addresses to deities. Some of these divinities are what could be called abstractions (the Lyre, Peace, Youth); some are places (Olympia, Thebes); and others are minor deities such as Fortune, the Graces, and Eleithyia (goddess of childbirth). Some hymns are brief; others are extensive. Two short odes (*Olympian* 12 and 14) are comprised mainly of hymns. Closely related to hymns are short prayers, dozens of which can be found in the odes. Their function is invariably transitional in that they conclude a topic, begin a new one, or accomplish both. The odes also contain many gnomes (maxims), some of which are among Pindar's most memorable verses. Examples include "a great risk does not take hold of the coward," "trial is the test of mortals,"

"on a stormy night it is good to have two anchors," "even wisdom is enthralled gain," and "it is impossible to conceal one's inborn character."

Narratives, usually about mythical or heroic figures, abound in the odes, from short sketches of a few verses to complex stories of considerable length (the myth in *Pythian* 4 is more than 250 verses). Usually narratives occur in the middle of an ode, but two odes (*Nemean* 1 and *Nemean* 10) end with them. The narratives are often set off by ring composition, whereby the poet provides a brief summary of the coming narrative followed by a more detailed account that concludes by echoing words in the summary. Pindar often treats his subject impressionistically by elaborating a significant episode or scene from a larger story and merely alluding to the rest.

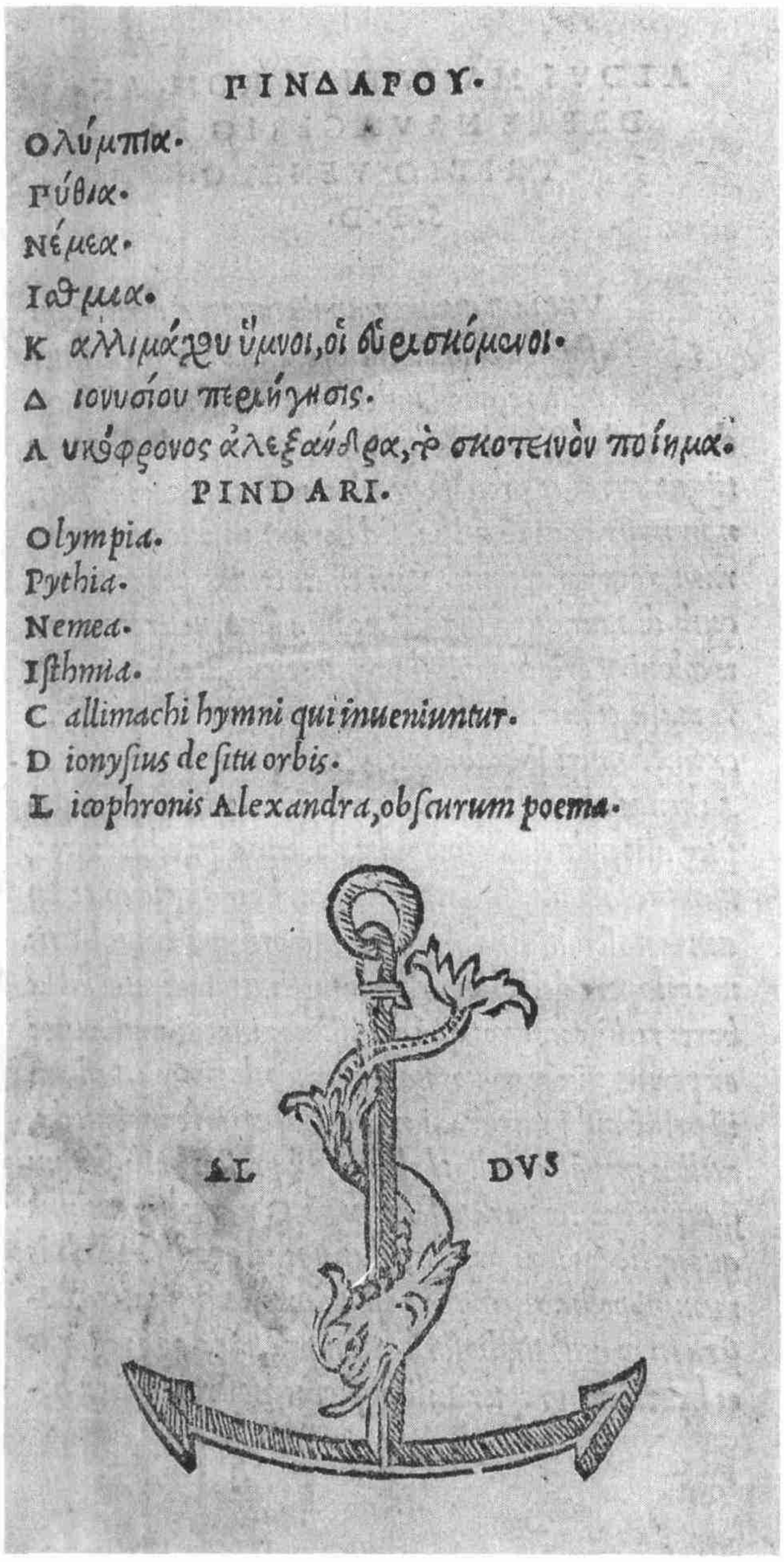
Narratives of note are the careers of Tantalus and Pelops (*Olympian* 1), Heracles' bringing the olive tree to the Olympic games (*Olympian* 3), the birth and career of Iamos the prophet (*Olympian* 6), the history of Rhodes (*Olympian* 7), Aeacus's building of the Trojan wall (*Olympian* 8), the survival of Pyrrha and Deucalion from the flood (*Olympian* 9), Heracles' founding of the Olympic games (*Olympian* 10), the career of Bellerophon (*Olympian* 13), the sin and punishment of Ixion (*Pythian* 2), the careers of Coronis and Asclepius (*Pythian* 3), the expedition of the *Argo* (*Pythian* 4), the love of Apollo for Cyrene (*Pythian* 9), and the journey of Perseus to the Hyperboreans (*Pythian* 10). Other narratives relate Clytemnestra's murder of Agamemnon (*Pythian* 11), Athena's invention of the flute (*Pythian* 12), the career of Heracles (*Nemean* 1), the youthful exploits of Achilles (*Nemean* 3), the relationship of Peleus and Thetis (*Nemean* 4 and 5), the career of Neoptolemus (*Nemean* 7), the dispute of Odysseus and Aias over Achilles' arms (*Nemean* 8), the expedition of The Seven against Thebes (*Nemean* 9), the brotherly love of Castor and Polydeuces (*Nemean* 10), the exploits of Heracles and Telamon (*Isthmian* 6), and the quarrel of the gods over marrying Thetis (*Isthmian* 8).

The odes contain many catalogues of athletic victories, heroes, places, people, and virtues. Pindar takes great pains to make each one interesting in its own right by means of circumlocutions, oblique references, digressions, and metaphorical expressions. In the odes Pindar displays extraordinary virtuosity by adapting essentially prosaic lists to his grand style and to the demands of his complex meters. To avoid repetition, especially in frequently used placenames, Pindar employs an array of allusive expressions that can initially be confusing. For example, any of the following terms would inform his Greek audience that he was referring to Delphi (and the Pythian games): Pytho (another name for the town of Delphi); Krisa or Kirrha (nearby towns); Parnassus (the adjacent mountain); Kastalia (the spring); Apollo's shrine, navel of the earth; or games of Apollo. Although all the odes, even the shortest ones, are interesting and challenging, undoubtedly the greatest are some of those written to Pindar's three most prestigious patrons, Hieron of Syracuse (*Olympian* 1; *Pythian* 1, 2, and 3), Theron of Acragas (*Olympian* 2), and Arcesilas of Cyrene (*Pythian* 4).

One of the most accessible of the grand odes is *Pythian* 1, celebrating Hieron's victory in the chariot race at the Pythian games in 470. It also provides a good illustration of the form and content of Pindar's other odes. *Pythian* 1 opens with a hymn to the Lyre (*Phorminx*) in which Pindar describes the instrument's relaxing effect on the Olympian gods. In contrast, Zeus's enemies are pained when they hear its sound, especially Typhos, who lies imprisoned under Mount Aetna in Sicily (still an active volcano) and who in his frustration sends up eruptions of lava. After praying for Zeus's favor, Pindar tells that Hieron, the founder of Aetna at the base of the mountain, was proclaimed victor at Delphi in the chariot competition. It would have come as a surprise to hear Hieron proclaimed a citizen of Aetna rather than of Syracuse, where he was ruler, but five years previously he had refounded the city of Aetna (modern Catania) with ten thousand settlers (half from Syracuse, half from the Peloponnesus) and was using this Panhellenic festival as an occasion to advertise the event. Pindar cites the gnome that a favoring wind at the beginning of a voyage is a good omen and hopes that Hieron's victory will prove the same for Aetna. He then prays that Apollo (the god honored by the Pythian festival) will help the city prosper.

The poet uses a simile to pass to the next subject. Likening himself to an athlete, he hopes that in praising Hieron he will not cast his javelin outside the lists (that is, go too far in his praises) but will nonetheless surpass his competitors. He begins his praise by alluding to two past military victories, one by Hieron's family (later he names the battle of Himera, in which Hieron's older brother Gelon was the commander) and a more recent one (he later names the battle of Kyme), in which he compares Hieron to Philoctetes, a hero who proved a godsend to the Greeks at Troy.

The poem takes a sudden turn in line 58, when the poet addresses the Muse, asking her to celebrate Deinomenes, Hieron's son, who is titular ruler of the new city of Aetna. This turns the discussion to civic governance. Pindar reviews the con-


ΠΙΝΔΑΡΟΥ.
Ολύμπια.
Πύθια.
Νέμεα.
Ισθμια.
Κ αλλιμάχου ὕμνοι, οἱ δυεισόμενοι.
Δ ιονυσίου περιήγησις.
Λ υκόφρονος ἀλεξάνδρα, τὸ σκοτεινὸν ποίημα.
PINDARI.
Olympia.
Pythia.
Nemea.
Isthmia.
C allimachi hymni qui inueniuntur.
D ionysius de situ orbis.
L icophronis Alexandra, obscurum poema.
AL DVS

Title page of the editio princeps (1513) of Pindar's odes (courtesy of the Lilly Library, Indiana University)

quest of the Dorian peoples and prays that Aetna's people may live in peace under their Doric constitution. The poem returns to the subject of war and to the two battles alluded to earlier, with a prayer that the Carthaginians and Etruscans may remain peacefully at home, the latter having been defeated by Hieron at Kyme (474) and the former at Himera (480). This last battle comes at the conclusion of a brief priamel that also lists the battles of Salamis and Plataea.

As the poet begins to praise Hieron in the final triad, he expresses concern that the listeners may become annoyed if he goes on too long. Therefore he couches his praise in a series of exhortations to Hieron, advising him to rule with justice, speak the truth, be a scrupulous steward, and be generous. He then concludes by mentioning two rulers of the previous century as positive and negative examples: Croesus of Lydia, who is well regarded for his generosity, and Phalaris of Acragas, who is abominated because of his cruelty. The poem ends with a gnome: he who is successful and also wins praise gains the highest crown. The implication is that Hieron is such a man and that his generosity will live in this song – as in fact it has.

The poem contains an opening hymn, numerous transitional prayers, a simile, a brief mythological narrative on Philoctetes, and a priamel – elements found throughout the odes. It also embraces the gods (Zeus, Apollo, and Ares), mythology (Typhos), heroes (Philoctetes), historic persons (Croesus and Phalaris), historic battles (Himera, Salamis, Plataea, and Kyme), and the founding of a new city (Aetna). The poem places Hieron in the context of a world governed by Zeus and Apollo, who foster just rule by resisting those who would destroy it: Typhos, the Carthaginians, Etruscans, Persians, and the wicked tyrant Phalaris.

The other odes to Hieron display Pindar's remarkable variety and are especially noteworthy for their extensive mythical narratives. *Olympian* 1, written to commemorate the victory of Hieron's horse Pherenikos in the Olympian games of 476 B.C., devotes half of its length to the stories of Tantalus, who was punished in Hades for stealing ambrosia from the gods, and his son Pelops, who won his bride Hippodameia by defeating her father in a chariot race. In telling the story of Tantalus, Pindar rejects (because it reflected badly on the gods) the version claiming that Tantalus served his son Pelops to the gods at a banquet.

Pythian 2, one of the most difficult odes to interpret, celebrates an equestrian victory of Hieron but does not specify where it was won. The mythical narrative tells of Ixion, who tried to rape Hera but was fooled by Zeus into having intercourse with a cloud in Hera's image, after which he was punished by being fastened to an ever-turning wheel. The last part of the ode consists of admonitions to Hieron and a defense of the poet's honesty. Because of the negative tone of the mythical narrative and the warnings to Hieron at the end, some scholars have detected court intrigues behind the ode, but that seems most unlikely in such a celebratory ode.

Pythian 3 does not celebrate a current victory but is written to console Hieron for his illness (the ancient commentators claim that he was suffering

from kidney stones). It is one of the greatest consolatory poems of classical Greece. It opens with a wish that Chiron the Centaur were still alive and could provide a physician such as Asclepius, the great healer to whom he taught medicine. Then Pindar tells in great detail the stories of Coronis, Asclepius's mother, and of Asclepius himself, narratives that reveal the folly of trying to take from the gods more than one is allotted. The famous lesson the poem draws from these stories, "Do not, my soul, strive for the life of the immortals, but exhaust the practical means at your disposal" (61–62), was used by the twentieth-century poet Paul Valéry as the epigraph of his poem "Le Cimetière Marin." Pindar advises Hieron to be content with the great success he has enjoyed and reminds him that even Peleus and Cadmus had their share of suffering. He concludes by suggesting that Hieron can achieve immortality through this poem.

Olympian 2 is for Theron, king of Acragas, who won the Olympic chariot race in 476 (at the same games in which Hieron won the horse race celebrated in *Olympian* 1). Its most unusual feature is its portrayal of the Underworld in lines 58–80, which tells of three classes of men: the unjust, who suffer torment; the good and pious, who live free from the toils of this life in a realm of continual equinox; and the blessed, who have, through three reincarnations, kept free from all injustice and who go to the Isles of the Blessed, where Cronos and Rhea preside and where such heroes as Peleus, Cadmus, and Achilles reside.

By far the longest and one of the most remarkable odes is *Pythian* 4, which celebrates the chariot victory of Arcesilas IV, king of Cyrene, a thriving Greek colony in Libya, at the Pythian games in 462. The bulk of the poem tells of the expedition of the *Argo* to recover the Golden Fleece. It begins with Medea's prophecy at the time of the expedition, which tells how the descendants of Euphamus, one of the Argonauts, will eventually colonize Cyrene, over which Arcesilas now rules, eighth in the line of kings from Battus, the founder of the city and the dynasty. Pindar begins the story proper with the sudden appearance in the marketplace of Iolcos by the twenty-year-old Jason, who has returned to the city of his birth to reclaim his rightful kingship, usurped by his uncle Pelias when Jason was a baby. Pretending he had died in infancy, Jason's parents secretly sent him to be brought up by Chiron. After rejoining his family, Jason confronts Pelias, who agrees to hand over the kingship if Jason will recover the Golden Fleece. The heroes are mustered and the *Argo* sails to Colchis, where Medea falls in love with Jason and helps him perform the task required by her father, Aeetes, of plowing with the fire-breathing bulls. With her help he also secures the Golden Fleece from the dragon guarding it.

By means of a brief summary linking the progeny of Euphamus, conceived during the voyage of the *Argo* home, to the colonization of Cyrene, Pindar returns to the occasion at hand. But surprisingly, instead of praising Arcesilas, he extols the virtues of a young nobleman named Damophilus, who had been living in exile from Cyrene in Thebes, and pleads for his restitution. It is likely that Damophilus commissioned this grand poem and that the reconciliation had been quietly arranged in advance of its performance.

Throughout his poetry Pindar speaks for the conservative Doric tradition, the stability of aristocratic or monarchical governance, and the moderation and caution contained in the Delphic maxims "Know thyself " and "Nothing in excess." His piety is apparent throughout his odes, all of which contain some reference to divinity. Especially important is his devotion to Apollo and the god's oracular shrine at Delphi. Another Pindaric trait is Panhellenism. Of the forty-five odes, only five are to Theban victors. Seventeen are for victors who come from cities in Sicily or southern Italy, eleven for victors from Aegina (the most by far for a single city), seven for victors from mainland Greece, three for victors from Cyrene, and one each for victors from the islands of Rhodes and Tenedos.

Pindar is the most self-conscious artist of classical Greece. His poetic "I" often breaks into a poem to redirect its course or to emphasize a point. Three examples among many are "I have many swift arrows under my arm in their quiver that speak to those who understand, but for the whole subject, they need interpreters" (*Olympian* 2.83–86); "But I am not at leisure to dedicate the whole long story to the lyre and gentle voice, lest tedious excess come and vex us" *(Pythian* 8.29–32); and "My heart, to what alien headland are you turning aside my ship's course? To Aeacus and his race I bid you bring the Muse" (*Nemean* 3.26–28).

Some of Pindar's principal themes are that nature takes precedence over art ("wise is he who knows many things by nature, whereas learners . . . are like a pair of crows that cry in vain against the divine bird of Zeus," *Olympian* 2.86–88); that human excellence (*arête*) is dependent upon the gods ("from the gods come all the means for human achievements," *Pythian* 1.41); that there is no success without effort ("if there is any happiness among men, it does not appear without toil," *Pythian* 12.28–29);

and that human life is unpredictable ("we do not know by day or in the night what sort of course destiny has marked for us to run," *Nemean* 6.6–7). The dominant images are those of light and height associated with success and darkness and depth associated with failure. Many of the sentiments in his odes are summed up in the famous lines from his last dated poem (*Pythian* 8.95–97): "Creatures of a day! What is someone? What is no one? A dream of a shadow is man. But whenever Zeus-given brightness comes, a shining light rests upon men, and a gentle life."

The most important fragments of Pindar's other works are those of his paeans preserved in the Oxyrhynchus papyri, the most complete of which are *Paean* 2, written for the people of Abdera, telling of their history and praying for a successful battle against the local Thracians; *Paean* 4, extolling the virtues of the small island of Keos; and *Paean* 6, which tells of the career and death of Neoptolemus. The few fragments of dithyrambs are too brief to give a clear indication of the form of a complete poem, but their style appears somewhat more animated than that of the epinikia. The fragments of encomiums to Xenophon of Corinth (fragment 122), Theoxenos of Tenedos (fragment 123), and Thrasybulos of Acragas (fragment 124) treat their subjects more lightheartedly and personally than the epinikia do.

The scanty remains of the dirges (threnoi) supplement the view of the afterlife seen earlier in *Olympian* 2. Fragment 129 describes the life of the blessed in more detail: "some take delight in horses and exercises, others in draughts, and others in lyres; and among them complete happiness blooms and flourishes"; fragment 131b states that the soul is divine: "The body of all men is subject to overpowering death, but a living image of life (that is, the soul) still remains, for it alone is from the gods"; and fragment 133, quoted in Plato's *Meno* (circa 380 B.C.), tells of the metempsychosis of the souls of good men. The beginning of fragment 169a, famous in antiquity, was quoted by Herodotus in support of cultural relativism and by Callicles in Plato's *Gorgias* (circa 387 B.C.) to justify his doctrine of might makes right: "Law, the king of all, of mortals and immortals, guides them as it justifies the utmost violence with a sovereign hand."

Even with the aid of dictionaries and commentaries an experienced student may require hours to work through a single triad of Pindar's complex Greek, and even then many questions of interpretation are likely to remain. But the effort is repaid by the beauties of Pindar's language, the ethical seriousness of his thought, the fascinating myths he tells, his mastery of complicated metrical forms, the constant variety and surprising twists in the odes, and the universal significance he imparts to human achievement.

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D. C. Young, "Pindar," in *Ancient Writers I,* edited by J. T. Luce (New York: Scribners, 1982): pp. 157–177;

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Plato

(circa 428 B.C.–348–347 B.C.)

Thomas C. Brickhouse
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and

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MAJOR WORKS:
Early dialogues (prior to 387 B.C.):
Apology;
Charmides;
Crito;
Euthyphro;
Gorgias;
Hippias Major;
Hippias Minor;
Ion;
Laches;
Lysis;
Protagoras;
Republic, Book I.

Early-transitional dialogues (circa 387 B.C.–380 B.C.):
Cratylus;
Euthydemus;
Menexenus;
Meno.

Middle dialogues (circa 380 B.C.–360 B.C.):
Phaedo;
Phaedrus;
Republic;
Symposium.

Late-transitional dialogues (circa 360 B.C.–355 B.C.):
Parmenides;
Theaetetus.

Late dialogues (circa 355 B.C.–347 B.C.):
Sophist;
Politicus;
Philebus;
Timaeus;
Critias;
Laws.

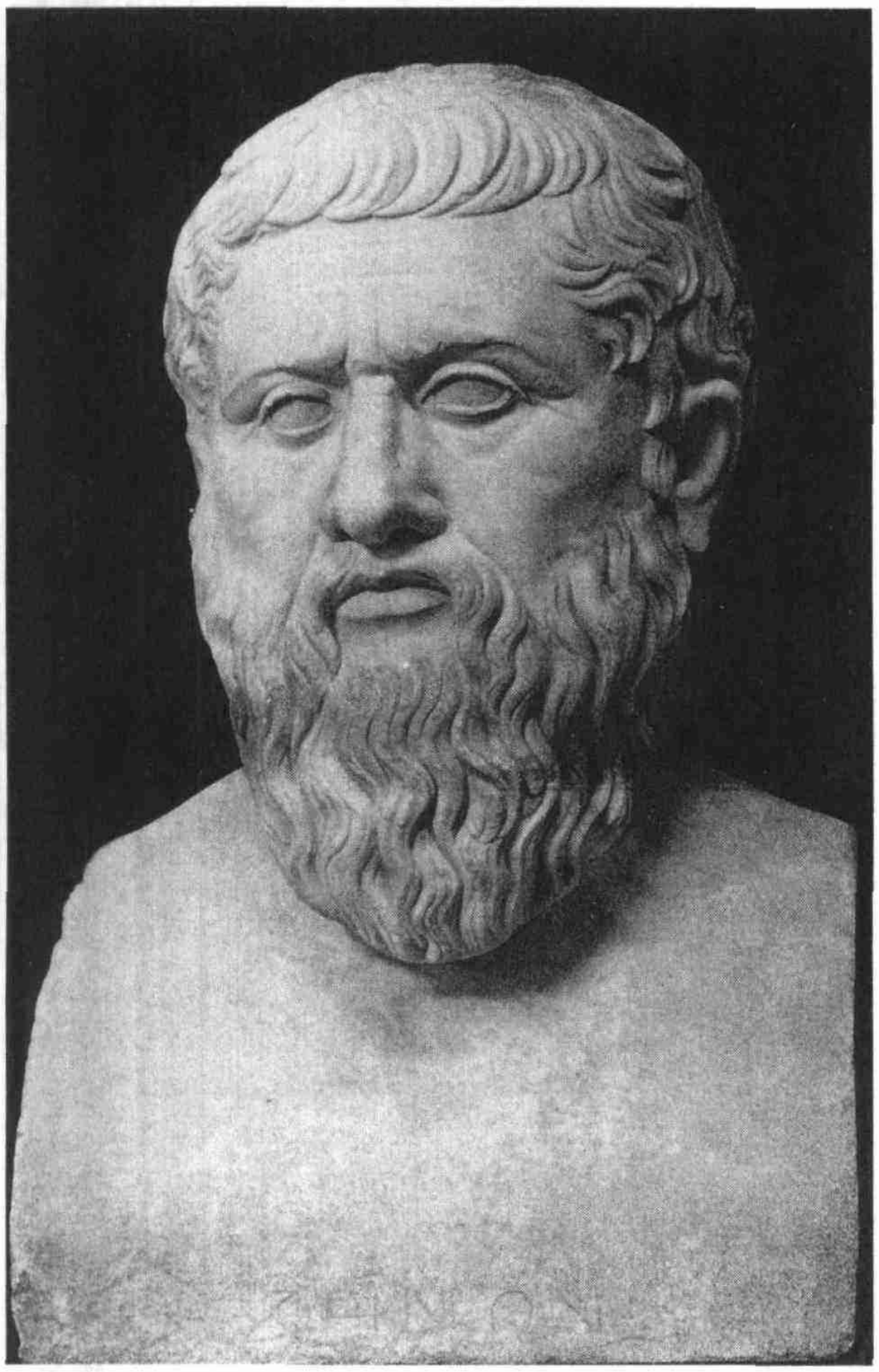
Dialogues generally judged spurious: *Alcibiades* I; *Alcibiades* II; *Alcyon; Axiochus; Chelidon; Cleitophon; Definitions; Demodocus; Epimenides; Epinomis; Eryxias; Hipparchus; Midon,* or *Horse-breeder; Minos; On Justice; On Virtue; Phaeacians; Rivals* (also known as the *Lovers*); *Letters; Sisyphus; Theages.*

Editio princeps: *Omnia Platonis opera,* edited by A. P. Manutius and M. Musurus (Venice: Aldus Manutius and Andrea Asulinus, 1513).

Standard editions: *Platonis Opera,* 5 volumes, edited by John Burnet (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900–1907); *Platon: Oeuvres Completes,* 4 volumes, edited by Léon Robin (Paris: Société Edition, Les Belles Lettres, 1966); *Platonis Opera,* volume 1, edited by E. A. Duke, W. F. Hicken, and others (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).

Translations in English: *The Dialogues of Plato,* fourth edition, 4 volumes, translated by Benjamin Jowett (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953); *The Collected Dialogues of Plato,* edited and translated by Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (New York: Pantheon, 1961); *The Dialogues of Plato,* volume 1, translated by R. E. Allen (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984); *The Complete Works of Plato,* translated by John M. Cooper, John Hutchinson, and D. Hutchinson (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1995)–includes the so-called *spuria* and *dubia.*

Plato stands at the center of philosophical thought in the ancient world. He was the first person to approach philosophical issues systematically,



Plato (Sala delle Muse, Vatican, no. 519.H.272)

but it was the genius with which he treated those issues that made his thought so influential. Virtually every philosopher who came after Plato in antiquity was responding, either favorably or unfavorably, to what he had written. Moreover, Plato's influence was hardly limited to the ancient world. Plato's thought was studied throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, and continues to be crucial to an understanding of philosophical issues. Although the correctness of his doctrines has always been the subject of vigorous debate, no one can deny the pervasive influence of Plato's thought on the history of Western philosophy.

Plato was born in Athens, the son of Ariston and Perictione (or, in some reports, Potone). According to Diogenes Laertius in his *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* (circa A.D. 200), Plato could trace his ancestry from his mother's side back to Solon, who in turn traced his ancestry to Poseidon. On his father's side Codrus, last of the legendary kings of Athens, was claimed as an ancestor and was also thought to have descended from Poseidon. At any rate there can be little doubt that Plato came from one of the wealthiest families in Athens. It was also one of the most politically problematic, including among its members two of the notorious Thirty Tyrants, Charmides (Plato's uncle), and the leader of the Thirty, Critias (Charmides' uncle).

In his biography of Plato, Diogenes Laertius also cites three sources (Speusippus, Clearchus, and Anaxilaides) for the story that Plato's birth was the result of Ariston's rape of Perictione, although Plato seems to have had two older brothers, Glaucon and Adeimantus, and a sister, Potone, by the same parents. (W. K. C. Guthrie, in *A History of Greek Philosophy* [1975], offers an argument for the claim that Glaucon and Adeimantus were older than Plato.) After Ariston's death, Plato's mother married her uncle, Pyrilampes (in Plato's *Charmides* it is related that Pyrilampes was Charmides' uncle, and Charmides was Plato's mother's brother). With Pyrilampes she had another son, Antiphon, Plato's half brother.

Plato's dates are not entirely clear. In the third book of his *Lives and Opinions,* Diogenes Laertius cites Apollodorus's *Chronology* (late second century B.C.) as giving Plato's birth in 427 B.C. and his death in 347 B.C. "in his eighty-first year." But Diogenes Laertius also immediately reports that a certain Neanthes claimed that Plato died at age eighty-four. Diogenes then apparently makes his own (impossible) inference that Plato must have been six years younger than Isocrates, having been born the year Pericles died. According to Neanthes' account, assuming that Plato's date of death is correct in Apollodorus's version, Plato would have been born in 430 or 431. Diogenes' claim that Plato was born the year Pericles died would put his birth in 429. Later in his account Diogenes says that Plato was twenty-eight when Socrates was put to death (in 399), which would again put his year of birth at 427. It is doubtful that this issue can be resolved.

Apparently Plato was originally given the name Aristocles, after his grandfather, but was given the nickname "Plato" (after the Greek *platos,* or broad). Diogenes seems to prefer the theory that Plato's wrestling teacher, also named Ariston, gave him the nickname for his physique; other theories were that it derived from the breadth of his style or even the breadth of his forehead. At any rate the nickname stuck, though the name Aristocles was still given as Plato's name on one of the two epitaphs on his tomb.

Plato was said to have shown mental acuity and modesty from his earliest years and was originally an avid student of the visual and literary arts. One unlikely story related that after hearing Socrates talk, Plato burned a tragedy that he had hoped to enter in a competition. No reader of Greek can doubt that Plato wielded considerable literary skills and could write in a prodigious variety of styles, even if he did ultimately abandon poetry for philosophy. Moreover, many epigrams have survived that were attributed to Plato in antiquity, and few scholars doubt their authenticity. Aristotle says in his *Metaphysics* (circa 335 B.C.) that Plato was acquainted with Cratylus the Heraclitean from his youth, and Diogenes claims that Plato was a follower of Heraclitus before becoming a pupil of Socrates. Almost certainly, Plato's conception of the empirical world as endlessly changing and unstable is because of some Heraclitean influence. Other influences from various pre-Socratics have been noted in antiquity or argued by modern scholars. No intelligent reader of book 5 of Plato's *Republic,* or of his *Parmenides,* or *Sophist* can doubt that the Eleatics, Parmenides and Zeno, influenced Plato's thinking. Diogenes Laertius also makes a connection between Plato and the philosophy of Parmenides but makes much more of other influences, arguing (in his *Lives,* 3.8) that:

> He mixed together in his works the arguments of Heracleitus, the Pythagoreans, and Socrates. Regarding the sensibles, he borrows from Heracleitus; regarding the intelligibles, from Pythagoras; and regarding politics, from Socrates.

A little later Diogenes makes a series of comparisons intended to show how much Plato owed to the comic poet Epicharmus.

The influence of the Pythagoreans can hardly be doubted. From the *Seventh Letter,* usually attributed to Plato, one learns that Plato had friendly relations with Archytas, the well-known Tarentine statesman and Pythagorean philosopher and mathematician. In the *Phaedo* Plato includes Echecrates the Pythagorean in the group attending Socrates at his death. Diogenes reports in his *Lives* that Plato traveled to Cyrene to see Theodorus the mathematician (portrayed kindly in Plato's *Theaetetus*) and from there to Italy to visit with the Pythagoreans Philolaus and Eurytas. Pythagorean elements and a fascination with mathematics (no doubt derived from the Pythagoreans) can be seen in many of Plato's dialogues. Diogenes refers to other travels, as well, and possibly other influences, including the "prophets" of Egypt, whom Plato is said by Diogenes to have visited. Diogenes' account is flawed, however, by the fact that he has Euripides accompany Plato to Egypt, but Euripides died in 406, whereas Plato's alleged visit to Egypt was supposed to have come after the death of Socrates in 399.

Whatever other influences have been claimed, there can be little doubt that it was Socrates who had the most profound impact on Plato. Plato chooses Socrates as the main character in most of his works, and no one doubts that this reflects Plato's reverence for the man he regarded as his true master. In the *Seventh Letter* one learns that Plato regarded Socrates as "the justest man alive" during the reign of the Thirty Tyrants in Athens. Diogenes reports also that the interest was mutual: he tells the story that Socrates dreamed of a cygnet on his knees, which all at once sprouted feathers and flew away after crying out a loud, sweet call. The next day Plato was introduced to Socrates as a pupil, and Socrates recognized the young man as the swan in his dream.

When Socrates died, Plato left Athens for Megara and is reported then to have traveled to several different places. Diogenes has him visit Cyrene, Italy, and then Egypt, whereas Cicero in his mid-first-century-A.D. accounts does not mention Cyrene, but has Plato visit Egypt before Italy and Sicily. Strabo claims that when he visited Heliopolis in Egypt (in the late first century B.C. or the early first century A.D.), he was shown the places where Plato lived while there. Nothing of this or any other visit to Egypt is certain, and nothing explicit about Plato's time there is said in his dialogues or in the spurious letters. Various stories involving Egypt are occasionally related in his works, but in a way compatible with their being learned through ordinary folktales or even made up on the spot.

The visits to Italy and Sicily are considerably better documented, with explicit details given in the letters, especially the *Seventh Letter.* Of all the letters, the *Seventh Letter* is generally regarded by scholars to be the most likely genuine, and even those scholars who have disputed its authenticity have never doubted its accuracy regarding Plato's travels. According to this letter, Plato first went to Italy and Sicily, then eventually moved to Syracuse when he was about forty. There he became an instructor to Dion, who was closely attached to the tyrant Dionysius I (Dionysius was married to Dion's sister, and Dion himself married his own niece, their daughter). The *Seventh Letter* says nothing about the duration of this visit or much about its termination, but

later stories related by Plutarch and Diogenes maintain that Plato earned the wrath of Dionysius, who arranged to have him removed from Syracuse and sold into slavery. Accounts vary as to how he was ransomed and returned to Athens.

During the following years Plato founded the Academy, named for its location, about a mile outside the Athenian walls, at a site sacred to the hero Academus (or Hecademus). For the remaining years of his life this was the center of Plato's activities. Still he traveled twice more to Syracuse. The first time was shortly after the death of Dionysius I, when his young son Dionysius II ascended to the tyranny. His uncle (and brother-in-law) Dion persuaded the young man to ask Plato to come to Syracuse, privately adding his own entreaty on the ground that in Dionysius II, Plato might find the opportunity to create a philosopher-ruler of the kind described in Plato's *Republic.* Filled with misgivings, Plato, now sixty years old, made the trip. It was a disaster. Upon arriving in Syracuse he found the place thick with evil gossip and plotting against Dion, whom the young Dionysius exiled (as seditious) within a few months of Plato's arrival. Plato then became, in effect, a personal prisoner of the young tyrant who was eager to win Plato's friendship but not at all eager to behave in the ways Plato prescribed.

Plato eventually persuaded the tyrant to let him return to Athens, where, according to Plutarch, Dion joined him at the Academy. Plato's agreement with Dionysius was that after the war (perhaps referring to the Lucanian War in 365), he and Dion would be invited back to Syracuse on friendly terms. Dion and Plato stayed in Athens for the next four years, from about 365 to 361. Dionysius then begged Plato to return but insisted that Dion wait until later, and Dion agreed to this condition and urged Plato to go. Plato annoyed both by refusing. A year later Dionysius sent a trireme that carried Plato's Pythagorean friend, Archedemus (an associate of Archytas); Archedemus urged Plato to come back to Syracuse. Dionysius now claimed to be truly devoted to taking up the philosophical life.

With great reluctance, and again propelled by Dion's exhortations, Plato went the last time to Syracuse. He again found Dionysius resolute against Dion; Dionysius now confiscated and sold off Dion's property in Syracuse. Again finding himself imprisoned in Syracuse, Plato desperately wrote to Archytas and other Tarentine friends, who sent a ship and prevailed upon Dionysius to let Plato go with them. Thus, Plato was freed from Syracuse again. In Olympia Plato met Dion, who became outraged at the news of the loss of his property. Swearing vengeance, Dion collected an army of mercenaries and successfully invaded Syracuse; but in the aftermath Dion was assassinated and political chaos in Sicily ensued. Plato returned to the Academy, where he lived the last thirteen years of his life and, according to Diogenes, was finally buried.

Diogenes further reports in his *Lives* that there was a rivalry or animosity between Plato and several of his contemporaries, especially other philosophers and literary figures, and especially fellow "Socratics," including Xenophon, Antisthenes, Aristippus, and Aeschines. It is certain that each of these also wrote "Socratic dialogues," though only those of Xenophon and Plato exist in complete form. It is important to note that the Socratic dialogues written by others deviate significantly from Plato's in their philosophies and their portraits of Socrates.

This fact, along with Plato's own use of Socrates as his main character, has led to several seemingly irresolvable scholarly disputes. Does the character Socrates actually speak for Plato himself, who simply articulates his own thoughts through Socrates? Or does Plato seek only to represent the philosophy of Socrates by reporting more or less accurately Socrates' own conversations? Never a speaking character in his own dialogues, Plato speaks for himself only in the *Letters,* whose authenticity is disputed. It has been argued, in fact, that his readers should never assume that Plato is articulating clear doctrines, but that, instead, he is using the dialogue form simply to offer arguments for consideration, not as dogmatic pronouncements. This radical claim seems to be confuted by Plato's student Aristotle, who often writes as if he believed that the Socrates whom Plato portrays is also articulating Plato's own philosophy.

Although a decisive resolution of the many debates about Plato's relationship with Socrates is not likely to be achieved, certain points of view seem well enough supported by evidence to be generally agreed upon by scholars. Perhaps the most important point concerns the relative dating of the dialogues. Partly because of the strategies used for dating the dialogues, some separation of the Platonic and Socratic philosophies has been made, on the supposition that Plato became more the master of his own philosophical thinking and less influenced by Socrates as he matured.

Several approaches to ordering the dialogues chronologically have been attempted. In antiquity the orderings were thematic at best and included

Fragment of a late-first- or early-second-century-A.D. papyrus text of Plato's Phaedo
(Egypt Exploration Society, London)

many works whose authenticity is now disputed or unanimously rejected. The internal and external historical evidence for a chronological ordering is relatively slight. Aristotle, Diogenes, and Olympiodorus of Alexandria all report that the *Laws* was written after the *Republic.* Internal references in the *Sophist* and the *Politicus* (also known as the *Statesman*) show that the *Sophist* came before the *Politicus.* The *Timaeus* (27a) says the *Critias* comes after it, and the *Timaeus* (17b–19b) may refer to the *Republic* as coming before it. Similarly, internal references in the *Sophist* and the *Theaetetus* may be thought to order three dialogues: *Parmenides, Theaetetus,* and *Sophist.* At *Theaetetus* 143c Plato seems to announce dissatisfaction with a certain style of writing in dialogue form, one that is never seen in the dialogues that appear (based upon the above evidence) to come after it, but that is common in other dialogues that, accordingly, may be placed before the *Theaetetus.*

Despite the lack of direct evidence, modern scholars have found sufficient differences in the philosophical methods and viewpoints articulated in the dialogues to group them into different periods. Gregory Vlastos in his influential study, *Socrates: Ironist and Moral Philosopher* (1991), finds ten significant differences between the Socrates of what have come to be regarded as the dialogues of the early period and the character by that name in the dialogues of the so-called middle period. Arguments of this sort have generally found favor among scholars who are inclined to find the differences in Plato's characterizations significant in terms of Plato's movement away, in the middle period, from the philosophical methods and preoccupations of the historical Socrates, which these scholars assume to have been represented more or less accurately in Plato's earlier works. Still, each of these differences between the Socrates of the early and middle dialogues – and others that scholars have claimed to find – will no doubt continue to be hotly debated. But the division of the dialogues into groups on the basis of their contents has more recently received some support from what is known as stylometry – the careful measure of certain stylistic features of the writings themselves.

If these two general approaches to dating the dialogues are combined, the following relative dating results (with all groupings but the last being in alphabetical order): The early dialogues, considered to be those written prior to Plato's first trip to Sicily in 387, include the *Apology, Charmides, Crito, Euthyphro, Gorgias, Hippias Major, Hippias Minor, Ion, Laches, Lysis, Protagoras,* and the *Republic,* book 1. Those dialogues considered to be early transitional (either at the end of the early group or at the beginning of

the middle group, from about 387 to 380) include *Cratylus, Euthydemus, Menexenus,* and *Meno.* Dialogues of the middle period (circa 380–360) are the *Phaedo, Republic,* and *Symposium.* Late-transitional are the dialogues either at the end of the middle group or the beginning of the late group, from about 360 to 355. These include *Parmenides, Phaedrus,* and *Theaetetus.* Late dialogues, from about 355 to 347, in possible chronological order, are the *Sophist, Politicus, Philebus, Timaeus, Critias,* and *Laws.*

While these groupings are accepted by many scholars, serious and learned debate will no doubt continue about the exact placement of each dialogue within these groups and even about the merits of the different methods employed to group them at all. Furthermore, a great many other dialogues and some thirteen letters have also been attributed to Plato over the years, but none of these other writings has been regarded by a clear scholarly concensus as authentic. Many were presumed to be so in antiquity and have only relatively recently been removed from the canon on grounds that in some cases may be found quite subjective. These disputed works are known as the *dubia.* Still other dialogues, called the *spuria,* were attributed to Plato but suspected to be fraudulent even in antiquity.

Diogenes Laertius in his life of Plato lists ten spuria, including five that have not survived in any form: the *Midon,* or *Horse-breeder, Phaeacians, Chelidon, Seventh Day,* and *Epimenides.* The remaining five he lists have survived: the *Alcyon, Axiochus, Demodocus, Eryxias,* and *Sisyphus.* Diogenes reports that Favorinus attributed the *Alcyon* to a certain Leon; Athenaeus regarded it as the work of Nicias of Nicaea. To the ten Diogenes lists, *On Justice* and *On Virtue* may uncontroversially be added, and also the *Definitions,* which is included in the medieval manuscripts of Plato's work but not mentioned in antiquity. Also doubted in antiquity, though not by Diogenes or his sources, were the *Alcibiades* II, *Epinomis, Hipparchus,* and *Rivals* (also known as the *Lovers*); and these are only rarely defended as authentic by contemporary scholars. If the *Epinomis* is authentic, it belongs to the late group; the others, if authentic, would belong to the early-transitional group.

Among the other dubia, all of which were accepted by the ancient authorities, are several interesting works, as well as some pedestrian dialogues. Debates continue about many of these, and whether they should be included among the canonical dialogues. Their value, once included, would also be their risk: not to include them is to risk the loss of valuable evidence for Plato's philosophy; to include them is to risk obscuring a clearer view of that philosophy by blurring it with what does not belong to that philosophy. These works include the *Alcibiades* I, *Minos,* and *Theages,* which would each go with the early group, if authentic; the *Cleitophon,* which might be middle or late; and the letters, of which only the *Third Letter* and *Seventh Letter* seem to be candidates for authenticity. The letters mostly appear to be late works, with the possible exception of the *Thirteenth Letter,* which could be middle.

All of Plato's works – with the exception of the *Timaeus* – were lost to the Western world until medieval times, in contrast to the Middle East, where they had been preserved through the centuries by Muslim scholars. In 1578 an edition of the dialogues was published in France by Henri Estienne, who printed each page of the Platonic text in a way that separated it into five sections. From this edition, which set the standard for more than two hundred years, it has become the practice in all Greek text editions, as well as the best translations, to annotate the text with numbers and the letters *a* through *e,* with the numbers representing pages of the Estienne edition and the letters representing the sections into which Estienne separated the pages.

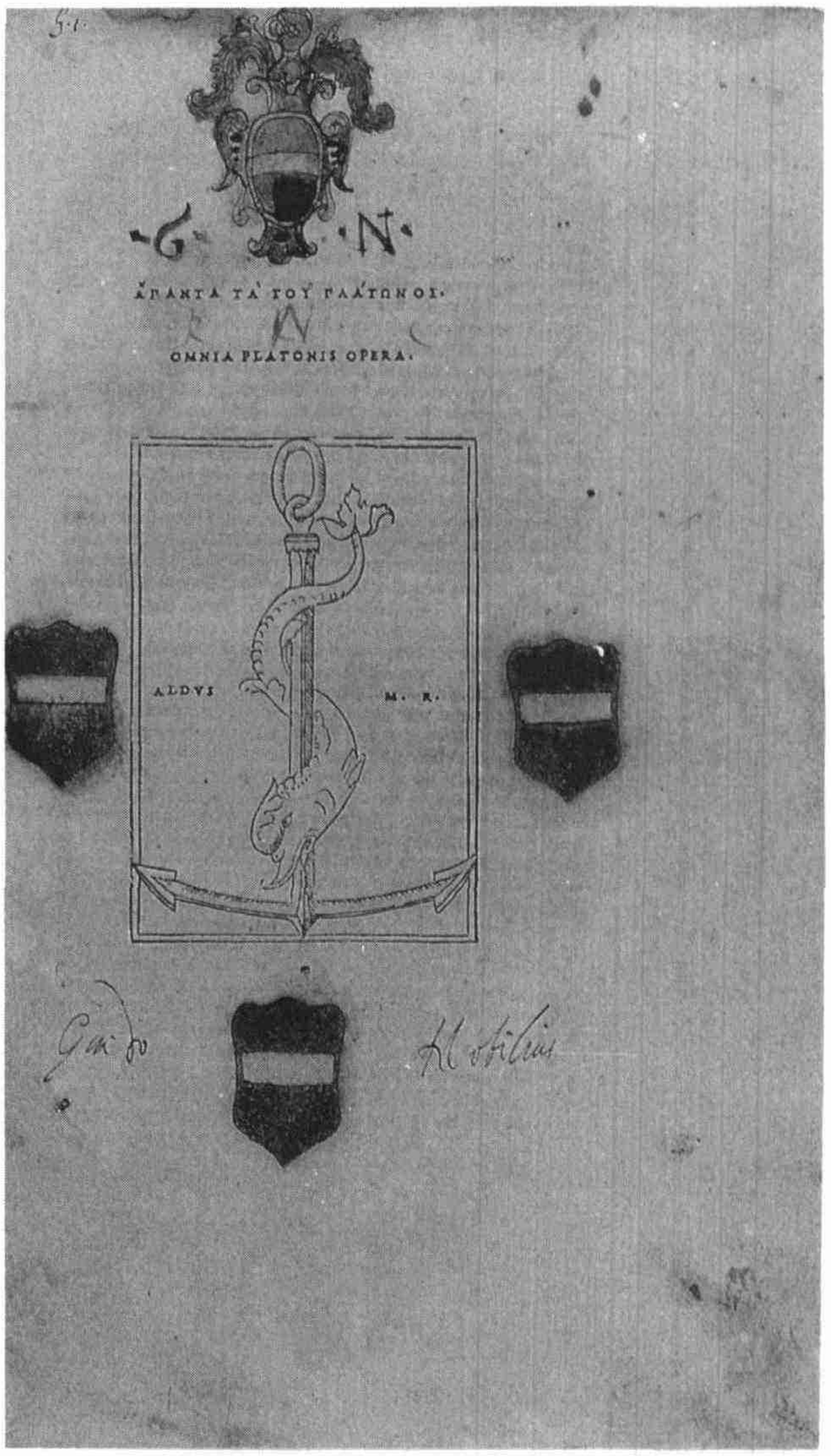
These numbers and letters are called "Stephanus" numbers and letters, after the Latinized version of Estienne. It is now universally accepted among scholars to cite Plato's texts by using the Stephanus pages and letters, rather than the page numbers of any specific edition of the Greek or any translation. Scholars who cite the Greek text may also add numbers after the Stephanus letters, which always represent line numbers within the Stephanus letter sections of what has now become the standard Greek edition of the dialogues, those given in the Oxford Classical Texts series, originally edited by John Burnet at the beginning of the twentieth century.

If the majority of scholars are right, Plato's early dialogues represent his attempt to preserve the memory of Socrates. No one seriously believes that Plato's accounts in these dialogues are verbatim reports of Socrates' actual words, though the *Apology* has been shown to be possibly quite close to the historical speech of Socrates at his trial. In other early dialogues – most notoriously, the *Gorgias,* for example – various anachronisms are found, which surely disqualify them as historically accurate recollections of actual conversations. But scholars are divided on the issue of how accurate these dialogues are in their portrait of the philosophical style and the points of view of the historical Socrates. Certainly

Socrates is portrayed in ways that make him look very different from the "Socrates" who is the main speaking character in Plato's middle-period dialogues. But this difference may signify no more than a change in Plato's own philosophical approaches, rather than anything significant about the man Plato appears to be immortalizing.

The majority view among scholars on this issue is that the early Platonic dialogues contain a certain highly coherent set of philosophical positions, and so it makes sense to think of this philosophy on its own terms, distinct from the philosophy found in the middle-period dialogues. Scholars often call the philosophy in the early dialogues "Socratic philosophy," and the philosophy in the middle dialogues "Platonic philosophy," even if they are officially agnostic about the attribution of "Socratic philosophy" to the historical Socrates. Partly this strategy permits an easy shorthand for the distinction between the two philosophies, and partly it reflects an acknowledgment that the philosophy of Plato's early-period dialogues is the most interesting and plausible candidate for the philosophy of the historical Socrates. Indeed, if the philosophy of Plato's Socrates is in fact *not* the philosophy of the historical Socrates, then the philosophy of the historical Socrates must either be associated with the views attributed to him by other Socratic authors (which seem quite pedestrian compared with what Plato's Socrates articulates), or else the historical Socrates must be considered lost. Any serious philosophical interest in Socrates, then, is, for modern scholars, to be found in the philosophy of Plato's Socrates in the early dialogues.

In these early-period dialogues of Plato, Socrates is a man of extreme intellectual agility, capable of reducing even the most resolutely proud and learned men to confusion and self-contradiction. All the while professing his own ignorance, Plato's Socrates is invariably able to demonstrate the ignorance of others. By Plato's account in the *Apology,* Socrates spent his life in this manner: each day he ventured forth in the city to find those who claimed in some way to be wise; when he found them, he showed that they were not truly wise. Since his investigations were nearly always done in public, his interlocutors' ignorance was exposed before witnesses, many of them young men, some of whom were so taken with Socrates' investigations that they began to imitate him. It takes little imagination to see how such a daily ritual would earn Socrates the enmity of many of his victims and their supporters. It is also easy to imagine the dismay of parents who heard of young men examining their elders Socratically. The puzzle about Plato's Socrates, though his professed motives derived from an admirable morality, is not that he was eventually brought to trial, but rather why it took the notoriously proud and litigious Athenians so long to prosecute him.



Title page for the editio princeps (1513) of Plato's works

Plato's depiction of Socrates allows one, at least to some degree, to understand the motives of the Athenians who put him to death and also those of his young followers who seem to have found him irresistibly charismatic. But most of all, Plato's works pose philosophical problems and questions whose intricacy and inherent interest continue to challenge those who think critically about serious issues. It is not merely affection for history that leads philosophy teachers regularly to assign Platonic dialogues to their introductory classes – Plato's Socrates asks many of what have become the quintessential questions of philosophy. He asks them in ways

that are readily understood; and in Plato's dialogues he is made to ask them in dramatic settings that make such questions even more compelling. Thus, when Plato asks in the *Crito* what is the duty of the individual to obey the laws of the state, he does not merely raise the question abstractly in an essay – he has Socrates discuss it as he awaits execution in jail, condemned to die by what both he and his interlocutor (Crito) agree was a miscarriage of justice and misapplication of the same laws to which obedience is in question.

So, too, one learns what the Platonic Socrates thinks about piety (and how much he thinks others do not know about it) in the *Euthyphro,* a dialogue set on the steps of the king-archon's office, where his interlocutor (Euthyphro) has come to press charges against his own father – something the Athenians of that time would view as impious in the extreme – and where Socrates had been called to answer his own accuser's charge of impiety. So it is that Plato's early portrayals of Socrates continue not only to raise the most serious philosophical questions, but also to stimulate and arouse the reader by their drama. For these reasons, though scholars may debate endlessly and never conclusively their relative value as history, Plato's dialogues will continue to be widely read and studied, and Plato's Socrates will always be the Socrates who is considered one of the great philosophers of the West.

The dialogue titled *Apology* consists of three speeches, which, according to Plato, Socrates gave to the jury during the course of his trial. The first is his defense proper, which begins with a prologue and after which Socrates distinguishes his accusers into the first and later accusers. Those who are now prosecuting him he calls the "later" accusers, but he claims to regard them as less dangerous to him than those who have filled his jurors' ears with slanders for many years now – his first accusers. He undertakes, accordingly, to defend himself against the prejudices that have built up through the years against him – that he is a word-twisting Sophist and an atheist who teaches the young evil ideas – and to explain how it was that he came to have such a bad reputation.

It is in this context that Socrates tells the well-known story of the Delphic oracle and Socrates' lifelong friend, Chairephon. Chairephon, he says, went to the oracle at Delphi and asked if there were anyone wiser than Socrates. The oracle answered no. When Socrates heard this, he says, he was profoundly puzzled; Socrates believed that he had no wisdom and had always assumed that others had the wisdom he himself lacked. Hoping to solve the riddle of the oracle, Socrates proceeded to question those who had a reputation for wisdom and discovered in the process that they were no wiser than he; even worse, unlike Socrates, these supposedly wise people were ignorant of their own lack of wisdom. Socrates then concluded that he was indeed the wisest of men, but only because he alone recognized the full extent of his ignorance. On this basis, and also (he adds later) because he had been given many other divinations, he came to recognize that he had been given a mission by God to expose others' pretense of wisdom. It is, he explains, because of his relentless pursuit of his divine mission that he has become such a notorious figure in Athens. The irony that he has been charged with impiety for pursuing a divine mission could hardly be missed by his jurors (or by Plato's readers).

Socrates then answers his so-called later accusers through a cross-examination of the principal prosecutor of the case, Meletus. Socrates' questions reveal that Meletus cannot provide even so much as a consistent account of his own charges against Socrates, which shows, according to Socrates, that the man made his accusations in a way that was frivolous and ignorant. He goes on to challenge his accusers to produce even one person who can claim to have been one of the "students" whom Socrates has corrupted. Socrates also claims not to be a teacher, on the ground that he has no wisdom to teach.

Whatever may be thought of Socrates' defense, the jury rejected it by the fairly narrow margin of sixty votes (out of five hundred jurors). In certain sorts of cases, Athenian law stipulated that no set penalties be assigned upon conviction. Rather, the prosecution would propose a penalty as part of the indictment, and, if convicted, the defendant would be called upon to make a counterpenalty proposal. The jury would then, in a second vote, decide between the penalties proposed by the prosecution and defense. The second speech in the *Apology* is Socrates' deliberation about what to offer as a counterpenalty, now that he has been found guilty. After reminding his jurors that he regards himself as having done nothing wrong – indeed, as having been one of Athens's greatest benefactors, by virtue of his divine mission – he considers and rejects various penalties that the jurors might be inclined to accept and settles finally upon a fairly substantial fine, which (not uncustomarily in such cases) he can pay only with the help of several of his friends, notably including Plato himself. Perhaps because Socrates has made it clear that he would never desist from the activities that landed him in

court, the jury rejects his offer and assigns him the death penalty sought by the prosecution. Socrates' third and final speech in the *Apology* is made to his jurors as the officials prepare to take him to the jail where he will await execution. In this speech Socrates chastises those who have condemned him and attempts to console those who sided with him by reminding them that death is, in all probability, nothing to fear.

Among Plato's early dialogues are two others, already mentioned, whose dramatic details place Socrates in the context of his trial and imprisonment. In dramatic order the first of these is the *Euthyphro,* in which Socrates is depicted as having been called to the king-archon's office to answer the charges against him and to schedule the trial, during which he examines a certain Euthyphro on the topic of piety. Socrates' own morality, and the fact that he is no corrupter of youth, are made evident in his treatment of the brash and thoughtless young Euthyphro. The second dialogue is the *Crito,* in which Socrates' friend Crito attempts to persuade Socrates to escape from jail and thus avoid his execution. Socrates argues that to follow Crito's advice would be wrong, because his escape would entail returning a wrong for a wrong (which he claims no one should ever do); it would make him violate his agreements with the state; and it would be tantamount to trying to destroy the state by showing that its laws do not have authority over private citizens. Taken together, these three dialogues show Socrates to be a man of the highest ideals and the most supreme courage in maintaining his convictions.

Other early dialogues dramatize a Socrates who is engaged in what he says in the *Apology* is his life's work: exposing others' lack of wisdom, while making no claim to such wisdom himself. Several dialogues depict Socrates in the act of exposing others' ignorance by showing his interlocutors to be unable to produce definitions of basic moral concepts, which they would apparently need to make the judgments that they express prior to their conversations with Socrates. Again, the *Euthyphro* provides one such example. Euthyphro intends to prosecute his own father for impiety but is then shown through Socratic examination not to be able to produce a cogent account of what piety is. Other dialogues that center around definitional issues (sometimes called "dialogues of search," because the interlocutors seek definitions) include the *Charmides,* in which the definition of temperance is at issue; the *Hippias Major,* which concerns beauty; the *Laches,* which concerns courage; the *Lysis,* which concerns friendship; and perhaps the *Republic,* book 1, which concerns justice. In each case Socrates challenges his interlocutors – in some cases a series of interlocutors – to produce the appropriate definitions; and in each case, the interlocutors are shown to fail and are reduced to perplexity (*aporia*) by the end of the dialogue.

Other early dialogues are less preoccupied with definitional issues and more concerned with the interlocutors' claims that imply that they possess some wisdom. In several cases the discussion concerns whether or not some interlocutor possesses some *technê* (skill, art, or craft) that would imply that she/he were wise, at least in that area, and could reliably produce something beneficial for her/himself and others. Dialogues of this sort include the *Gorgias,* which concerns whether rhetoric is a technê, or, as Socrates argues, a mere knack or worse, something like flattery, which serves only to gratify but does not really produce anything truly beneficial. Similarly, the *Ion* portrays a rhapsodist, Ion, who claims to have a technê, again with Socrates demurring. In this dialogue, however, Socrates argues that the rhapsodist does what he does through divine inspiration. Perhaps also in this category is the *Protagoras,* a dialogue in which the Sophist's claim to have a technê is refuted by Socrates. In each case, because the claim to have a technê is tantamount to the claim that one has a kind of wisdom, Socrates refutes those who claim to have wisdom when they do not, as his mission requires.

In still other dialogues the issues are more specifically moral in character, but the refutation of the pretense to wisdom can still be seen in Socrates' attempts to show certain interlocutors that they lack the wisdom it would take to make the difficult judgments that they are apparently prepared to make. This is evident in the *Crito,* for example, in which Socrates refutes Crito's argument that Socrates should escape from jail. In the *Hippias Minor* Socrates and Hippias pursue the question of whether the one who knows will be a better liar than the one who does not know, and Hippias is shown not to be able to maintain a consistent position on this issue; the *Protagoras* and *Meno* question whether virtue can be taught, with no decisive conclusions reached in either dialogue; and the *Euthydemus* demonstrates the futility of certain sophistic forms of argumentation.

Only the *Apology* and *Crito* directly invite readings in which Socrates clearly stakes out substantive positions, although even in these what he claims is, for the most part, not asserted dogmatically. But even in the so-called aporetic dialogues (in which the conversation ends with the interlocutor reduced

Socrates, the central figure of Plato's works (British Museum)

to the state of aporia), Socrates occasionally directly affirms certain philosophically significant positions and argues from what appear to be determinable viewpoints. Among these positions may be counted several moral claims or principles that include the following: the rejection of retaliation, or the return of harm for harm or evil for evil; and the claim that doing injustice harms one's soul, the thing that is most precious to one, and hence that it is better to suffer injustice than to do it.

Other philosophical positions that Socrates affirms in these early dialogues include some form of what is called eudaimonism, that is, the view that goodness is to be understood in terms of its conducing to human happiness, well-being, or flourishing. He also maintains the view that only virtue (or the virtues) are intrinsically good, and that all other good things are good only to the degree that they serve or are useful to the acquisition or preservation of, or used by, virtue (or the virtues). He upholds the view, too, that in some way the several virtues form a kind of unity, at least to the degree that one cannot possess one of the virtues without possessing every other virtue; and also the view that there is at least a profound – perhaps exceptionless – connection between morality and obedience to law. Related to these positions are various psychological claims that may be fairly attributed to Plato's Socrates in this period, including the claim that those who do what is evil or harmful do so out of ignorance, because no one desires what is evil or harmful, but only what is good or beneficial; and that each person, in some sense, accepts or believes certain moral principles, even though he or she may disavow such principles in argument.

To these may be added various religious beliefs that Socrates enunciates: for instance, that the gods are flawlessly wise and good; that he, Socrates, has had from childhood a certain divine something (*daimonion ti*), voice, or sign that opposes him when he is about to do something wrong; and that human beings can discern something of the divine will through divination. Socrates furthermore declares that poets, rhapsodists, and other literary figures do the wonderful things they do (when wonderful) not through some knowledge they possess, but from divine inspiration. He also expresses his conviction that death is no evil, perhaps because the soul survives the death of the body and achieves some just reward or punishment in the afterlife.

In addition, Plato's Socrates in these early dialogues may plausibly be seen to have certain methodological or epistemological convictions. He appears to be convinced, for example, that the knowledge required to define moral terms has an epistemological primacy, where such knowledge would be a necessary condition of one's being a reliable judge of specific instances of moral issues. Then, too, he defends the principle that a proper definition of moral terms cannot be achieved from a list of examples of the moral property at issue but must state what is common to all such examples. In some cases he adheres to the view that knowledge requires, as a necessary condition, that one be able to produce a consistent set of judgments on the subject in question, and that comprehensive knowledge of the subject matter, including definitional knowledge, is a necessary condition of wisdom. None of these statements about Socrates' positions as they emerge from the early dialogues is comprehensive, and every item in each group is to some degree contro-

versial. Scholars will almost certainly continue to debate the nuances and implications of each one and the many others that may be added.

As for Plato's later dialogues, relative chronological orderings of the transitional and middle dialogues have been attempted, but these efforts are somewhat confounded by the fact that the main dialogue of the period, the *Republic,* was almost certainly written in stages, perhaps over a long period of time. Scholars generally treat the first book of the *Republic* as if it were among the early group of dialogues, because its style and dialogic content seem entirely of a piece with the earlier dialogues. Here one finds Socrates characteristically questioning others, confessing his own ignorance just as vehemently as he exposes that of others, and leading the discussion to an aporetic conclusion at the end of the book. And yet, in many ways the first book works extremely well as an introduction to the remainder of the work, and so even if Plato did originally write the first book as an independent work, there can be little doubt that he revised it later to fit with the rest. Scholars who utilize stylistic studies and appeals to content divide on the issue of how the remaining books should be dated, though all who accept any strategy for dating the dialogues put the remaining nine books (two through ten) within the middle period.

Beginning with the transitional dialogues, several departures in style and philosophical substance from the early dialogues are apparent. Perhaps most notable are two radical changes that are obvious to even the most casual readers. First, there is a marked change in the philosophical argumentation and the apparent position of Socrates as an authority about the topic under discussion; second, there is a dramatic increase in the range of subject matter that Plato's Socrates is willing to discuss.

Furthermore, in the early dialogues Socrates was preoccupied with ethical subjects and on a mission to expose the false claims of wisdom that others made. His philosophical approach was confrontational and refutative; his philosophical examinations proceeded through the exclusive use of question and answer, what has come to be known as the Socratic *elenchos* (refutation or examination), or "elenctic method." Employing his elenchos, Socrates invariably refuted his interlocutor's theories and reduced him to aporia on moral subjects. In the middle period Socrates continues asking questions and his interlocutors continue answering, but the tone and point of the questions and answers are plainly different. Gone (nearly gone – the *Theaetetus* is an intriguing exception) is the Socrates who professes his own ignorance while seeking to refute his interlocutors. In his place is a Socrates whose questions are designed to solicit agreement from his interlocutors to premises and conclusions that Socrates develops and identifies as his own views.

Moreover, as he develops his arguments, this Socrates is inclined to situate the moral discussions within highly developed epistemological and metaphysical systems. Concerns and conceptions expressed with this degree of sophistication simply cannot be found in the early period. The exclusively moral philosopher of the early period, whose interest in epistemology and logic extended only to the contact these areas made with ethical issues, now avidly pursues highly technical and systematic discussions of language and reality (as in the *Cratylus*) and science and explanation (as in the *Phaedo* and *Republic,* books 5–7). He also now acknowledges the possibility of infallible human knowledge (especially in books 5–7 of the *Republic*) by virtue of a supposed human ability to make cognitive contact with a suprasensible reality – Forms or Ideas (*eide*) – that exist changeless and pure in a realm available only to thought. The theory of Forms, which has come to be known as perhaps the single most defining signature of Platonism, is found articulated in various ways in each of the middle-period dialogues (with the exception, once again, of the transitional *Theaetetus,* discussed in the next section).

The Socrates of the *Apology* regarded death as "one of two things," either an annihilation or a transfer of the soul to some other place. In the *Crito* and *Gorgias,* too, Socrates refers to a place to which the dead go in the afterlife. But in the *Meno* the claim is made for the first time that the soul of each human being must have existed in some form before birth, and indeed that it was from this prior existence that each individual acquired the knowledge he possesses in this life. The transmigration of souls is extended in the *Phaedo* to include their transmission in subsequent lives into different embodiments (a position that looks to many scholars like a sudden and significant imposition of Pythagorean ideas onto a Socrates who did not include reincarnation as one of the possible forms of afterlife in the earlier dialogues). This tale of transmigration is given, as well, in book 10 of the *Republic* and in the *Phaedrus* and is also advanced in the dialogues of the late period, including the *Timaeus* and the *Laws.* Such changes as these have persuaded scholars that Plato's middle-period dialogues represent not only a markedly different characterization of Socrates, but

also a philosophical approach that is significantly different from the early dialogues.

Certain changes of tone, philosophical style, and even substance begin to be evident in each of the transitional dialogues; for example, in the interest in deriving a theory of language and meaning in the *Cratylus* and in the theory of knowledge as recollection from a prior existence in the *Meno.* In the *Meno,* too, the Socrates who before showed no special interest in mathematics suddenly undertakes fairly complicated geometric proofs with Meno's slave (as part of a demonstration of the slave's existence prior to his present incarnation). But not until the *Phaedo* is there a clear articulation of several distinctive middle-period doctrines. Because Platonic philosophy is so closely associated with the doctrines and viewpoints of the middle period, the dialogues of the *Phaedo* and the *Republic* will be represented in more detail.

The dramatic date of the *Phaedo* is the day of Socrates' execution; the dialogue ends, in fact, with Socrates' death by hemlock poisoning. The topic of the dialogue, fittingly, is the immortality of the soul, and for the first time in the Platonic corpus Plato's Socrates actually argues for the thesis that the soul is immortal. Along the way, the theory of Forms is announced, initially in connection with the theory (first proposed in the *Meno*) that knowledge is recollection, and later, as Socrates' preferred basis for all explanation, in a context that provides his final argument for the immortality of the soul.

According to the theory of Forms, particular equal things are equal by virtue of their resemblance or approximation to the Form of Equality, which is purely, essentially, eternally, and simply equal. The same may be said of the many tall things and the Form of Tall, for the many beautiful things and the Form of Beauty, or even the many beds and the Form of Bed, or the many tables and the Form of Table (see *Republic* X. 596b), or for that matter any other general property that things may be judged to have. Knowledge, then, involves the recognition of the Forms, and the judgment knowledge makes possible is possible only by virtue of one's ability to recognize the Forms clearly, and thus to compare the particulars to be judged with the Form. When Plato claims that knowledge is recollection, at least in the *Phaedo,* he seems to mean that knowledge involves some recollection of the Form, with which the individual came into contact in some previous existence.

The *Republic* is perhaps Plato's best-known work. Though it is divided into ten books (an artifact of the prerequisites of ancient printing), it may thematically be divided into five sections: book 1, which, as noted, may have been written considerably earlier than the others (indeed, it is sometimes argued that the spurious *Cleitophon* was an alternative introduction, perhaps written later, that was either unfinished or that somehow never gained acceptance); books 2–4; books 5–7; books 8 and 9; and finally book 10.

Book 1 of the *Republic* reads much like an early period dialogue of search, starting out, after some prefatory banter, by seeking a definition of justice (with interlocutors Cephalus and his son, Polemarchus, respectively) and failing. This conversation is interrupted by the brash Sophist Thrasymachus, who begins by offering his own definition of justice (as the advantage of the stronger party), but changes, under fire from Socrates, to the claim that it is preferable to be unjust than just, if only one can get away with it. This claim, too, is subjected to Socrates' refutative examination, and Thrasymachus is eventually reduced to passivity. Socrates professes to be left with his characteristic ignorance.

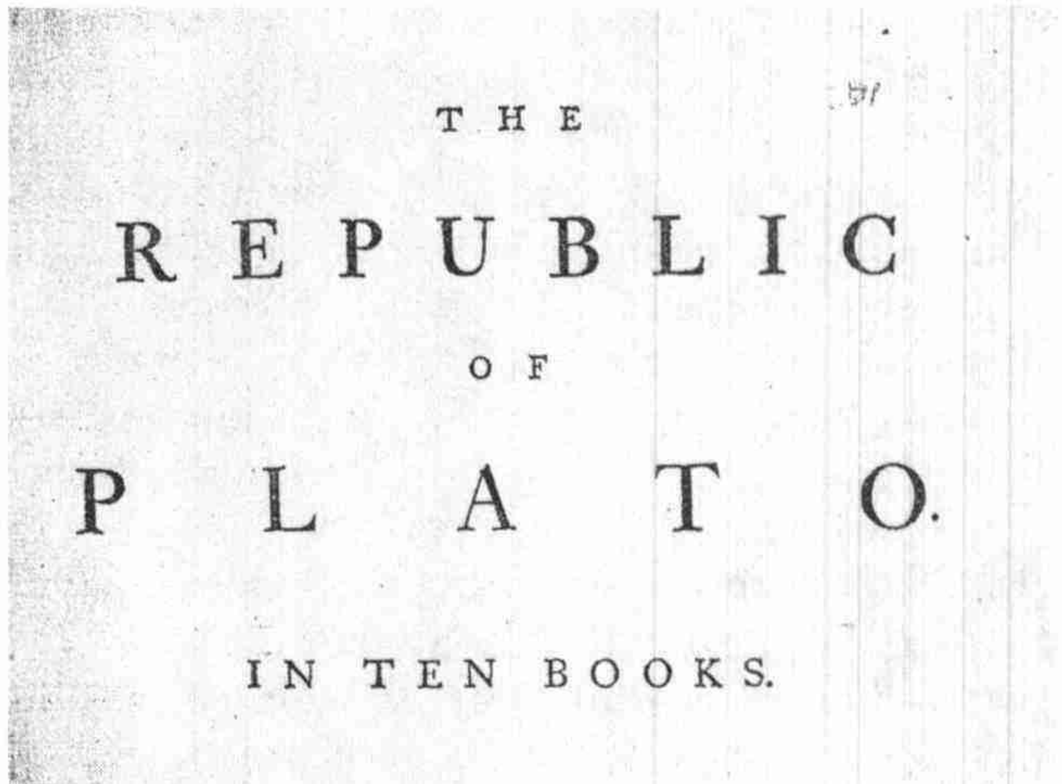
Book 2 picks up with a new set of interlocutors (Plato's brothers, Glaucon and Adeimantus), who express their dissatisfaction with Socrates' refutation of Thrasymachus and challenge Socrates to undertake a defense of justice by proving that it really is intrinsically preferable to injustice, not for any extrinsic rewards it may win, but for its own sake. Socrates accepts this challenge, and now the nonelenctic Socrates of the middle period advances a position he identifies as his own view. Socrates insists that in order to determine if justice is preferable to injustice, he and his interlocutors must first return to the question – abandoned in the discussion with Thrasymachus – of what justice is. To achieve this, Socrates suggests an analogy to reading the same text written in large and small letters: just as it is easier to read the text written in large letters, so, too, it will be easier to discern what justice is when written in a state rather than in the small letters of an individual person. If only they can read these large letters, then, they can apply what they have read to their challenge by discerning what justice in the person is, and whether, indeed, it is preferable to injustice. This, then, maps the strategy of books 2–4.

In the remainder of book 2, in all of book 3, and through much of book 4, Plato's didactic Socrates sketches what he and his interlocutors agree would be a just state, as just as they can imagine – or nearly so: the brothers actually reject a simplistic community that Socrates begins with as being too

rustic (a "city of pigs" as Glaucon disparages it at 372d) and insist on a more luxurious city, which Socrates seems to regard as rather less healthy than his simplistic community. Both communities – the first simple community that the brothers refuse to accept, and the more luxurious city that has come to be identified as Plato's "ideal state" (somewhat inaccurately, as the above passage shows) – are marked by the rule that each citizen must do the one and only one job in the state for which he or she is best suited by nature. Plato's Socrates argues that human natures seem to come in roughly three kinds: one appropriate for a class of productive artisans, to whom only such work will be assigned, along with the goods and tools appropriate to that work; one appropriate for a class of warriors; and one appropriate for an elite class of rulers, who are at last identified in book 5 as Plato's renowned philosopher-rulers. The ruler and warrior classes, collectively called the state's guardians, will be allowed no private property or marriages, lest their personal interests conflict with their civic responsibilities. On the other hand, the artisans will be permitted no weaponry and will be assigned no role in political deliberation. Those to be assigned to these classes will accept their assignment because they will be told a noble lie that will function as the city's foundation myth: human beings are born with what are said to be metals in their constitutions, some with iron or bronze (who will be assigned to the artisan class), some with silver (who will become warriors), and some few with gold (who will become rulers).

Having sketched his just state, Plato's Socrates returns in book 4 to the large and small letters analogy of state and individual, identifies the individual with his or her soul, and then produces arguments for supposing that the soul is divided into three parts: one that supplies the appetites (which is analogous to the artisan class in the state), one that provides the spirited or passionate element (which is compared to the class of warriors), and one that supplies reason (which is compared to the ruling class). Justice in the individual occurs when each of these parts performs the function for which it is suited by its nature and does not interfere in the functions of the other parts. It is, then, this psychic harmony that quickly provides an answer to the original question of the preferability of justice to injustice: no one would prefer to have a soul at war with itself; all would prefer the healthy state of a well-balanced soul.

Having established his answer to the original challenges, Socrates now encounters another challenge from Polemarchus, Adeimantus, and


THE
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TRANSLATED FROM THE GREEK BY
H. SPENS, D. D.
WITH A PRELIMINARY DISCOURSE CONCERNING THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE ANCIENTS BY THE TRANSLATOR.
GLASGOW:
PRINTED BY ROBERT AND ANDREW FOULIS
PRINTERS TO THE UNIVERSITY
M.DCC.LXIII.

Title page for the first edition in English of Plato's best-known work, a dialogue in which Socrates discusses the qualities of an ideal state (courtesy of the Lilly Library, Indiana University)

Glaucon: he must clarify and expand upon his prescriptions for the just state, in particular the community of women and children and the ways in which private families will be abolished for some new social ordering. Socrates takes up this challenge by arguing that women and men are, but for physical strength and their roles in procreation, for all practical purposes equal in natural talent and ability. Accordingly, they will be made equal in the assignment of social roles within the guardian classes. A rigged lottery will secure a system of pairings to breed the best women with the best men, to assure both that eugenics may be achieved for the state, and that those not included among the breeders will not suspect their rulers as the source of their frustrations, blaming chance and not the rulers for their plight.

Socrates is then challenged to prove that such a state is not just a fantasy, but something that could be realized. He replies that it will be difficult indeed for this to happen, but in the end he stipulates that it can only happen if and when there is a

convergence of philosophical temperament with political power – that is, only when some philosophers become rulers or some rulers become philosophers.

This remarkable claim is then defended with a long and extremely technical explanation of what it is about philosophers that makes them uniquely suited to be the rulers of the state. It is, Socrates argues, only philosophers who have the full capacity for knowledge, as opposed to mere opinion or belief. Knowledge is that capacity or power that grasps the Forms; opinion or belief relates only to particular things, and these are but images of the Forms. Only one who recognizes the Forms and sees clearly to what extent some particular serves as an image of a given Form can make the reliable judgments required for stability and constancy in the state. Otherwise, there will be no end to the ills of political life. The remainder of book 5 introduces the distinction between knowledge and opinion through which the philosopher is identified and distinguished from mere "lovers of opinion." Book 6 later takes up the question of how those with the appropriate aptitude might be educated so as to actualize their capacity for knowledge to the fullest possible extent. This book terminates with the similes of the Sun and the Divided Line, by which Plato clarifies his contrast between knowledge and opinion and sets the study of the Form of the Good as the highest study to be achieved by the prospective philosopher.

Book 7 begins with one of Plato's best-known and most striking images, the Parable of the Cave, in which the common experience of human beings is compared with prisoners in a cave. These prisoners are bound and forced to look only at the shadows playing across the wall in front of them, shadows cast by the puppets paraded behind their backs and – unbeknownst to them – before a fire. One of Plato's prisoners is released, forced to turn and look at the origins of the sham to which he has been subjected, and then dragged up and out of the cave. There he is trained to use his vision to recognize in the outer world what was merely imaged in the region within the cave. This image supplies Plato's analogy for the education of the philosopher-rulers. Each must be trained to turn his or her attention away from the realm of particulars and toward the realm of the Forms.

The released prisoner who achieves this vision of reality and truth must then be forced back down into the cave, to become the guardian and ruler over those who reside within it. This, then, is the return of the one educated to become a philosopher to the political life he or she would never choose on its own merits. The remainder of book 7 details the system of higher education by which the philosophers in training will be, first, habituated to the study of higher realities and then brought to the study itself. Having achieved this height, they will then function as apprentices in the ruling of the state (habituating them again to the gloom of the political cave). At last, at the age of fifty, if they have passed all the tests of their education and training, they will become the rulers of the state. After fifteen years in this service, they will be permitted a retirement into the life of pure philosophical contemplation as their reward.

Books 8 and 9 return to the topic, postponed by the challenges of Polemarchus, Adeimantus, and Glaucon when they wished for more specifics on the administration of the state at the beginning of book 5, of how the justice of the state and the soul might be degraded, and what forms this degradation might take. The answer is detailed, respectively, in books 8 and 9. Finally, Book X returns to several prescriptions for the state first suggested in books 2–4, in particular the censorship of the arts, especially poetry. Book 10 employs the theory of Forms to characterize poets and visual artists as imitators whose products are three removes from reality. Such products are neither the Forms themselves nor the particulars that image the Forms in the secondary position; the products of the imitative arts are the deceptive and inferior images of particulars, those at the third and lowest position of originals and images. Plato concludes the *Republic* with arguments for the indestructibility of the soul, reaffirming the inherent value and preferability of justice over injustice and then closing with the Myth of Er, which tells of the soul's survival after death and its eventual reincarnation into a life fitting the way that it had been molded by its former life.

As for the *Symposium* and the *Phaedrus,* these may have been written at the opposite ends of the middle period. Stylometric studies have tended to put the *Symposium* near the beginning of the middle period, whereas they have put the *Phaedrus* toward the end of this period or even early in the late period. Thematically, however, the two dialogues have much in common: it is in these dialogues that Plato's theory of *eros,* from which the expression "Platonic love" comes, is articulated. The *Symposium* is set at a banquet in honor of the playwright Agathon's first victory in the tragedy competition. Those in attendance decide to entertain themselves with a series of speeches in honor of eros. After speeches by Phaedrus, Pausanias, Eryximachus, Aristophanes (the famous comic poet), and Agathon,

followed by a dialogical interlude with Socrates questioning Agathon, Socrates himself gives a speech explaining the nature of love, but attributing the entire view to a certain Diotima, said to be a prophetess. Shortly after Socrates has given his speech, the notorious Alcibiades shows up, very drunk, and proceeds to offer his own peculiar hymn of love, in which he tells of his own love affair with Socrates, who remains physically chaste despite all of Alcibiades' overtures. After Alcibiades' speech is over, another crowd of revelers shows up, and the party degenerates to a happy chaos lasting late into the night. At the end it is related that at last only Socrates, Agathon, and Aristophanes are awake, with Socrates leading the continued drinking and discussion, until first Aristophanes and then Agathon succumb to sleep. Having no one left with whom to drink and philosophize, Socrates leaves, walks to the Lyceum to wash up, and then goes about his day as usual.

Many celebrated passages are found in this dialogue, including the image, given in the speech of Aristophanes, that originally human beings were hermaphrodites, with two heads and two sets of limbs; but, because of their arrogance, they were later separated. Aristophanes explains the power of love as one's forever after looking for his "other half." The "ladder of love" idea is introduced in Socrates' speech, in which he maintains that physical love is supposed to give way to loves of greater and greater generality, until at last it reveals the Beautiful itself (the Form) as the ultimate object of love. Plato shows his own extreme artistry in this dialogue, moreover, by changing styles for each of his speakers – somewhat to the consternation of those who seek to date the dialogues through stylometric measures.

The *Phaedrus* is a dialogue between the same Phaedrus who offered the first speech in the *Symposium* and Socrates. In a rare sojourn outside the walls of the city, Socrates encounters Phaedrus, who has in his possession a speech by the orator Lysias, which Phaedrus is eager to read to Socrates. The gist of its argument is that one should bestow one's erotic favors not on someone who loves him, but on someone who does not – since lovers are greedy and possessive of their beloved, and then, after their passion passes, they regret the madness they felt in love and turn away from those they had loved. Those not in love will be more reliable, Lysias argues, and will associate with others in a way that is calm and reasonable.

Socrates reacts to this speech as if he had found it so inspiring that he feels compelled to give a speech in turn, for which, however, he claims not to be the author (later, he blames his speech on Phaedrus). In Socrates' speech, too, the argument runs that one who is in love is simply following his appetites and not to be trusted, whereas the non-lover may be relied upon to act reasonably and, thus, responsibly. But Socrates breaks off his speech in what Phaedrus would have supposed was the middle of it, ashamed to go on. He realizes that his speech was "foolish, and somewhat impious" and feels now that he must undergo a purification for the evil he has done in characterizing the god of love as bringing something evil on human beings, rather than something good. Socrates' purification is provided by another speech in which he praises love as something good.

It is, he says now, indeed a madness, but not the evil madness that it was characterized as being in Lysias's and Socrates' first speeches, but a "divine madness" that brings many of the best things that come to human beings. Socrates says that the soul is immortal and may be compared to a pair of winged horses led by a charioteer. One of the horses is the brute strength of appetite; the other is what gives the noble forces of shame and the desire for what is honorable to the soul. The charioteer provides the reason to the soul and must force the two very different horses to work in concert to drive the soul upward. (Here again the theme of psychic harmony appears.) Love excites the soul and drives it into pursuit of the beloved, but if the ignoble horse is undisciplined, the soul will pursue the beloved into carnal and earthbound forms of love, driven only by appetite and recognizing neither the shame of this nor the far greater goals that reason can comprehend. If the charioteer, however, is skilled, he will not permit his appetitive horse to drive the soul; he will, instead, force it to comply with the charioteer's own wishes, using its power to pull the soul higher and higher until the soul is carried at last to the clear sight of what Plato calls "the really real," especially the Form of Beauty. Once the soul has achieved this vision, it may, in subsequent reincarnations, always be moved by some memory of it, whenever some earthly, particular instance of beauty is seen, and the soul will feel itself sprouting its wings again, and this experience, he says, is one's divine experience of love.

Having made his penance for his earlier offence, Socrates then engages Phaedrus in discussion, with speeches and rhetoric giving way, characteristically, to a dialogue in which rhetoric is criticized (as in the *Gorgias*) as being an "artless knack without knowledge" and writing is acknowledged

as, at best, an aid to memory and nothing grander than that. Despite his apparently low opinion of writing, Plato manages in the *Phaedrus* to write a masterly work, one rich in imagery, rich in speeches and in drama, and rich in its characterization and contextualization of the interplay among its speakers.

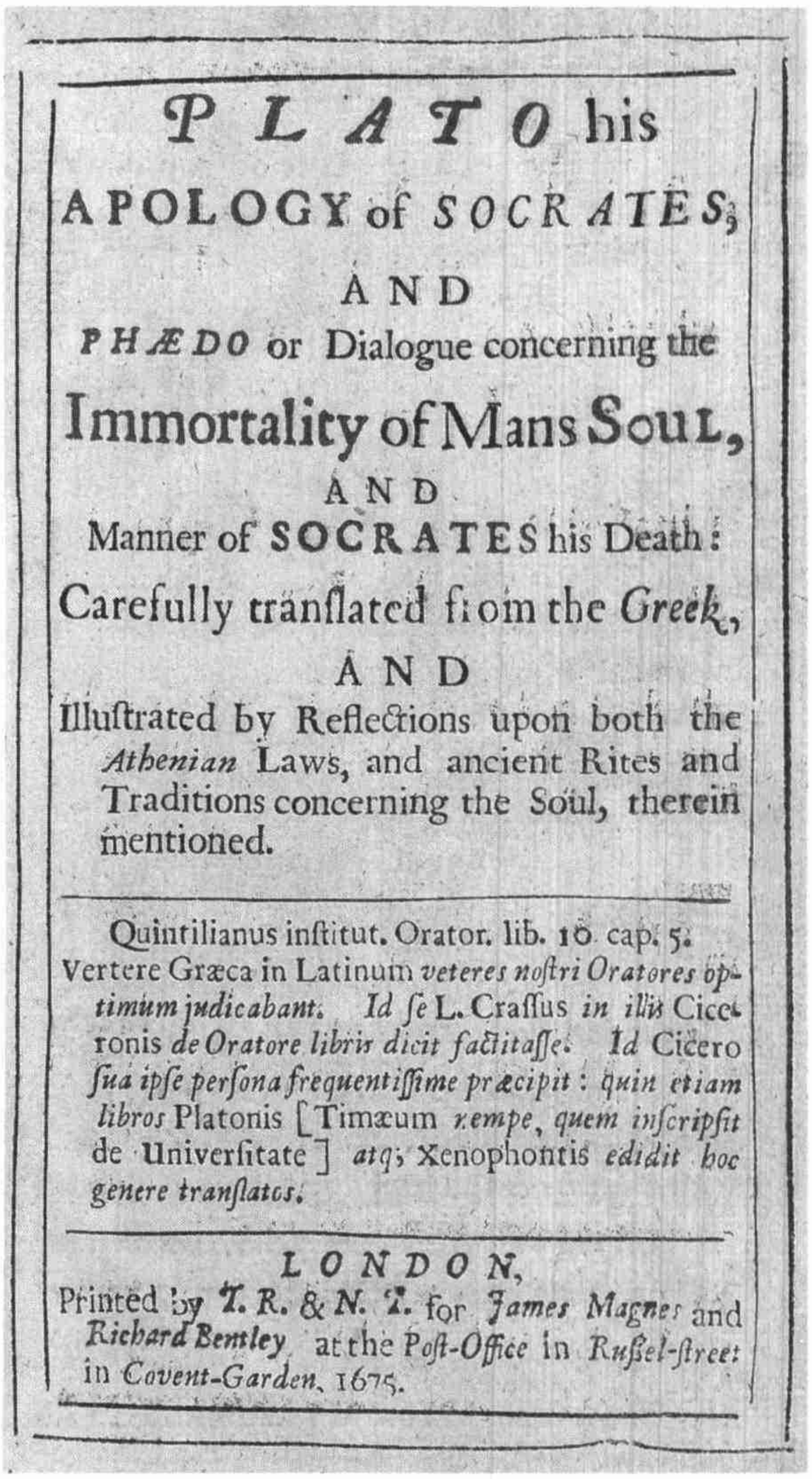
Already in the *Phaedrus* traces of elements that become commonplaces of the later period begin to be seen, in particular what has come to be known as the "method of collection and division" referred to in the *Phaedrus* at 265e. Certain stylometric data also place the *Phaedrus* even after the two dialogues widely regarded as transitional to those of the late period, the *Parmenides* and *Theaetetus.*

Each of these dialogues seems to signal, in various ways, the beginning of a break with the doctrines and methods of the middle period. Particularly in the *Parmenides* some striking elements are found. The scene is set, in the prefatory banter of the dialogue, well in the past, at a time when the great Eleatic philosophers, Parmenides and Zeno, came to the Panathenaic Festival in Athens. Parmenides was about sixty-five; Zeno was forty; and Socrates was "very young." A conversation is recalled in which Parmenides serves as a kind of refutative examiner of Socrates. Interestingly, what Socrates defends is a theory that looks exactly like the theory of Forms articulated in the middle dialogues. Parmenides, however, advances several arguments that raise what appear to be fatal objections to this theory.

Perhaps the most widely known of these arguments is what has come to be called the "Third Man Argument," in which Parmenides seems to show that the putative relationship (called "participation" in the middle period) by which particulars take on the characters of Forms (becoming imperfect images of these Forms) leads ultimately to an infinite regress if one thinks that the Forms exemplify the characters for which they are named. For example, if individual beautiful things are beautiful by virtue of their participation in the Form of Beauty, and the Form of Beauty is itself beautiful, there seems to be no obvious way to avoid the conclusion that what is common to both Beauty and the particular beautiful things must be that they all participate in some (other) Form, say, Beauty 2. But if Beauty 2 is beautiful, then it must be that what it has in common with the other beautiful things is participation in some further Form, Beauty 3, and so on. The oddity of a dialogue in which Plato seems to offer deadly criticisms of his own most celebrated metaphysical theory has received considerable scholarly attention, and the Third Man Argument in particular has been an object of detailed and subtle interpretation and controversy. And scholars have found the dialectical exchanges of the latter part of the dialogue even more difficult to comprehend, though many sophisticated accounts have been offered to explain them within a coherent Platonic philosophical plan.

The *Theaetetus,* on the other hand, seems less mysterious in its arguments (about knowledge and how to define it), but also seems to signify a break with Plato's middle-period approaches. Curiously, for example, the theory of Forms is never explicitly announced at all, though in the other middle-period dialogues the concept of knowledge was always articulated in a way that set knowledge in opposition to opinion and in relation to the Forms. Moreover, the dialogue has the general structure, recalled from the early period, of a dialogue of search – Socrates examines his interlocutors' opinions in a search for the definition of knowledge, a search that ends up in failure. The dialogue is, moreover, plainly linked with what all agree is a dialogue, the *Sophist,* that is characterized as the continuation on the following day of the discussion that constitutes the *Theaetetus.* But Plato identifies the dramatic order of these dialogues in such a way as to put the *Euthyphro* between the *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist,* because at the end of the *Theaetetus,* Socrates says he must go off to the king-archon's office to answer the charges by Meletus, where he has his encounter with Euthyphro, according to the *Euthyphro.* But the speakers of the *Theaetetus* also agree to meet at the same place on the following day, and the *Sophist* begins by recalling this agreement and stipulating that all concerned are there to honor this agreement of the day before.

The final group of Plato's dialogues, those generally considered the dialogues of his late period, are not as widely studied, and their doctrines are not as well known as the dialogues and doctrines of the early and middle periods. This is partly to be explained by the fact that the highly dramatic style characteristic of the early and middle dialogues gives way in the late period to extremely technical argumentation about what are often abstruse philosophical subjects. And though the length of the dialogue never seemed an impediment to readers of the *Republic,* the lengths of all of the late dialogues (other than the relatively short *Critias,* which is written as a sequel to the *Timaeus*) has seemed daunting to many of the same readers. Even Plato seemed aware of the fact that some of his late works were long and difficult: references to the


PLATO his
APOLOGY of SOCRATES,
AND
PHÆDO or Dialogue concerning the
Immortality of Mans Soul,
AND
Manner of SOCRATES his Death:
Carefully translated from the *Greek*,
AND
Illustrated by Reflections upon both the *Athenian* Laws, and ancient Rites and Traditions concerning the Soul, therein mentioned.

Quintilianus institut. Orator. lib. 10 cap. 5.
Vertere Græca in Latinum *veteres nostri Oratores optimum judicabant. Id se* L. Crassus *in illis* Ciceronis *de Oratore libris dicit facilitasse. Id* Cicero *sua ipse persona frequentissime præcipit: quin etiam libros* Platonis [Timæum *nempe, quem inscripsit* de Universitate] *atq;* Xenophontis *edidit hoc genere translatos.*

LONDON,
Printed by T. R. & N. T. for *James Magnes* and *Richard Bentley* at the Post-Office in *Russel-street* in *Covent-Garden*, 1675.

Frontispiece and title page for the first edition in English of one of Plato's earliest dialogues as well as the dialogue set on the day of Socrates' execution (courtesy of the Lilly Library, Indiana University)

great lengths or difficulties of these dialogues may be seen in such dialogues as *Critias, Sophist,* and *Politicus.*

Perhaps the earliest of the late dialogues is the *Sophist,* which, as just argued, was obviously written as the sequel to the *Theaetetus.* In the *Sophist* the participants from the earlier day's conversation return to the same spot, but a newcomer joins them on this day, a man who is never named but is said to be from Elea and a follower of Parmenides and Zeno. It is this "Eleatic Stranger" who conducts the discussion now, with the young Theaetetus as his interlocutor, while Socrates – quite uncharacteristically – observes silently from the sidelines. This "eclipse of Socrates" continues in what appears to be the next dialogue in this series, the *Politicus,* as well, with Socrates returning only in the ethical dialogue, the *Philebus,* which is not a part of the *Theaetetus-Sophist-Politicus* series. The *Sophist* dialogue seeks to define the nature of sophistry, which it does by identifying the Sophist as a kind of image-maker and a trader in falsehood. But the idea of falsehood is itself a problem – if it is "what-is-not," it would appear to be nothing at all and could not be spoken. Thus, a long discussion of not-being is undertaken, during the course of which Plato develops a conception of reality altogether different from that of the middle-period theory of Forms.

In the *Politicus* the same group of speakers and observers are reconvened; Theaetetus is relieved of his post as the answerer of questions; and a different young man (also named Socrates) takes over, who had before been one of the observers, as the older Socrates and the others attend and the Eleatic Stranger continues to lead. In this dialogue an account of the true statesman is offered, and the Ele-

atic Stranger proposes to employ the same method for the search that produces the account as he used in the former discussion – the celebrated method of the late period known as "collection and division." The Eleatic Stranger collects the instances that seem to have common characteristics and then divides them into kinds until they cannot be further subdivided, with the statesman revealed at the end of one of the subdivisions. It has been a significant interest among scholars to compare the doctrines of this dialogue to Plato's earlier great political work, the *Republic,* as well as to the dialogue he is said to have left just barely finished at his death, the *Laws,* in which what he explicitly calls a "second best state" (as opposed to the best of the *Republic*) is described at great length.

The *Philebus* employs the method of division – here explicitly tied to the Pythagorean principles of the Limited and Unlimited – to distinguish between kinds of pleasure in a lengthy argument about the nature of the good. Philebus and his defender Protarchus argue the view that pleasure is *the* good. Socrates first seems to want to counter that knowledge is indeed the good, but soon suspects that some mixture of knowledge and pleasure is best. Classifications of pleasures and pains are offered, as well as classifications of knowledge. At the end a fivefold classification scheme for good is offered, with moderation, fitness, and kindred things at the top and the pure pleasures at the bottom.

The *Timaeus* begins with what appears to be a recapitulation of the *Republic* and is dramatically placed on the following day. It may be seen as having three main sections: the prologue, in which Plato gives what is now the illustrious legend of Atlantis (attributing it to Solon); the central section, in which the construction of the universe is detailed; and the final section, in which the construction of the human soul and body is explicated. The myth of Atlantis is continued in the unfinished dialogue intended to be the sequel to the *Timaeus,* the *Critias.*

The *Timaeus* is probably best known for its account of the creation of the universe by the Demiurge, a creator not in the sense of the Judeo-Christian God who created ex nihilo, but rather in the sense of one who puts organization into what was before only chaos. Imitating the Forms, the Demiurge crafted their likenesses in matter, aiming always – much like the philosopher-rulers of the *Republic* – at whatever is best. For the first and only time in Platonic philosophy, one is told here about the substrate of instantiation, sometimes called "Platonic matter," that which underlies the copies on which the patterns of the Forms are imprinted. Plato takes from Empedocles the four elements – fire, air, water, and earth – claiming that what he calls the Body of the Universe is made from various compounds of these; but unlike Empedocles, who appears to regard these elements as basic, Plato proclaims them to be composed of various aggregates of triangles. Though presented in mythic form, Plato's *Timaeus* offers a rich and occasionally bewildering variety of explanations of natural phenomena, including those phenomena that would now be assigned to physics, astronomy, chemistry, and biology.

Death came to Plato before he was able to complete the *Laws.* Diogenes Laertius in his *Lives* reports that the work was left in an unfinished state, written on wax tablets, and only copied out later by Phillipus of Opus. The *Epinomis,* included among the spuria, appears to be an appendix to the *Laws,* but it is generally agreed to have been written by some later author. The *Laws* is the longest of Plato's works and provides a highly detailed blueprint for a city: a blueprint, as noted earlier, intended to be more practical than that proposed in the idealistic *Republic.* In the *Laws,* remarkably, Socrates is not even presented as being among those present for the discussion. Taking the lead in this dialogue is, instead, an "Athenian Stranger."

Diogenes reports that two women, Lastheneia of Mantinea and Axiothea of Phlius, were among the students at the Academy who survived Plato, which, if true, can be taken as a measure of Plato's sincerity in advocating equal opportunity and education for women in book 5 of the *Republic.* Plato's nephew Speusippus took over the Academy after Plato's death. Other Platonic disciples are said to have included Theophrastus, Hyperides the Orator, and Demosthenes. No doubt the most renowned of Plato's students, however, who stayed nearly two decades at the Academy before departing at Plato's death, was the extremely prolific philosopher Aristotle, who was, however, in many ways highly critical of many of Plato's best-known theories.

The Academy continued for centuries after Plato's death, though its members deviated from Platonic teachings in several striking ways. Within a century (circa 276 B.C.) the school had become a center for the philosophy of the Skeptics under Archesilaus. Revivals of some versions of Platonism were undertaken both at the Academy itself under Antiochus of Ascalon (circa 87 B.C.) and elsewhere (for example, the "Middle Platonism" of the same time in Athens and Alexandria, which included Plutarch). So-called Neoplatonism began with Plotinus (circa A.D. 205–A.D. 270) in Rome and continued

until Justinian closed the pagan schools in A.D. 529. The Neoplatonic movement included Plotinus's student Porphyry (232–circa 305), Iamblichus (circa 250–circa 325), and Proclus (circa 410–485). In many obvious ways Neoplatonism continued to provide a significant source of ideas for later medieval thinkers.

Plato's influence, though transformed and reshaped by the Middle Platonists and Neoplatonists, can almost certainly be found later in the conceptions of the temporal order and eternity in Augustine and Boethius, and in other ways among the medieval rationalists, especially Anselm. The Platonic conception of knowledge as deriving from and secured by innate and infallible cognitive capacities, which make contact with a truth or reality that is independent of the human senses, continues after the Enlightenment in the philosophies of what have come to be known as the Continental Rationalists, most notably René Descartes, Benedict de Spinoza, and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, and it echoes even later in the transcendentalism of Immanuel Kant, the British idealists, Francis Herbert Bradley and John M'Taggart Ellis M'Taggart, and later still in the American transcendentalists, especially Ralph Waldo Emerson.

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Plotinus

(A.D. 204 – 270)

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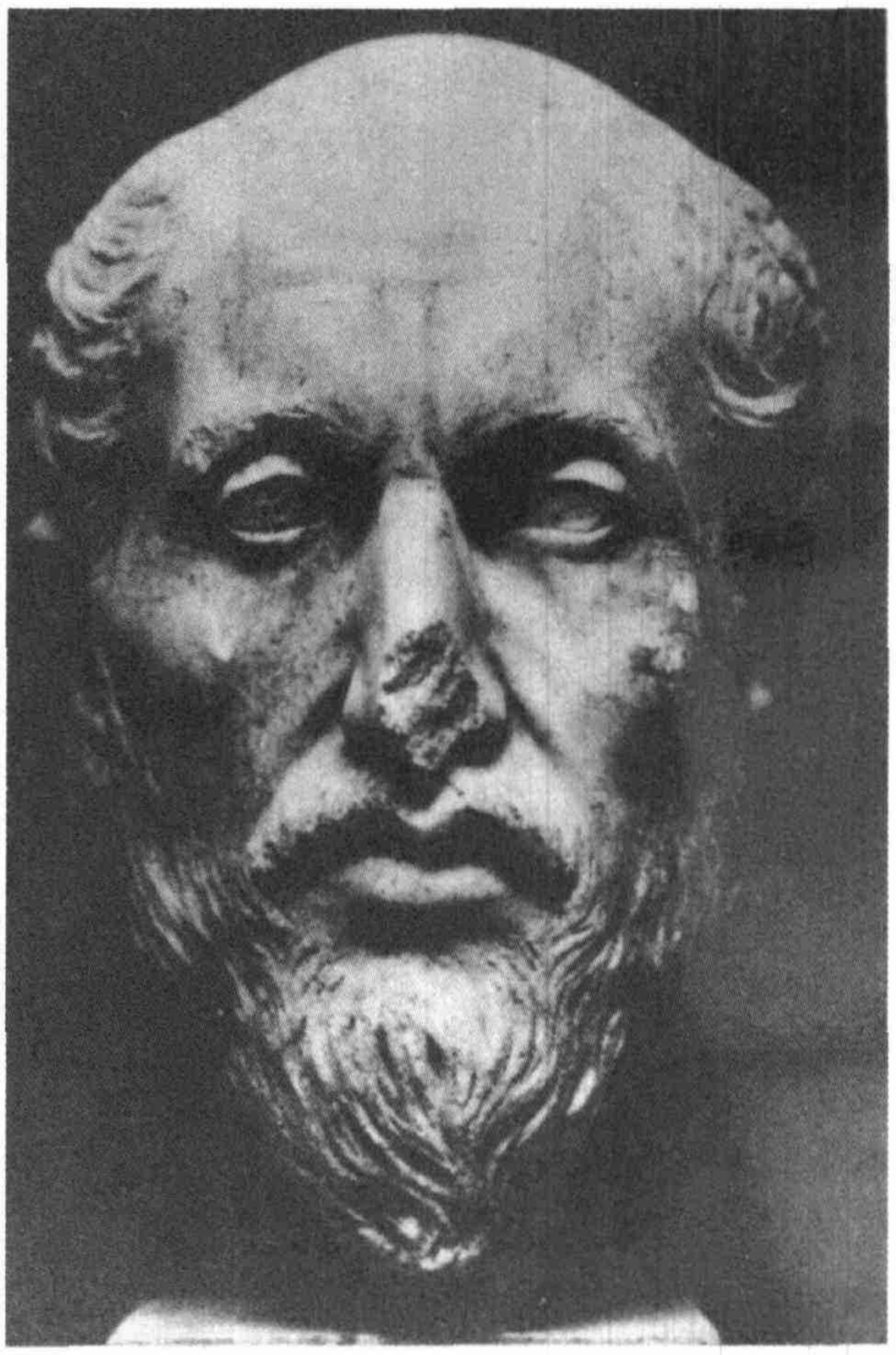
MAJOR WORK: *Enneads* (A.D. 253–270)

Editio princeps: *Plotini . . . operum philosophicorum omnium libri ix in sex enneades distributi* (Basel: P. Perna, 1580).

Standard editions: *Plotini Opera,* three volumes, edited by Paul Henry and Hans-Rudolf Schwyzer: *Enneads* I–III, volume one (Brussels: Edition Universelles, 1951); *Enneads* IV–V, volume two (Brussels: Edition Universelles/Paris: Desclée de Bouwer, 1959); *Ennead* VI, volume three (Paris: Desclée de Bouwer/Leiden: Brill, 1973); *Plotinus,* 7 volumes, edited and translated by A. H. Armstrong, Loeb Classical Library (London: Heinemann/Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966–1988).

Translations in English: *The Enneads,* translated by Stephen MacKenna, fourth edition, revised by B. S. Page (London: Faber & Faber, 1969).



Plotinus (Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris)

Plotinus, the founder of Neoplatonism, was the last profoundly creative thinker of the ancient pagan world. He was an original and penetrating interpreter of Plato, and his importance in the history of ideas rests on his formulation of a new version of Platonism that made it a credible and satisfying option in a world that had changed considerably since Plato's own day. In this version, to be sure, much of what Plato himself considered important virtually disappears. But while losing something of the range of Plato's thought, Plotinus focuses and enriches an aspect of that thought that has always been its most inspirational feature, namely, the Athenian philosopher's defense of his confidence in the superior value and reality of another world, a "higher" realm in which everything that is deficient, ephemeral, and incomplete in the "lower" realm of sense is overcome.

The key interpretive move that enabled Plotinus to push such otherworldliness to the center of a coherent Platonism was his "psychologizing" of Plato's metaphysics: the equation of Plato's higher and lower realms of reality with different states of consciousness available to the soul. There were other distinctive interpretations of Plato in the ancient world, notably those of the Old Academy and Middle Platonism, but the Neoplatonism inaugurated by Plotinus is the only one that has continued to exert a living influence on later generations of thinkers.

However universal its appeal, Plotinus's thought is certainly a reflection of the transitional

age in which he lived. The third century was the period in which classical Greco-Roman civilization – though not destined to die for some time yet – finally lost any chance of rehabilitating itself. Plotinus's life falls entirely within the so-called Time of Troubles, which lasted from the death of the emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus in A.D. 180 to the accession of Diocletian in A.D. 284, a period of great social turmoil within the Roman Empire and military pressure from without. The average emperor during Plotinus's lifetime could look forward to less than three years on the throne, a reign that often ended in assassination. The empire was in the throes of a long economic decline, and measures that were adopted to control the situation only hastened the collapse of the cities, whose vitality had rendered such a distinctive contribution to classical culture. The empire was no longer capable of mustering a creative response to these challenges, and the century exhibited an essentially imitative culture, marked by a reverence for anything claiming an ancient pedigree, a trend toward commentaries as the favored form of philosophical discourse, and the increasing decadence of the arts.

With the material and social order providing such diminished satisfactions, it is no surprise to find more and more people looking elsewhere for consolation. The Greek scientific tradition was in retreat before a growing popular belief in magic and astrology, and the traditional civic religion was abandoning the field to exotic mystery cults from the East that won their converts over with claims to universality and offers of personal salvation. Christianity was one beneficiary of this trend; a revived Platonism was another. As for the latter, it was clearly the otherworldliness of Plato that was most in harmony with the spirit of the age, while such prominent Platonic themes as Socratic doubt and political idealism had little appeal.

This was the world in which Plotinus made his unique contribution to Western thought. The primary source for his life is the biography that his disciple Porphyry composed by way of preface to an edition of the master's works in A.D. 301, thirty-one years after Plotinus's death. Its opening lines at once give a vivid impression of the hero of the biography, as well as the difficulties faced by his biographer: "Plotinus, the philosopher of our times, seemed ashamed of being in the body. As a result of this state of mind he could never bear to talk about his race or his parents or his native country" (*Vita Plotini* [Life of Plotinus]). This reticence on the part of the master has the expected consequence: with the exception of a few tidbits Plotinus evidently dropped in conversation over the years, what Porphyry offers to posterity is primarily a picture of the great man as he was during the last third of his life, after he had settled in Rome and become the center of an admiring philosophical circle, of which Porphyry himself was a member for five years.

Plotinus died in A.D. 270: that fixes the year of his birth at around A.D. 204, if one accepts as reliable the claim of his physician, Eustochius, that he was sixty-six years old at the time of his death. Plotinus does not even enter Porphyry's biography until the age of twenty-eight, when he appears in Alexandria, the chief city of Egypt. Where he came from is not told, but the traditional view has always been that Plotinus was an Egyptian by birth. Though there is virtually no evidence to support this view, other than the sheer weight of tradition, it has been generally accepted in the absence of evidence to the contrary. It is also believed that Plotinus's background must have been upper-class and thoroughly Hellenized.

What brought Plotinus to Alexandria in 232 was a desire to study philosophy. How long this desire had been growing within the young Plotinus, whether it expressed itself in any form earlier in his life, or what finally precipitated the move to Alexandria when he was in his late twenties is not known. But Alexandria, as the premier seat of learning in the Roman Empire and the home of numerous competing schools of philosophy, was certainly a natural destination for someone with Plotinus's turn of mind. His hopes, however, were initially frustrated, as the more renowned teachers whose lectures he attended during his first few months in the city fell short of his evidently high expectations. He could well have abandoned his incipient quest for wisdom at this point, had not a friend recommended to him a teacher by the name of Ammonius Saccas. Ammonius obviously made a favorable impression on Plotinus, since he remained his student for the next eleven years.

Ammonius is a figure of considerable interest to classical scholars, not because of anything he wrote, since he wrote little or nothing, but because of his influence as a teacher. Whatever personal, pedagogical, or intellectual qualities attracted to him a demanding student of the caliber of Plotinus, the same qualities attracted other outstanding students as well, including Longinus, the scholarly Platonist and literary critic who later

taught at Athens, and the two Origens: Origen the Pagan and Origen the Christian (who are generally thought to be two distinct persons, despite the similarity of name). The latter Origen was the most impressive systematic theologian that Christianity produced before the time of Saint Augustine, and any interaction he may have had with Plotinus would be of the greatest interest to scholars. Unfortunately, he seems to have left Egypt the year before Plotinus arrived in Alexandria, the result of a falling out with the local bishop.

The teacher of the greatest pagan and the greatest Christian thinker of the third century is a man about whose own views little is known. Ammonius is supposed to have been raised as a Christian and later to have converted to paganism. The philosophical position he eventually adopted can be located well within the Platonic tradition of the time and included a belief in the immateriality of the soul and the basic compatibility of Plato and Aristotle; he may have had more-esoteric interests as well. It is a reasonable assumption that the formative years spent under his instruction are what instilled in Plotinus a conviction of the essential normativeness of Plato's thought. Ammonius's rank within the academic establishment of Alexandria, at least as judged by the conventional standards of the time, was apparently not high, since Plotinus did not hear about him until he had been in the city almost a year; but to serious seekers after wisdom he evidently had much to offer. In his lectures Ammonius seems to have adopted an undogmatic approach, and open-ended discussion was encouraged. Thus, he conveyed to his students a sense of philosophy as a dynamic involvement with ideas, in contrast to the stale glossing of texts that was then the norm in the schools, and this may be in large measure what attracted Plotinus to him in the first place.

Sometime during this long period under Ammonius's tutelage Plotinus developed a desire to learn more about the philosophies of Persia and India. In 243 an opportunity arose for him to act on that desire. The emperor Gordian III was leading an army against the Persians, and Plotinus managed to attach himself to the expedition, in what capacity is not known. Plotinus certainly had some idea, however vague, of the sort of wisdom the Orient might offer before he set out – he was hardly acting on a mere whim. Interest in oriental thought was widespread in the empire, partly on account of its great antiquity (which was felt to endow it with a certain authority), but also partly arising from a general taste for the exotic. Persia's proximity to the borders of the empire ensured that there would be at least some transmission of its ideas, and a popular cult among the Roman troops, that of Mithras, was Persian in origin. As for India, the information available to Plotinus would have been sketchier. Nevertheless, there had been contact between the Greek and Indian worlds over the centuries (of which the campaigns of Alexander the Great are perhaps the most notable example); and Alexandria, a cosmopolitan city lying on the trade route to the East, was particularly well situated for the accumulation of such lore.

The possibility of an "India connection" has proved the most intriguing to scholars. The essential message of the Hindu *Upanishads* (circa 900 B.C.) is that the individual self is fundamentally identical with the universal reality and that the conscious realization of this identity will lead to perfect peace. There are clear parallels between this theme and the ideas that Plotinus later expressed in the *Enneads* (A.D. 253–270). These parallels have brought forth two responses from scholars. The first tends to emphasize those aspects of Plotinus's thought that are utterly novel from the point of view of Western philosophy and then appeals to the obvious parallels with Hinduism as evidence that he must have come under the influence of Indian ideas at some point. The second insists on Plotinus's continuity with earlier thought, finding in his work a consistent, albeit unique, development of Platonic and other Hellenic ideas; the parallels with Hinduism are then attributed to the fact that human beings in diverse locales sometimes have similar experiences, so that there is nothing intrinsically implausible in the idea of a sensitive Greco-Egyptian of the third century developing the same desire for blissful union with the highest reality as is to be found in the Indian sages. Whichever of these interpretations is preferred, however, it is quite natural that Plotinus, given the problems that came to occupy his thinking during his time with Ammonius, should have been led to pursue a firsthand knowledge of the wisdom that lay beyond the eastern boundary of the empire.

It is doubtful that he learned much about India, at least during his time with Gordian. The troops revolted; the emperor was murdered; and Plotinus got away to Syria, evidently in some fear for his life. In 244 he arrived in Rome, just one year after his departure from Alexandria. Rome at this time was not especially noted as a center of philosophical activity, so that his choice of this destination remains something of a puzzle. If he had returned to Alexandria, he would have faced the choice of resuming his student relationship with

Ammonius or establishing a rival school in competition with his old teacher, and neither option could have been appealing to him. Perhaps, then, what recommended Rome to him was simply that it was not Alexandria and that he had contacts there who could help him get established. There have been suggestions that these contacts belonged to the senatorial class, which would explain why he was in such danger following the murder of Gordian (who came from a senatorial family) and how he was able to move so easily into the upper reaches of Roman society, attracting a circle of followers that included many senators and their wives; but this must remain the sheerest speculation. Whatever brought him there, he remained in the area of Rome for the remainder of his life, a period of twenty-six years.

Regarding this last phase of his life we have Porphyry's own testimony, as well as what he learned from others who had been with Plotinus longer. Plotinus stayed in Rome at the house of a lady named Gemina. At some point he began holding public lectures. The following passage from Porphyry's biography conveys some sense of the impression he must have made at these lectures: "When he was speaking his intellect visibly lit up his face: there was always a charm about his appearance, but at these times he was still more attractive to look at: he sweated gently, and kindliness shone out from him, and in answering questions he made clear both his benevolence to the questioner and his intellectual vigour" (*Vita* 13).

These lectures would begin, as was the norm in the schools of the period, with the reading of a text by a Platonist or Peripatetic commentator. Unlike most teachers, however, Plotinus had little interest in a scholarly exegesis of these commentaries, employing them instead as a springboard for discussion of the philosophical issues they raised. To those accustomed to the formality of the other schools his style must have been frustrating on occasion. One discussion, driven along by Porphyry's persistent questioning of Plotinus regarding the relation of the soul to the body, went on for three days, eliciting a protest from one visitor who "wanted to hear Plotinus speaking in the manner of a set treatise" (*Vita* 13). Plotinus deflected the request as follows: "But if when Porphyry asks questions we do not solve his difficulties we shall not be able to say anything at all to put into the treatise." The influence of Ammonius, as well as the example of Socrates, is apparent in this reply.

Most of those who frequented Plotinus's school seem to have been visitors from the East; Porphyry, for example, was born in Syria and received philosophical training in Athens before coming to Rome. But many – like Amelius, a native of Etruria, who was Plotinus's closest associate – were Italians, and several of these, as mentioned earlier, were of senatorial rank. Of the latter, the senator Rogatianus is worthy of mention: Porphyry reports that he took Plotinus's teaching so much to heart that he declined the office of praetor when it was offered to him, gave away all his property, and adopted the life of an indigent sage. Connections with the imperial court, where Emperor Gallienus and his wife were among his admirers, encouraged Plotinus at one point to broach an intriguing scheme for the renovation of an abandoned town outside Rome, where a community of philosophers would live in accordance with the *Laws* (circa 347 B.C.) of Plato. It is unclear whether this was to have been a full-scale, self-sufficient polis of the sort described by Plato or simply a country retreat to which Plotinus and his students could retire as a refuge from the distractions of the city. In any event the plans for Platonopolis, as it was to have been called, failed to attract the requisite imperial support and were never carried out.

Plotinus's personal life was marked by a certain asceticism – Porphyry reports that Plotinus ate sparingly, got by with little sleep, and avoided the public baths. He was also a vegetarian, and it can be inferred that Porphyry's third-century A.D. treatise *On Abstinence* – the most acute defense of philosophical vegetarianism to survive from the classical period – reflects at least some of Plotinus's own ideas on this subject. His moral code was also fairly strict, and Porphyry recounts how Plotinus once came close to making a public show of his displeasure at a lecture where the speaker was defending the time-honored practice of sexual intercourse between master and pupil as contributing to the study of virtue.

His asceticism was not of an extreme variety, however: love of spiritual things entailed for him no hatred of material things. His disapproval of the public baths did not deprive him of the ministrations of masseurs, which he received in the privacy of the house where he was staying. Nor did the inward meditation he continuously engaged in render him ineffective or unwilling when it came to involvement in public affairs. Porphyry avers that he was "at the disposal of all who had any sort of acquaintance with him," (*Vita* 9) and his impartiality as an arbitrator made him much sought after in disputes. He was also appointed executor of the estates of several wealthy Romans and the guardian of their children, a responsibility he discharged with

great scrupulousness. Porphyry attributes his ability to combine a contemplative with a public life to his extraordinary powers of concentration, which he must have had in abundance if, as Porphyry adds, "his house was full of young lads and maidens" (*Vita* 9), the children of deceased aristocrats.

Something should also be said about his attitude toward religion. For him the road to God was inward and could be traveled only by the solitary individual. Thus, he had no use for the external rituals of the various religious cults. When Amelius invited him along to one of the feasts of the gods, Plotinus replied, "Let those beings come to me, not me to them" (*Vita* 10). Those who heard it were much impressed by this oracular utterance, though he probably meant only that gods who depended in this way on outward ceremonies were too trivial to engage his interest. He had much the same reaction to the magical arts. Porphyry reports two confrontations the master had with the occult, and Plotinus seems to have accepted the genuineness of such powers; but he showed little personal interest in exploring them.

He was generally tolerant toward the religious observances of his associates, but one religious system, Gnosticism, so exercised him that he devoted an entire treatise to its refutation. Gnosticism was an important religious current in the third century, appearing on occasion in the guise of a Christian heresy, and no attempt will be made here to adumbrate its rich content. Suffice it to say that Plotinus objected to its spiritually trivial system of salvation, its untidy farrago of superstitions, and its reliance on special revelation as a sort of lazy man's substitute for reason. Of course, most cults of the period had the same elements in various degrees. Perhaps what incited Plotinus's polemics against this particular set of beliefs is that it struck closer to home, in that some of his own students, as he complains in his treatise, "happened upon this way of thinking before they became our friends, and though I do not know how they manage it, continue in it." It must also be admitted that Gnosticism in some respects resembles a debased version of Plotinus's own system, and this undoubtedly contributed further to the special sense of urgency he felt in clarifying the differences between the two systems and exposing the defects of the inferior one.

In 268 Porphyry left Rome for Sicily; he had been feeling suicidal, and Plotinus suggested travel as a tonic. Shortly thereafter Plotinus, who had been the victim of persistent ailments throughout his life, began showing signs of the disease from which he was to die, probably some form of leprosy. Amelius was in Syria, and the circle in Rome began to break up as the degenerative effects of the disease made Plotinus's physical presence more and more repugnant to his remaining associates. He retired to a country estate outside Rome, where he spent his last months. His dying words to the doctor who attended him were, "Try to bring back the god in you to the divine in the All" (*Vita* 2).

Plotinus left a total of fifty-four treatises for Porphyry to compile. He wrote nothing during his first nine or ten years in Rome, perhaps owing to a Platonic distrust of the written word (reinforced by the example of Ammonius). When he did begin to write, the manuscripts were shared only with an inner circle who could be trusted to approach them in the proper spirit. It seemed to Porphyry that he composed each treatise beforehand entirely in his head, since "he wrote as continuously as if he was copying from a book" (*Vita* 8). Poor eyesight prevented him from revising anything once he had written it down, and Porphyry complains that he paid little attention to spelling and penmanship since "he was wholly concerned with thought" (*Vita* 14). His ideas are often expressed "in a tone of rapt inspiration" that verges on a stream-of-consciousness style, and it is fair to say that his writings will be most intelligible to those who already share to some degree his general vision of reality. But it is the abstractness of the questions he addresses, rather than any defect in his style, that accounts for the great difficulty he poses for the reader. Indeed, his style is perhaps most notable for the vivid imagery he deploys on those occasions when the ordinary resources of language become inadequate to the subject at hand.

Porphyry grouped the fifty-four treatises into six books of nine treatises each; hence the enneads, from the Greek word for nine. Porphyry arranged the *Enneads* by topic, rather than date of composition; nevertheless, he offers a rough outline of their chronological order in his biography of the master when he divides Plotinus's productive life into three periods, indicating which treatises were written in which periods. Twenty-one treatises were written during the ten-year period from 253 to 263, before Porphyry met Plotinus; twenty-four more were written while Porphyry was with him in Rome, from 263 to 268; finally, nine treatises were written during 268–270, the last two years of his life, while Porphyry was away in Sicily. A study of treatises from different periods shows much less change in Plotinus's ideas over time than one would ordinarily expect in the case of a complex system articulated during a span of seventeen years; indeed, each

treatise seems to presuppose all the rest. Rather than engage in subtle speculation about how these ideas might have developed in Plotinus's mind, it is best to approach his thought as a finished whole.

The major influence on Plotinus's thought was, of course, Plato. The traditional birthdays of Plato and Socrates were celebrated at the school with the reading of discourses by all the students who felt up to the task. The authority of Plato was beyond challenge – not because he was viewed as a quasi-sacred source of revelation, but because he was believed to have earned his status through the demonstrated acuity of his thought. Plotinus understood his own role simply as that of an interpreter of Plato's thought, working out in greater detail what was already implicit in the writings of his great predecessor. At the same time, Porphyry declares, he "states what he himself really feels about the matter and not what has been handed down by tradition" (*Vita* 14) – a sharp contrast with the contemporary heads of the school Plato himself had founded, the Academy in Athens, whose approach seemed to Plotinus more scholarly than philosophical.

A detailed account of Plato's philosophy can be obtained elsewhere in this volume, but the crucial foundation he laid for the ideas of Plotinus argues for at least a brief overview here. Plotinus had little interest in the social or political side of Plato's thought, the Platonopolis episode notwithstanding. What occupied his attention was Plato's metaphysics, for which the cleavage between a sensible world of physical objects and an intelligible world of ideal paradigms, or Forms, is fundamental. The intelligible realm alone is real in the highest sense, eternally changeless and thoroughly knowable; it is the proper object of thought. The sensible realm, in contrast, is a shifting shadowland in which mere opinion, based on sensory input, is all that can be hoped for (though some opinions, to be sure, are better than others). The sensible world is patterned after the intelligible, but its dispersion in space and time renders it an inferior copy of its model; to the extent that it "participates" in the intelligible world, however, it can be considered to achieve a facsimile of reality.

In Plato's view, the most important responsibility of human beings is the care of one's soul. The soul is immortal, not only outliving the body but preexisting it as well. It occupies a position midway between the intelligible and sensible worlds and to some extent takes on the character of whichever world most occupies its attention during this life. This choice of psychic focus determines the soul's fate after death, a fate that includes eventual reincarnation in a form appropriate to the soul's training in virtue (or lack thereof). The true philosopher, or lover of wisdom, will attempt to assimilate himself as much as possible to the higher world, a project in which some knowledge of that world (that is, of the Forms) is essential. Such knowledge – whether the Forms in question be mathematical, ethical, or of some other type – is available to the individual a priori, a thesis that Plato expresses in his theory of "learning as recollection." According to this theory, the most important knowledge (actually the only knowledge, since all else is strictly opinion) is already in an individual's possession at birth, though he does not realize it, and when one later learns about mathematics, ethics, and so forth, he is simply "recollecting" truths that lie dormant within him.

One further feature of Plato's system should be mentioned, if only because of the significance Plotinus attached to it. One Form – the Form of the Good – is accorded a superior status by Plato. Just as the Forms in general endow the sensible world with their quasi reality and quasi knowability, so the Form of the Good endows the other Forms with their superior reality and knowability. What, then, endows the Form of the Good with its reality and knowability? There is nothing that could possibly play this role, and Plato in the *Republic* (circa 385 B.C.) concludes that the Good is "not itself being, but transcends being in dignity and surpassing power." Moreover, in the well-known analogy in which Plato likens the role of the Good to that of the sun, one of the points of comparison between the two is that, just as the brightness of the sun, the very quality that accounts for its power to illuminate physical objects and render them visible, prevents the sun itself from being clearly visible to the naked eye; so the Good, in like manner, though illuminating the Forms and rendering them intelligible, is not itself intelligible to the "naked mind." This certainly makes it problematic to what extent the Good can be a Form at all, and the exact status of the Good became one of the principal questions to be debated by later Platonists. The investigations of Middle Platonists such as Albinus and Neopythagoreans such as Moderatus helped prepare the way for the solution that Plotinus himself would later offer to this conundrum.

This discussion of Plotinus's intellectual heritage cannot conclude without at least a brief comment on the contributions of Aristotle. Plotinus was thoroughly versed in the works of Aristotle, who had been the premier student of Plato at the Acad-

emy and whom Plotinus regarded as a highly perceptive Platonist who simply carried on the work of his teacher – a judgment that, if not quite on target, is at least closer to the mark than the popular impression of Plato and Aristotle as polar opposites. Plotinus was particularly indebted to Aristotle's theory of the two levels of soul, only the higher of which is immortal, a view that can be found in Plato but is not worked out by him in any detail. The immortal part of the soul is called nous, which may be thought of as mind or intelligence. The nous in the individual's soul is relatively self-sufficient, since its activity is directed upon itself (that is, upon the thoughts that it is engaged in thinking); it is this independence from externals that undergirds the possibility of its immortality. It is in Aristotle's God, the unmoved mover of the universe, that one encounters a perfect Nous, completely self-sufficient and eternally self-contemplative. This conception of God joined Plato's Form of the Good in shaping how Plotinus himself came to understand the highest reality.

Turning now directly to Plotinus's own philosophical doctrines, it is clear that Plotinus is one of the grand system builders in the history of Western philosophy and the diverse topics he touches on in the *Enneads* are all tied onto a central metaphysical structure. One of the salient features of this structure is its division into various levels called hypostases. Each hypostasis is the subject of a distinctive form of spiritual activity. Everything depends on such activity; thus, the hypostases that engage in it are constitutive of reality in the sense that, were they eliminated, nothing would be left.

Plotinus identified three primary hypostases: the One, Intelligence, and Soul. These correspond to the three levels of entities that made up Plato's higher realm. The One is equivalent to the Good, a designation that Plotinus also uses; Intelligence corresponds to the world of the Forms; and Soul is, of course, the counterpart of Plato's soul, which was assigned to the higher realm in virtue of a kinship with the Forms not possessed by ordinary physical objects. Despite the fact that the One is anomalous in ways that make it unrepresentative of the other hypostases, it is best to begin the excursion through the hypostases at the top.

The One is the God of Plotinus: it is the supreme reality and the highest focus of adoration. Everything else flows from the One and receives its measure of reality from the activity of the One. As the source of reality, the One is not simply greater in degree than other things; it is wholly other than they are, "existing beyond and above Being," so that it would be an equivocation to speak in the same breath of the One and other things as *both* being "real." Thinking of it as unreal, however, would also be misleading, and it is perhaps best to construe it as more than real, a hyperreality. As such, it completely evades the human capacity for understanding: "The One, as transcending Intellect, transcends knowing." This is not owing primarily to any mental inadequacies on the part of the individual (which in any case Plotinus believes can be overcome, as will be seen later); rather, it is a necessary consequence of the One's own nature.

This nature is wholly without limitation. This means, in the first place, that the One is indeterminate. "Being has, as it were, the form of Being, but the One is formless. It does not even possess the form which the intelligible possesses." *Form* refers here to specific characteristics or attributes, possession of which would limit the One unacceptably by determining it as this and not that. The One's lack of limitation means, in the second place, that the One is undifferentiated, void of all multiplicity. Multiplicity entails the differentiation of one thing from another, a difference that cannot be maintained unless the things in question are limited; but the One is limitless. Finally, it is this complete lack of limitation in the One, rather than the feebleness of human mental powers, that entails that the One is ineffable: it is not susceptible to analytical description, so that anything one comes to say about it will prove inadequate. "The One is in truth beyond all statement: any affirmation is of a thing; but 'all-transcending, resting above even the most august divine Mind' – this is the only true description, since it does not make it a thing among things, nor name it where no name could identify it." Plotinus is thus one of the principal sources of the tradition, so important in medieval theology, of the *via negativa:* the doctrine that it is not possible to say what God is, only what he is not. It would be a mistake to conclude from this that the One is negative in nature – that would hardly be in keeping with its perfection. It is true that its ineffability prevents any direct formulation of its positive character; but the via negativa can always be supplemented by the *via analogica,* the way of analogy, of which Plotinus makes such rich use.

Consider, for example, the relation of light to its source; in the tradition of Plato's analogy of the sun, Plotinus's writings are filled with such images. "The only reasonable explanation of act flowing from [the One] lies in the analogy of light from a sun," he writes. The sun illuminates other things, but one does not usually think of the sun as being it-

self illuminated. What makes it strange to think of the sun in this way is that being illuminated implies being illuminated by something. The sun is certainly not illuminated by anything outside itself, nor would it be correct to say that the sun is its own source of illumination; a flashlight might be rigged in such a way that its beam is reflected on itself through a series of mirrors, but the sun does not become visible to the human eye by shedding light on itself in this way. It would be more accurate to say that the sun *is* illumination; it is the source of illumination, rather than an illuminated thing. In like manner the One is the source of reality and intelligibility; that is its positive nature, unnegated by the fact that it is not itself intelligible or real in the way that other things are.

Plotinus, then, is in agreement with Plato, not only that things are intelligible just to the extent that they satisfy a criterion or standard of intelligibility, but that the standard that functions in this way cannot itself be intelligible. For example, Plotinus says of the One that "it is measure, not the measured." This statement highlights the One's normative role as the standard by which other things are judged and thus seems to say more about how the One is related to other things than it does about the One itself. What is of particular interest here, however, is what it means for something to play the role of standard. For example, the Standard Meter Bar in Paris is the measure by which other things are measured as fractions or multiples of meters. Yet the very determination of length that the Standard Meter Bar makes possible for other things is applicable only equivocally, if at all, to the Standard Meter Bar itself. This can be brought out by considering how odd it is to say that the Standard Meter Bar is itself one meter long. What standard could one rely upon in making such a judgment? "It is measure, not the measured." So understood, the impossibility of assigning a definite length to the Standard Meter Bar – or, by the same token, a determinate structure to the One – is seen to be something quite different from any sort of deficiency or negativity on the part of the transcendent standard.

All Greek philosophers – Platonists, Peripatetics, Epicureans, and Stoics alike – agreed that an essential, if not the definitive, element in the good is the notion of self-sufficiency, of independence from external circumstances. Systems that admitted different levels of reality also agreed that reality and goodness vary in direct proportion to each other, so that the more real a thing is, the more goodness it involves (and the greater its corresponding degree of self-sufficiency). A classic example of this principle at work is to be found in the God of Aristotle, which, because it is wholly involved in the eternal contemplation of its own thoughts, has absolutely no dependence on anything outside itself. But Aristotle set the criteria for genuine self-sufficiency so high that his "unmoved mover" would jeopardize its status if it undertook even the slightest action directed toward the temporal order; hence his doctrine that God imparts motion to the world only by functioning as an unmoved object of desire.

It is Plato, in the *Timaeus* (circa 350 B.C.), who found the words to reconcile the ideal of self-sufficiency with the notion of a cosmic creator: "Let us therefore state the reason why the framer of this universe of change framed it at all. He was good, and what is good has no particle of envy in it; being therefore without envy he wished all things to be as like himself as possible" (*Timaeus* 29e). Here self-sufficiency, construed as a lack of envy, proves no bar to creative activity, but actually spurs it on. Plotinus expresses the same thought as follows: "The One is perfect because it seeks for nothing, and possesses nothing, and has need of nothing; and being perfect, it overflows, and thus its superabundance produces an Other." Even a self-sufficient being would be less than perfect if it did not produce to the limits of its capacity. Plotinus typically expresses this creative act in terms of emanation metaphors: just as the nature of the sun is to give off rays of light, so the perfection of the One necessarily involves the emanation of reality. In keeping with its self-sufficiency, however, this activity leaves it undiminished.

At the same time as this productive activity is expressive of the One's perfection, it also represents a kind of fall from original grace. The second hypostasis, Intelligence, arises from the One's abortive attempt at self-cognition, an attempt that is necessarily doomed owing to the One's transcendence of all possible categories of thought. "It turns to itself and has vision; and this self-vision is Intelligence." This vision introduces a duality between subject and object, seer and seen, knower and known. Such multiplicity is incompatible with the unity of the One, and thus must be ejected from it. This is the logical mechanism underlying the emanation of reality from the One. But this emanation is only the "matter" from which the next hypostasis will come into being; it does not constitute itself as a full-fledged hypostasis until it begins the spiritual activity distinctive of its level, which is the contemplation of its source. It proves unequal to the task, however, as it must – after all, if even the One itself is incapable of contemplating the One in perfect unity, it is even

less likely that some inferior level of reality will succeed. So the contemplative effort directed toward its source is stillborn and results in a vision of the One broken up into a multiplicity of forms. These forms Plotinus calls Intelligences. The Intelligences are the counterparts of Plato's Forms, though there are some significant differences between the two. Plato construed the Forms as static and lifeless concepts, independent of the minds that may happen to be thinking about them. Later Platonists, however, came to interpret them as thoughts in the mind of God, and it is this development to which Plotinus is the heir. In his system the Intelligences are not only ideas or thoughts, they are also the thinkers of those thoughts; indeed, in Nous thinker and thought coincide.

The process whereby the One gave rise to Intelligence is now repeated at the next level. Intelligence engenders a new form of life below itself, possessing its own distinctive mode of contemplation. This new hypostasis – Soul – involves a further diminution in the primal unity. The emanation given off by Intelligence collects itself in contemplation of its source; but its power is diluted and it is unable to grasp Intelligence in its eternal simultaneity. It can only survey the Intelligences serially, and this limitation on its contemplative powers is the origin of time. Thus, the spiritual life flowing from the One first disperses itself logically into a plurality of eternal thoughts constitutive of Intelligence, and then disperses itself temporally into a plurality of moments constitutive of the history of Soul. Soul expresses itself both as the cosmic soul responsible for the governance of the world, and also as the individual souls which animate particular bodies. But the hypostasis of Soul is not merely a collection of discrete souls; rather, Plotinus speaks of it as a single psychic life, imitating in its own fashion the unity of the One, while nevertheless expressing itself through diverse channels. The communion of these various souls in universal Soul produces a kind of cosmic sympathy, which Plotinus appeals to in explaining what would be called "psychic phenomena" today.

Following Plato and Aristotle, Plotinus assigns to the soul a double (and sometimes a triple) nature. Living organisms are a composite of body and soul; the soul in this case is what accounts for those distinctive traits of appetition, locomotion, sensation, and the rest that distinguish a living body from one that is dead. Such activity, in Plotinus's scheme, is the function of the lower soul. The higher soul is completely unaffected by these bodily involvements of the lower soul and "dwells always in the upper region which illuminates and fills it." One's "true" self is the higher soul, unswervingly intent on its vision of Intelligence; nevertheless, most people, most of the time, identify themselves with the lower soul and become totally immersed in its life, unaware of the contemplation in which the higher self is continuously engaged. It appears, then, that the soul is the subject of two parallel lives, each of which is virtually autonomous with respect to the other. Yet this cannot be the end of the story, because this sharp division between a higher and a lower soul does not account for the mysterious "I" that ordinarily, but not necessarily, affiliates itself with the lower soul. Thus, Plotinus is led to posit yet a third element in the soul: "We are the principal part of the soul, which is the middle between two powers, a worse and a better, the worse being that of sense-perception, the better that of intellect." This is the part of a person that can direct its attention toward the lower or the higher, or be torn between the two.

Just as the individual soul, whose true self remains fixed in contemplation of Intelligence, nevertheless has a lower part involved in the affairs of the body, so Plotinus identifies a lower part within Soul itself, the hypostasis in which all individual souls are united. This lower level within Soul is called Nature, and Plotinus delegates to it roughly the same responsibilities that Plato assigned to the World-Soul in his *Timaeus*. It is in Nature that the last and weakest form of contemplation takes place. The mode of multiplicity that is superadded at this stage to the others acquired earlier (that is, logical and temporal multiplicity) is that of extension and dispersion in space. The result of this process is the production of material bodies. Nature animates these bodies, endowing the material universe with one final simulacrum of unity, the unity of a single organism.

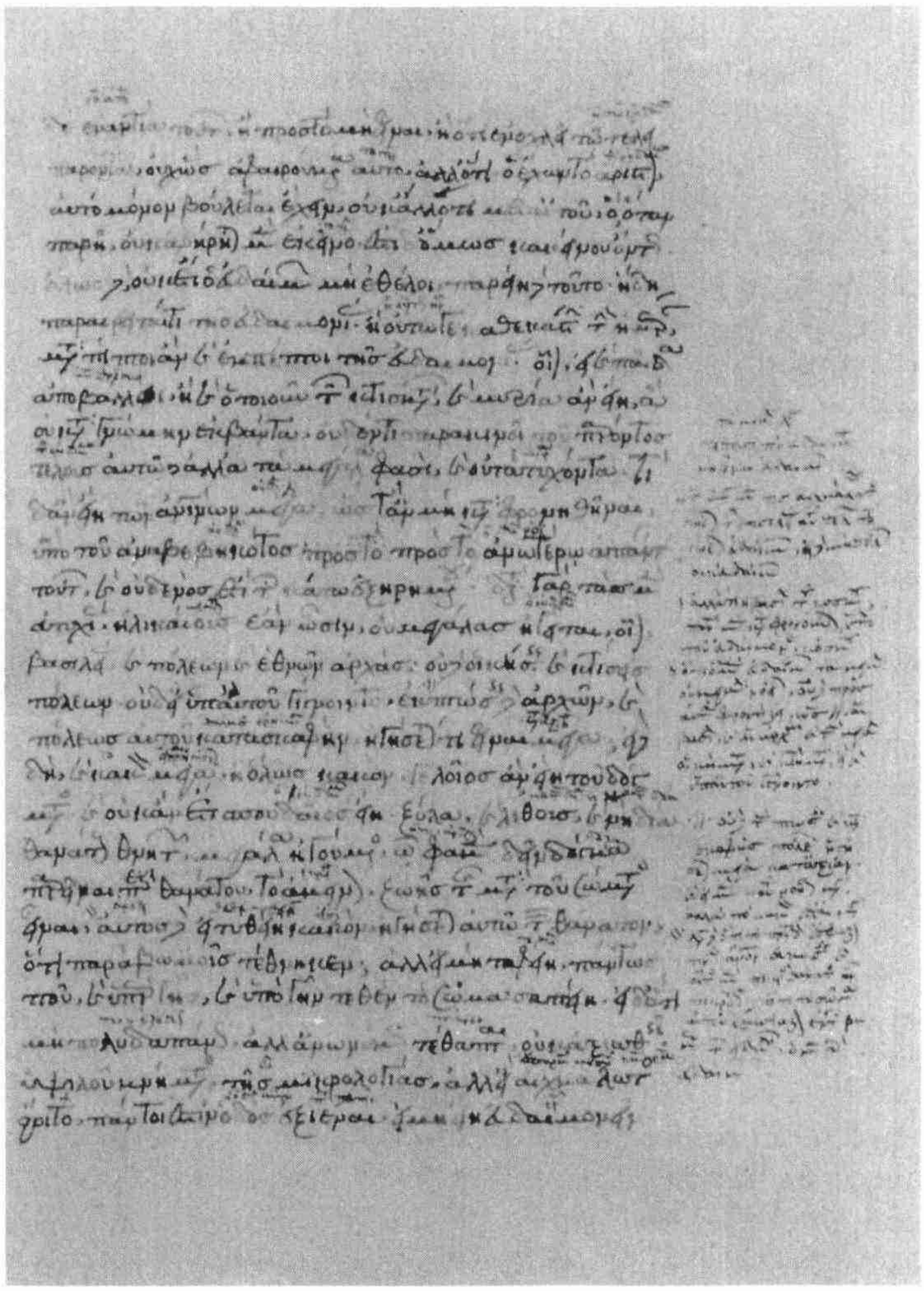
Material bodies are a composite of form and matter. Every stage thus far rehearsed in the emanation of hypostases from the One involved a dilution of reality, and it is in matter that the weakening of reality becomes complete. Matter is wholly negative and unreal. Unlike sheer nothingness, however, matter is a metaphysical principle that enters into the constitution of material bodies. Since reality and goodness vary in direct proportion to each other, the complete unreality of matter wins for it the role of absolute evil in Plotinus's system. But at the same time as Plotinus discovers in matter the locus of evil, he trades on its unreality in order to argue for the essential goodness of creation and to absolve the One of any tincture of defect for having brought the lower hypostases into existence. Plotinus offers here

the first clear expression in the history of Western thought of the "negative theodicy," a distinctive approach to the problem of evil that alleviates the conflict between a perfect God and an evil creation by analyzing evil as somehow negative and less than fully real. Saint Augustine and Saint Thomas Aquinas were later to formulate powerful versions of this theodicy, thus ensuring the vitality of this conception of evil within Christian theology. The matter that enters into material bodies, though evil, is nothing positive; what is positive in material bodies is their form, and this is good. Following Plato, Plotinus held that everything cognizable in the material universe is an expression of form. Nature is a *kosmos,* a harmonious order, that imitates the paradigms in Intelligence and shares (at two removes) in their goodness.

Thus, one comes to the end of the chain of hypostases. The metaphysical and epistemological deficiencies of the material universe, which led Plato to consider it a mere shadow world in comparison to the realm of the Forms, are gradually overcome as the chain of hypostases is ascended, until they are completely transcended in the self-subsistent unity of the One. Plotinus is a mystic, to be sure, but he is also a rationalist in the tradition of Plato and Parmenides. At the same time as he has developed and articulated his system as an expression of his own experience of the divine and an inner yearning for a higher and better world, he has also designed it to provide an explanation, even a deduction, of reality that will completely satisfy the demands of reason. The timeless process of emanation from the One is strictly necessary; there is about it nothing contingent that could leave unanswered the question of why things turned out as they did. The entire system, in fact, is a sophisticated development of the idea of the "great chain of being," the germ of which Arthur O. Lovejoy, in *The Great Chain of Being* (1936), found in Plato. Existence cannot belong merely to some arbitrary selection among possibilities, because that would imply an irrational preference for some possibilities over others; rather, every possibility must somewhere find its realization. "To this power," Plotinus says, "we cannot impute any halt, any limit of jealous grudging; it must move forever outward until the universe stands accomplished to the ultimate possibility."

With this survey of the hypostatic structure of reality completed, the question of how human beings fit into this picture, and what morals can be drawn for how individuals ought to lead their lives, can be considered. Plotinus was attracted to "the ancient teaching" that "every virtue is purification." The implication of this purification metaphor is that evil is external to the soul, marring its outward beauty while leaving its essence somehow untainted: "His ugly condition is due to alien matter that has encrusted him, and if he is to win back his grace it must be his business to scour and purify himself and make himself what he was." This understanding of the virtuous life meshes well with his theodicy, in which the locus of evil is external matter, and his account of the dual nature of the soul, in which one's true self is identified with the higher soul whose life of pure contemplation proceeds unhindered by the sensual affiliations of the lower soul. One's task in life is to choose aright, weaning oneself away from the body and its trivial concerns and turning toward the higher soul illumined by Intelligence. Such a view of the ideal human life is obviously quite close in spirit to the moral teachings of the Stoics; and while Plotinus rejected the Stoics' materialism, he was attracted to their doctrines that external goods are not required for happiness and that no real harm can come to a good man. His practical involvements in Rome, as revealed in Porphyry's biography, also fit the pattern of Roman Stoicism, which stressed the seriousness of an individual's social obligations, despite the emphasis on interiority that could have led so easily to an idealization of the life of a philosophical recluse.

But Plotinus's ethics go beyond that of the Stoics, and beyond any other purely ethical system, in the way in which he incorporates it into a mystical account of the soul's destiny. This destiny involves a return to the soul's original source in the One. There is a grand drama to this journey of the soul, since it is the counterpoint to the process whereby the lower hypostases came into being through emanation from perfect Unity, and thus confers upon Plotinus's system a final symmetry and completeness: what once went forth at last returns. In this return voyage the soul is sometimes said to take an upward path, while at other times its route is said to be inward. These are not, however, different roads to the same destination, but different metaphoric expressions for a single process, and Plotinus is not averse to employing both metaphors in the same passage: "When the soul begins to *mount,* it comes not to something alien but to its very *self*" (italics added). In general, that which is higher is to be found within one, though a person may not realize it (recall Plotinus's claim that the higher soul is active within a person even when that person is unaware of its operation). Indeed, it could be said that the realization of who one really is is the primary goal of Plotinian mysticism.



Page from a thirteenth-century manuscript text of Plotinus's Ennead I
(Ziskind Collection, Yale University)

Mystical experience in general involves an indescribable and overwhelming sense of the presence of the Absolute. Despite its ineffability, those who have had such an experience are rarely able to let it pass in silence, and it tends to be articulated in terms of whatever vocabulary a particular culture relies on for discussing the highest reality – for example, Christian mystics such as Saint Teresa of Avila and John of the Cross interpret the experience as an encounter with the God of the Bible, while Plotinus employs categories derived from Plato. In terms of the modern typology of mystical experience, the variety endorsed by Plotinus is introvertive and nontheistic in nature. In introvertive mystical experience, the mystic discovers the Absolute within himself after stripping away all the thoughts, sensations, desires, and other obstructions of consciousness that ordinarily mask Its presence; such an experience is contrasted with the extrovertive variety of mysticism, in which the mystic experiences a profound sense of oneness with the world outside himself. As for theistic versus nontheistic experiences, the former preserves the subject's sense of his ultimate distinctness from the Absolute, at the same time as his communion with the Absolute is so intimate that nothing further stands between them; while the latter involves a complete loss of one's own identity in that of the Absolute, so that one becomes, or discovers that one has been all along, that which one was seeking. Introvertive nontheistic mysticism is most closely associated with certain Eastern religions; but Plotinus is perhaps its purest Western representative.

Three features of Plotinus's metaphysical system are particularly pertinent to understanding how the mystical ascent is possible. In the first place, as was noted earlier, Plotinus offers a psychological interpretation of reality in which the various hypostases correspond to different levels of psychic activity (with suitable qualifications, as usual, in the case of

the One). "All life is some sort of thought which, like life itself, shows various degrees of strength. The supreme life is also the supreme thought, the life of the second rank is also thought of the second rank, and the last rank of life is also the last rank of thought." Everything whatsoever that can lay a claim to being real is engaged in some form of "thought" or "contemplation" (as he also terms it). This is not something that beings do, as it were, on the side – rather, contemplative activity constitutes the very nature of real beings, and the quality of the contemplation in which they are engaged defines the hypostatic level at which they live. Plotinus says, for example, that the soul that has "won its way" to the intelligible order "will be in contemplation of that order, and have its Act upon the things among which it now is; failing such Contemplation and Act, its being is not there." This carries an important implication for the possibility of the mystic ascent: if contemplation determines hypostasis, then the mystic's goal of assimilation to a higher level of reality may be achievable through the progressive development of one's contemplative abilities.

The second metaphysical underpinning for the mystic ascent concerns the nature of this contemplative activity. In every act of contemplation there is a contemplating subject and a contemplated object. Strictly speaking, the latter is always something within the contemplating subject: a thought, sensation, desire, and so forth. At the same time, however, such inner objects of contemplation also point beyond themselves (the thought that all lions are mammals says something about lions, a sensation of heat may alert the subject to the presence of fire, and hunger pangs indicate a desire for food). In short, the objects toward which contemplative activity is directed are inner representations of reality. Such inner objects in themselves are simply present to the one who has them; they are neither more nor less intimate or external. As representations, however, they may differ substantially in their integrity: the reality they represent may be more or less distant from the contemplator, and the account they offer of that reality may be more or less adequate. Those representations that constitute the content of a lower hypostasis are considered to be mere reflections, images, or copies of some higher hypostasis. Ultimately, of course, all objects of contemplation are representations of the One and are to be adjudged by the adequacy with which they represent the One's unity, creativity, self-sufficiency, lack of limitation, and so forth. This serves to clarify further the nature of the mystic ascent as the contemplation of ever more adequate representations of the One.

Even assuming a contemplator whose mode of life is determined by its thought and whose position in the hierarchy of reality is defined by the adequacy of its vision of the One, the universe could just as well be a place of utter stasis. What an account of mystic ascent must explain is how movement (upward or inward) can be a genuine possibility. The final ingredient in Plotinus's mysticism addresses this issue by holding that each level of reality below the One, along with its associated species of contemplation, contains within itself the marks of its own inadequacy. Plotinus holds that all contemplators have available to them an incipient awareness of some higher standard with respect to which they fall short. Knowledge of such a standard serves to motivate the turn toward the mystic life, provide a goal toward which to strive and a criterion by which to measure progress, and even supply the focus for the contemplation whose progressive adequacy constitutes the soul's ascent. Plato, for whom an evaluation of the sensible world in accordance with supersensible standards is also of considerable importance, explains the individual's access to these standards by means of his theory of "learning as recollection." In a similar fashion Plotinus appeals to the half-forgotten memory all persons carry of their divine origin. Anyone aspiring to return to this divine source "will have to be introduced to philosophy by arguments that will lead him to be convinced of truths which he possessed in himself without knowing." Two sorts of arguments are especially useful for this purpose: "The one consists in showing [the soul] the low value of the things she at present esteems. The other consists in instructing and reminding her of her nature and worth." Thus fortified, the soul may begin to free itself from the seductive pull of the sensual order and turn its attention toward the development (which, in Plotinus's view, is simply the clearer recollection) of those traces of the higher realms that it discovers within itself.

For Plotinus, then, the mystic ascent begins with the instability and disunity that obtain between the contemplator and its inner representations, on the one hand, and the higher realities to which these representations point, on the other. Most people, in Plotinus's estimation, respond to the "human condition" by turning a deaf ear to any intimations that their psychological completeness is not what it seems, endeavoring instead to fabricate a false unity in which the self is identified wholly with the lower soul – a move that denies all connection between

the lower soul and anything higher by which it could be critiqued. But a few respond to "the sounds from above," turn from the fragmented world of sense, and devote their lives to the pursuit of an authentic unity. This goal, if diligently pursued, involves the progressive unification of contemplating subject and contemplated object: "contemplation ascends from nature to soul, and soul to intellect, and the contemplations become always more intimate and united to the contemplator." The soul's ascent, then, must terminate with the coincidence of representation and object represented, which occurs for Plotinus at the level of Intelligence. Intelligence is "thought thinking itself," in which the conceptions that constitute thought "are the very things of which They are the conception, and achieve the union of intelligible object and subject." This yields a genuine unity and stability quite unlike the inferior (though seductive) facsimile the lower soul is prepared to offer in its place.

This is not, however, the end of the story. "Thought thinking itself" marks the limit of the mystic path only to the extent that the mechanism of ascent can be intelligibly described – that is, only to the extent that the mystic ascent remains rational rather than genuinely mystical. But Intelligence bears within itself the image of a superior Unity beyond itself, one that (unlike Intelligence) offers no purchase even to the barest logical distinctions. "The self thus lifted, we are in the likeness of the Supreme: if from that enlightened self we pass still higher – image to archetype – we have won the Term of all our journeying." To approach this highest reality, the soul must become a perfect mirror, undistorted and untroubled, even by discursive thought. The seeker who remains on the upward path to the very end "is changed, no longer himself nor self-belonging; he is merged with the Supreme, sunken into it, one with it: centre coincides with centre." Porphyry reports that Plotinus achieved this final goal of the mystic quest on several occasions (*Vita* 23). Since, in taking this last step, the mystic passes beyond the realm of intelligibility, the experience of union with the One is strictly incommunicable. It is, however, the culmination of everything Plotinus taught, and it is fitting that the final treatise of the *Enneads* should end with a peroration on the "flight of the alone to the alone." Thus, Plotinus's survey of the structure of reality comes full circle: the soul returns to the Alone through knowing itself at last to be Alone.

With this overview of the metaphysical and psychological teachings of the *Enneads* in place, Plotinus's thoughts on art and beauty may be considered. The ancients' contribution to aesthetics consisted largely of various versions of the mimetic theory: that art is best understood as an imitation (mimesis) of something outside itself. Plotinus is no exception to this general tendency, and his position should here, as always, be compared and contrasted with that of Plato.

"Imitation" is a broad rubric, and much depends on what is being imitated and how imitation itself is understood. As is well known, Plato employed the mimetic theory in support of a generally negative appraisal of art. Though Plato celebrates a supersensible beauty in the *Symposium* (circa 370 B.C.), and extends to lower forms of beauty some degree of value to the extent that they advance one toward the contemplation of beauty itself, the work of art is assigned no privileged role in this process. To understand Plato's position here, one must recall that the world of nature is already an imitation of a reality outside itself, namely, the world of Forms. His criticism of artists, then, is that they can only produce an imitation of an imitation, so that all Plato's complaints regarding the original imitation (that is, nature) will be doubly true of the derivative imitation (that is, art). What this critique presupposes, however, is a particular view of the mimesis at work in art: that the object of imitation is a natural object or occurrence disclosed to the senses, and that the point of imitation is the "photographic" reproduction of this object.

In book 10 of the *Republic* Plato conjures up an artist who is painting a picture of a bed. The bed, of course, is already an imitation of the ideal Form of Bed. The latter is the perfect standard for what makes something a "good bed," and the good bedmaker will "look up" to this standard as the pattern for his work, endeavoring to exemplify it as well as possible within the limits of his skill, the suitability of the material at hand, and so forth. When the artist then makes a picture of this bed, he produces something that exists at "three removes from the truth," where "the truth" is the intelligible Bed that exists in the world of Forms. If there is a single line of mimetic descent from the Form of Bed to particular bed to picture of a bed, with the Form of Bed serving in exactly the same way as the criterion for bed and picture alike, then Plato's low estimation of art is a necessary consequence: no matter how short the frame, how uneven the legs, how squeaky the springs, how lumpy the mattress, every real bed will make a better bed than will a picture of a bed.

One response to Plato is to challenge his assignment of the locus of reality and value to a supersensible world, with art as just one of the many sen-

sible enterprises that suffers as a result. Since this is Aristotle's general criticism of Plato, Aristotle's aesthetics can be expected to be more satisfactory than Plato's on this score; and this has certainly been the judgment of posterity. In Aristotle's metaphysics, the forms become embedded in material objects, rather than enjoying a separate, unenmattered existence. Since they are present in the artist's model, there is nothing to prevent the discerning artist from treating them as the true objects of mimesis. The artist, like the scientist, does not have an indiscriminate interest in objects per se – that is, the sculptor is not interested simply in human bodies; the tragic poet is not interested simply in historical events; and so forth. Rather, he focuses his artistic skill on those features of the object or event that best bring out the "universal in the particular," thereby making available for the aesthetic appreciation of others what was already present in less striking form in the artist's original model.

Aristotle's account of art is certainly closer to what artists are actually engaging in than Plato's portrait of artists slavishly imitating whatever lies before their eyes. Plotinus's problem was to find a way to rehabilitate art – to take art on its own terms, as Aristotle had – but to do so without abandoning Platonism. The obvious solution is to overhaul, not Plato's metaphysics, but his impoverished conception of mimesis. For Plotinus, aesthetic mimesis does not focus primarily upon physical particulars, nor aspire to the mere "photographic" replication of them:

> The arts are not to be slighted on the ground that they create by imitation of natural objects; for we must recognize that they give no bare reproduction of the thing seen but go back to the Ideas from which Nature itself derives, and, furthermore, that much of their work is all their own; they are holders of beauty and add where nature is lacking. Thus Pheidias wrought the Zeus upon no model among things of sense but by apprehending what form Zeus must take if he chose to become manifest to sight.

One implication of this passage is the centrality of imagination in artistic creation. The artist, like the philosopher, goes beyond the mere outward appearance of things to grasp the archetypes after which all things are patterned; he creates out of a vision of Ideal Beauty, not from a mere visual perception of "what things look like." Moreover, what he creates is like Nature in being an imitation of the Intelligible – it is not at a further remove from truth, but at the same remove from truth as Nature herself. In the metaphysical order of things Art and Nature are on a par. Indeed, on some counts the advantage may belong to art: since the artist is manipulating his materials in the deliberate service of his vision of Ideal Beauty, the artwork can offer a more concentrated reflection of the transcendent than is normally to be found in the natural world, thus "add[ing] where nature is lacking." In sum, the artist assumes the exalted role of the divine artisan in the *Timaeus,* who mediates between intelligible and sensible reality.

The beauty of a work of art, of course, lies in its form. "Now it must be seen that the stone thus brought under the artist's hand to the beauty of form is beautiful not as stone; for so the crude block would be as pleasant – but in virtue of the form or idea introduced by the art. This form is not in the material; it is in the designer before ever it enters the stone." Plotinus discusses, and then dismisses, the claim that different principles may account for the formal beauty possessed by different kinds of objects. All value, like all reality, is a product of the One, and objects from the world of sense are endowed with the value of beauty to the extent that they imitate the unity of the One. "We hold that all the loveliness of this world comes by communion in Ideal Form. . . . But where the Ideal Form has entered, it has grouped and co-ordinated what from a diversity of parts was to become a unity: it has rallied confusion into co-operation: it has made the sum one harmonious coherence: for the Idea is a unity and what it moulds must come to unity as far as multiplicity may." The beauty of a thing, then, is the way in which it manifests unity. The work of art expresses the "indivisible exhibited in diversity," the "immanence of the eternal in the temporal."

Although the individual work of art acquires in this way an integrity that Plato denied it, Plotinus is still a thoroughgoing Platonist, so that the beauty of particular objects of sense must be inferior to that higher beauty of which it is the reflection. "Harmonies unheard in sound create the harmonies we hear," Plotinus writes, in terms reminiscent of John Keats's lines in "Ode on a Grecian Urn" (1820):

> Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard
> Are sweeter; therefore, ye soft pipes, play on;
> Not to the sensual ear, but, more endeared,
> Pipe to the spirit ditties of no tone.

The arena for these "harmonies unheard in sound" is the mind of the artist, just as the statue "is in the designer before ever it enters the stone." Though the artwork can never rival the "inner art" that spawned it, the inferiority of the outward manifestation of this inner art is no argument against ar-

tistic creation; because every being – beginning with the One – must produce in accordance with its contemplation. The artist is no longer, as he was for Plato, the one who debases the currency of reality, but one who grasps in an inner vision the ideal pattern of reality and then plays his part in the cosmic task of creation. This emphasis on the artist as quasi-divine creator was later to find considerable appeal during the Renaissance, as well as among poets (and others) of the Romantic period.

What the artist grasps in his inner vision is the same thing that the mystic attains to an even higher degree, namely, the primal unity of the One – which, as the ultimate standard for beauty as well as goodness, may also be called the Beautiful and the Good. As Plato maintained in the *Symposium,* beauty below is just a preview, not an end in itself; its real value lies in coaxing one onto the upward path toward Beauty Itself and thus toward reunion with the One. So Plotinus exhorts his reader: "He that has the strength, let him arise and withdraw into himself, foregoing all that is known by the eyes, turning away forever from the material beauty that once made his joy. When he perceives those shapes of grace that show in body, let him not pursue: he must know them for copies, vestiges, shadows, and hasten away towards That they tell of." The very power of beauty to call one toward his destination, however, can also distract and seduce: "Beauty brings wonder and shock and pleasure mingled with pain, and even draws those who do not know what is happening away from the Good, as the beloved draws a child away from its father." This is certainly one of the reasons Plato wished to banish the poet from his ideal city; but Plotinus is concerned with the spiritual enlightenment of the few, not the social organization of the many.

Those who become distracted by outward physical beauty, without its inspiring in them any desire to pursue such beauty to its source, are actually fixated upon what – in abstraction from that source – is inert and dead. The living work of art is the soul, whose beauty is its goodness; at the level of soul, the aesthetic and moral orders coincide. In the following final citation from Plotinus (1.6.9), his accounts of the beauty of art and of the soul's ultimate destiny are merged, offering a splendid example of the seamlessness of the philosophical fabric that he weaves throughout the *Enneads:*

> Withdraw into yourself and look. And if you do not find yourself beautiful yet, act as does the creator of a statue that is to be made beautiful: he cuts away here, he smoothes there, he makes this line lighter, this other purer, until a lovely face has grown upon his work. So do you also: cut away all that is excessive, straighten all that is crooked, bring light to all that is overcast, labour to make all one glow of beauty and never cease chiselling your statue, until there shall shine out on you from it the godlike splendour of virtue, until you shall see the perfect goodness surely established in the stainless shrine.

Though Plotinus did not found a school to carry on his work, several subsequent thinkers did adopt the essentials of his scheme and attempt to develop and systematize it. Porphyry – his student, biographer, and editor – is the first of these to warrant mention. Of the many philosophical treatises composed by Porphyry, the most important in terms of its enduring influence was his late-third-century A.D. *Isagoge,* a discussion of some knotty topics in Aristotle's *Organon* (circa 335 B.C.) which became a standard introduction to Latin editions of Aristotle's logical works and the chief catalyst for the medieval controversy over universals. Iamblichus, a Syrian who may have been a student of Porphyry, was another notable Neoplatonist and represents a growing interest in theurgy, or the magical arts, among the pagan custodians of Plotinus's legacy, as well as the proliferation of levels of reality beyond the three hypostases originally posited by Plotinus. Alexandria, where Plotinus had begun his formal study of philosophy, soon became an important center of Neoplatonism. Hypatia, the preeminent woman philosopher of antiquity, was the most notable head of the school in Alexandria; her murder by a mob of fanatical Christians in 415 is indicative of the tensions that lay just beneath the surface. In Athens the Academy founded by Plato eventually came to be controlled by Neoplatonists, among whom the outstanding figure was Proclus, a systematizer whose work offers an early and powerful example of medieval scholasticism. It was here that pagan Neoplatonism came to an end with the closure of the Academy by Emperor Justinian I in 529.

Though Neoplatonism was probably the most vital pagan philosophy of the late Roman period – and the favored intellectual system of those (such as the apostate Emperor Julian) who were trying to reinvigorate pagan culture in the face of Christianity's inexorable spread – the pagan world was on the way out. Neoplatonism might have gone with it had it not found a home within Christianity itself – as it also found a home within Islamic philosophy, following the capture of Alexandria by the Arabs in 641. As Christianity assumed the position and responsibilities of a major world religion, it became

more philosophically sophisticated, and many of its foremost theoreticians and spokesmen realized that Platonism, with its belief in the immortality of the soul and its focus on a higher and better world, was a natural ally of Christianity. The Platonism that achieved this intellectual victory among the early Christian theologians was, of course, the thoroughly otherworldly version represented by Plotinus: and it was no less a figure than Saint Augustine who, in an encomium that certainly matched Plotinus's own aspirations, referred to Plotinus as "Plato come to life again." Among those Christian thinkers whose views were shaped by Neoplatonism, and who in turn helped to shape Western culture, were the Cappadocian Fathers (especially Saint Gregory of Nyssa), Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, Boethius, and Saint Augustine himself. During the centuries when the *Enneads* were unavailable in the West, Plotinus's influence nevertheless endured, virtually unabated, since it was his reading of Plato that had won universal acceptance.

Even when Saint Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century secured for Aristotle the place of honor in Catholic philosophy, Platonism in a Plotinian key remained a vital part of the Western heritage, particularly among mystics such as Saint Bonaventura and Meister Eckehart. Its most notable literary expression from the High Middle Ages is surely Dante's *Divine Comedy* (1321), which presents an image of the cosmos that is distinctly Neoplatonic: its hierarchy of reality is drawn directly from Pseudo-Dionysius, the Christian Neoplatonist; its varying degrees of perfection are accounted for in terms of the notion of emanation; and its "beatific vision" is essentially what Plotinus understood by the mystic's vision of the intelligible world. It was the Renaissance, however, that really witnessed the second birth of Neoplatonism in the West, prompted in part by the emigration of Greek scholars from the collapsing Byzantine Empire. A notable example of this revival is the Platonic Academy in Florence, founded in 1462 by Marsilio Ficino with the support of Cosimo de Medici. Ficino's Academy became for a time the center of intellectual life in Florence; among those who were affiliated with it was Pico della Mirandola, whose *Oration on the Dignity of Man* (circa 1487) made the Neoplatonic notion of "man as microcosm" a central tenet of Renaissance humanism. Ficino himself translated all of the dialogues of Plato into Latin, followed by the *Enneads;* when the latter appeared in 1492, it was the first time since late antiquity that the writings of Plotinus had been available to an educated public in the West. Ficino regarded Plotinus as the supreme interpreter of Plato and made the works of both philosophers the subject of many commentaries, by which the Plotinian version of Platonism was reinforced and propagated among the European intelligentsia. His commentary on Plato's *Symposium,* in particular, had a major impact on Renaissance ideas of love, such as those recommended by Baldassare Castiglione in book 4 of *The Book of the Courtier* (1528).

The influence of this revived Neoplatonism on literature was felt most strongly in England, where Castiglione's *Courtier* came to define the norm for the Elizabethan gentleman. Edmund Spenser was particularly dependent on Ficino's Neoplatonic reading of Plato in his *Four Hymns* (1596) on the subjects of love and beauty, while Sir Philip Sidney in *An Apology for Poetry* (1595) defends the Neoplatonic belief in the essential similarity between the creative function of God and that of the artist. John Milton (especially in the earlier poetry), John Donne, Andrew Marvell, and many others also reflect the intellectual currency of Neoplatonism. Later in the seventeenth century the Cambridge Platonists – Ralph Cudworth, Henry More, John Smith, and Benjamin Whichcote – contributed to the Neoplatonic strain in English intellectual life with their defense of a rational Christianity based on Plato and Plotinus. The Cambridge Platonists, in virtue of the impression they later made on William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge, were among the spiritual forebears of English Romanticism, with its recognizably Neoplatonic commitment to the godlike creativity of the artist, the fundamental correspondence between man and nature, and the idea of nature as an expression of the infinite and a vehicle for transcendence. Such themes are especially prominent in the work of William Blake, Keats, and Percy Bysshe Shelley, in addition to Wordsworth and Coleridge; they also play a significant role in American Transcendentalism, such as that espoused by Walt Whitman and Ralph Waldo Emerson. Of more-recent figures whose work shows the influence of Neoplatonism, William Butler Yeats is perhaps the outstanding example. Over and above these particular literary figures and movements, however, it would not be stretching the point too far to suggest that the introspective character of modern philosophy and literature in general, its obsessive focus on the conscious subject, is the remote descendant of the Neoplatonic inwardness inaugurated by Plotinus with his psychologizing of Plato's metaphysics.

The nineteenth century marks a real turning point in the critical estimation of Plotinus. At the be-

ginning of the century Thomas Taylor rendered the first translation in English of selected treatises from the *Enneads*. This event led to greater attention being focused on Plotinus himself, apart from his traditional connection with Plato, and fostered a growing appreciation of the many differences–subtle and not so subtle–between Platonism and Neoplatonism. The disentangling of Plato and Plotinus accelerated as scholars began to devote themselves specifically to the study of Plotinus. In the process Plotinus lost his monopoly on the interpretation of Plato; at the same time, however, he was set free after sixteen centuries to speak in his own unique voice to modern seekers after wisdom.

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Plutarch

(circa A.D. 46 – circa 120)

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MAJOR WORKS: *Moralia*

Editio princeps: *Plutarchi Opuscula LXXXXII,* edited by D. Ducas (Venice: Aldus Manutius & Andreas Asulani, 1509).

Parallel Lives

Editio princeps: *Sapientissimi Plutarchi paralellum. Vitæ Romanorum et Græcorum* (Florence: P. Junta, 1517).

Standard Editions: Plutarch: *The Parallel Lives,* 11 volumes, edited and translated by Bernadotte Perrin, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass. & London: Harvard University Press, 1914–1926); *Vitae,* 4 volumes, edited by K. Ziegler and others (Leipzig & Berlin: Teubner, 1914–1935); *Moralia,* 6 volumes published to date, edited by J. Wegehaupt and others (Leipzig & Berlin: Teubner, 1925–); *Plutarch: Moralia,* 15 volumes, edited and translated by Frank C. Babbitt and others, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass. & London: Harvard University Press, 1927–1969).

Translations in English: *The Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romanes, Compared Together by . . . Plutarke of Chæromea: Translated out of Greeke into French by J. Amyot . . . Bishop of Auxerre . . . and out of French into Englishe,* translated by Thomas North (London: T. Vautroullier & J. Wright, 1579); *Plutarch's Lives, Translated from the Greek by Several Hands. To Which Is Prefixt the Life of Plutarch (by J. Dryden),* 5 volumes (London: J. Tonson, 1683–1686); *Plutarch's Lives, Translated from the Original Greek, with Notes Critical and Historical, and a New Life of Plutarch,* translated by John Langhorne and William Langhorne (London: E. and C. Dilly, 1770); *Greek History from Themistocles to Alexander, in a Series of Lives from Plutarch,* edited by A. H. Clough (London: Longman, 1860).

Plutarch of Chaeronea was the author of essays, dialogues, and letters known collectively as the *Moralia* as well as a collection of paired biographies known as the *Parallel Lives.* He was a kind man, devoted to his family and friends, and active in public life, both political and religious. He lived his long and productive life in Chaeronea, northwest of Athens, where he served as a priest of Delphi and a representative to the Roman Empire. His works have been appreciated for centuries because of their humanity and inspirational qualities.

Most of what modern scholars know about Plutarch's education, travels, and religion comes from his own works. His great-grandfather Nicarchus–an eyewitness to events surrounding the climactic Battle of Actium fought by Octavian (the future Caesar Augustus) and Mark Antony–surely had an influence on the young Plutarch's interest in the past. In his life of Antony in *Parallel Lives* (58.5) Plutarch paraphrases his ancestor:

> my great-grandfather Nicarchus used to tell how all his fellow-citizens were compelled to carry on their shoulders a stipulated measure of wheat down to the sea at Anticyra, and how their pace was quickened by the whip; they had carried one load in this way, he said, the second was already measured out, and they were just about to set forth, when word was brought that Antony had been defeated, and this was the salvation of the city; for immediately the stewards and soldiers of Antony took to flight, and the citizens divided the grain among themselves.

This narration is reminiscent of Plutarch's own works in its vivid description of events and its awareness of the greater context, the "salvation of the city." His grandfather Lamprias was a colorful character in his own right, whom Plutarch describes in the *Moralia* as being "his most ingenious and eloquent self when drinking, and it was his habit to say that, much as incense is volatilized by heat, so was he by wine." Similar was his father, Autobulus, a frequent participant in the "Table Talk" dialogues of the *Moralia,* whom Plutarch described as "a skillful man indeed at finding an argument."

Plutarch was fond of and kind to his wife, Timoxena, emphasizing his pride in her in his "Consolation to My Wife" after the death of their young daughter. His essay "Advice to Bride and Groom" reveals a loving if domineering husband and includes some excellent advice, such as "married people should succeed in attaining their mutual desires by persuasion and not by fighting and quarrelling. . . . It is the petty, continual, daily clashes between man and wife, unnoticed by the great majority, that disrupt and mar married life," as well as some beautiful imagery: "so that, as ropes, by being intertwined, get strength from each other, thus . . . the copartnership may be preserved through the joint action of both."

Plutarch's brothers, Lamprias and Timon, appear in the symposiastic Table Talk essays. Lamprias is described as having a "saucy disposition and [loving] a joke," and he is in fact chided by Ammonius, Plutarch's old teacher, for giving a joking answer to a serious question. Plutarch had two sons who died young, Chairon and Soclarus, as well as two sons who survived him, Plutarchus and Autobulus; he also had a daughter, Timoxena, who died before reaching adulthood.

Plutarch relates in the essay "Of the *Epsilon* at Delphi" in the *Moralia* that he overheard his teacher Ammonius discussing the meaning of the Greek letter *Epsilon* at the temple of Apollo at Delphi when Nero visited Greece, sometime around A.D. 67; since Plutarch was in Athens attending school at that time, he must have been born around A.D. 46. He died shortly after A.D. 119, the year in which he was appointed *epitropos,* or caretaker, of Greece (according to Eusebius's *Chronicles* for the year A.D. 119–120).

He studied philosophy with Ammonius at the academy in Athens, where he was friends with Themistocles of Athens, a direct descendant of the great Athenian statesman of the fifth century B.C. Afterward, as is clear from his reference in the *Moralia* to dinner parties given by friends on the occasion of his return from Alexandria, he traveled to Egypt, the native land of his teacher Ammonius. He frequently uses the phrase "even now" in his essay "About Isis and Osiris," and his detailed knowledge of Egyptian customs and beliefs indicates that he spent his time there profitably.

Plutarch refers to the "time I spent in Rome, and other parts of Italy," evidently teaching philosophy and performing public service; he was involved in diplomacy, as is evident in his advice in "Precepts of Statecraft" to a young man beginning his career in public life:

Medallion of Plutarch, with verses by Simon Goulart, from *Les hommes illustres grecs et romains*, translated from the Greek by Jacques Amyot, published by Frederic Leonard, Paris, 1655.

Frontispiece for Les hommes illustres grecs et romains *(1655), Jacques Amyot's French translation of Plutarch's* Parallel Lives

I recollect that when I was still a young man I was sent with another as envoy to the proconsul; the other man was somehow left behind; I alone met the proconsul and accomplished the business. Now when I came back and was to make the report of our mission, my father left his seat and told me in private not to say "I went" but "we went," not "I said" but "we said" and in all other ways to associate my colleague in a joint report.

He describes attractions such as the statue of Flamininus and the Sacred Isle of the Tiber but adds that he had no leisure time for Latin language practice, beginning his study of Roman literature late in life. Plutarch's Latin translation skills are often rather unfairly criticized as lacking because of his statement that objects and events helped him learn the language – in other words, knowing what happened in the Roman civil war helped him translate Asinius Pollio or Julius Caesar. He cites Roman authors less frequently than Greek, with some sur-

ΠΛΟΥΤΑΡΧΟΥ ΠΑΡΑΛΛΗΛΑ.

ΘΗΣΕΥΣ.

Σωφρὲν ταῖς γεωγραφίαις ὦ Σόσιε σενεκίων, οἱ ἱστορικοὶ τὰ διαφοὺγοντα τὴν γνῶσιν αὐτῶν τοῖς ἐσχάτοις μέρεσι τ̃ πινάκων περιέχουντες, ἐνίοις παραγράφουσιν ὅτι τὰδ' ἐστὶν ἀνύδροι καὶ θηριώδεις, ἢ πηλὸς ἀϊδνὴς· ἢ σκυθικὸν ὄρος· ἢ πέλαγος πεπηγός, οὕτως ἐμοὶ περὶ τὴν τῶν βίων τῶν παραλλήλων συγγραφὴν, χρόνον ἐφικνουμένῳ λόγῳ καὶ βάσιμον ἱστορίᾳ πραγματ̃ ἐχομένῃ χρόνου διελθόντι περὶ τῶν ἀνωτέρω, καλῶς εἶχεν εἰπεῖν· τὰδ' ἐστὶν ἐκεῖνα τερατώδη καὶ τραγικὰ, πρεπτὰ καὶ μυθογράφοι νέμονται· καὶ οὐκέτ' ἔχει πίστιν οὐδὲ σαφήνειαν· ἐπεὶ δὲ τὸν περὶ λυκούργου τοῦ νομοθέτου, καὶ νομᾶ̃ βασιλέως λόγον ἐκδόντες, ἐδοκοῦμεν οὐκ ἀπ' ἀλόγως τῷ ῥωμύλῳ προσαναβῆναι, πηδοῦντ̃ χρόνων αὐτοῦ τ̃ ἱστορίᾳ γενόμενοι· σκοποῦντι δέ μοι, τοιῷδε φωτὶ κατ' ἀρχύλον, τὶς ξυμβήσεται, τὴν αὐτὴν τάξω τοιῷδε, τὶς φερέγγιος, ἐφαίνετο τὸν τῶν καλῶν καὶ ἀοιδίμων οἰκιστὴν ἀθηνῶν, αὐτὶς ἦσαι καὶ παραβαλεῖν τῷ πατρὶ τ̃ς αὐχήτου καὶ μεγαλοδόξου ῥώμης· εἰ μὲν οὖν ἡμῖν ἐκκαθαιρόμενον λόγῳ τὸ μυθῶδες ὑπακοῦσαι καὶ λαβεῖν ἱστορίας ὄψιν· ὅτου δ' αὖ αὐθαδῶς τοῦ πιθανοῦ προφρονῆ, καὶ μὴ δέχηται τὴν πρὸς τὸ εἰκὸς μίξιν, δυγνωμόνων ἀκροατῶν δεησόμεθα, καὶ πρᾴως τὴν ἀρχαιολογίαν προσδεχομένων· ἐδόκει δ' οὖν ὁ θησεὺς τῷ ῥωμύλῳ κατὰ πολλὰς ἐναρμόττειν ὁμοιότητας· ἀμφω μὲν ἀνεγνώσθαι καὶ σκοπῶ γενόμενοι, δόξαν ἔχον ἐκθεῶν γεγενέσθαι· ἀμφω δ' αἰχμηταί· τόγε δὴ καὶ ἰδεῖν ἅπαντες· καὶ μεταξὺ τ̃ δυνατοῦ τὸ συνετὸν ἔχοντες· πόλεων δὲ τῶν ἐπιφανεστάτων, ὁ μὲν, ἔκτισε τὴν ῥώμην· ὁ δὲ, συνῴκισε τὰς ἀθήνας· ἁρπαγὴ δὲ γυναικῶν, ἑκατέρῳ πρόσεστιν· οὐδ' ἕτερος δὲ δι' τυχίαν περὶ τὰ οἰκεῖα καὶ νέμεσιν ἐγγενῆ διέφυγεν· ἀλλὰ καὶ τελευτῶντες· ἀμφότεροι λέγονται τοῖς ἑαυτῶν προκρουσθῆναι πολίταις· εἶτα τῶν ἤκιστα τραγικῶς εἰρῆσθαι δοκούντων, ὄφελός ἐστι πρὸς ἀλήθειαν· θησεὺς, τὸ μὲν πατρῶον γένος εἰς ἐρεχθέα καὶ τὸς πρώτους αὐτόχονας ἀνήκει· τῷ δὲ μητρώῳ, πελοπίδης ἦν· πέλοψ γὰρ οὐ χρημάτων πλήθει μᾶλλον ἢ παίδων, μέγιστον ἴσχυσε τῶν ἐν πελοποννήσῳ βασιλέων· πολλὰς μὲν ἐκδόμενος θυγατέρας τοῖς ἀρίστοις· πολλοὺς δὲ ταῖς πολιτείαις ἐγκαταπειράς ἄρχοντας· ὧν εἷς γενόμενος πιτθεὺς ὁ θησέως πάππος· πόλιν μὲν οὐ μεγάλην τὴν τροιζηνίων ὤκισε, δόξαν δὲ μάλιστα πάντων ὡς ἀνὴρ λόγιος ἐν τοῖς τότε καὶ σοφώτατος ἔσχεν· ἦν δὲ τ̃ς σοφίας ἐκείνης τοιαύτη τις ὡς ἔοικεν ἰδέα καὶ δύναμις· οἵα χρησάμενος ὑπόδοδε· δυσδοκίμει μάλιστα περὶ τ̃ς ἐν τοῖς ἔργοις γνωμολογίας καὶ μίαν γε τοὺ Ἰφ ἐκείνην λέγουσι πιτθέως εἶναι μαθὸς δ' αὖ δριφίλωι ἐρημένος, ἄρκιος ἔστω· τοῦτο μὲν οὖν καὶ ἀριστοτέλης ὁ φιλόσοφος εἴρηκεν, ὁ δ' ὑριπίδης τὸν ἱππόλυτον, ἀγνοῦ πιτθέως παίδευμα προσεῖπεν, ἐμφαίνει τὴν περὶ τὸν πιτθέα, δόξαν· ἀγεῖ δὲ παίδων δεομένῳ τὴν πυθίαν αἰτεῖν λέγουσι τὸν βουλλούμενον χρησμὸν διακελευομένην μηδεμιᾶ γυναικὶ συγγενέσθαι, πρὶν ἐλθεῖν ἐς ἀθήνας· οὐ παύσασθαι δὲ τοῦτο φράζειν δυσκόλως δοκοῦσαν· ὅθεν εἰς τροιζῆνα παρελθὼν αἰνειοῦτο πιτθεὶ τὴν τ̃ θεοῦ φωνὴν, οὕτως ἔχουσαν· ἀσκοῦ τὸν προύχοντα πόδα μέγα φέρτατε λαῶν, μὴ λύσῃς· πρὶν δ' ἦμαρ ἀθηναίων εἰσαφικέσθαι ἄδηλον οἷον ὅπνος ἀνέσας ὁ πιτθεὺς ἔπεισεν αὐτὸν, ἢ δι' ἀπάτης τ̃ ἄθρᾳ συγγενέσθαι· συνελθὼν δὲ καὶ γνοὺς ἐκεῖνος ὅπ τ̃ πιτθέως θυγατρὶ συγγέγονε καὶ κύειν αὐτὴν ὑπονοήσας, ἀπέλιπε ξίφος καὶ πέδιλα κρύψας ὑπὸ πέτραν μεγάλην, ἐντὸς ἔχουσαν κοιλότητα συμμέτρως ἐμπεφυκυῖαν τὰ κείμενα, φράσας δὲ πρὸς μόνην ἐκείνην· καὶ διακελευσάμενος αἰ φὸς ἐξ αὐτοῦ γένηται καὶ λαβὼν αὐξηρὸς ἡλικίαν, δυνατὸς ᾖ τὴν πέτραν ἀναστῆσαι καὶ ὑφελεῖν τὰ καταλειφθέντα, πέμπειν πρὸς αὐτὸν ἔχοντα τἀῦτα μηδενὸς ἀδόντος· ἀλλ' ὡς ἔνεστι μάλιστα λανθάνοντα πάντας· ἰσχυρῶς γὰρ ἐδεδοίκει τοὺς παλλαντίδας αὐτῷ βουλδύοντας αὐτῷ· καὶ διὰ τὴν ἀπαιδίαν καταφρονοῦντας· ἦσαν δὲ πεντήκοντα παῖδες ἐκ πάλλαντος γεγονότες, ἀδελφοί· τεκμαίρεσθαι δὲ τ̃ ἀληθείας φόν, οἱ μὲν, δύδυς ὀνομαθῆναι θησέα λέγουσι διὰ τὴν Ἰφ γνωρισμάτων θέσιν· οἱ δὲ, ὕστερον, ἀθήνησι παιδὸς θεμένου τοῦ ἀγέως αὐτόν· τρεφόμενον δὲ ὑπὸ τοῦ πιτθέως ἀπὸ τὴν ἔχειν καὶ παιδαγωγὸν ὄνομα κοννίδαν· ᾧ μέχρι νῦν ἀθηναῖοι μᾶ πρόπρον ἡμέρα τῶν θησείων, κριὸν ἐναγίζουσι· μεμνημένοι καὶ τιμῶντες πολὺ δικαιότερον, ἢ σιλανίωνα τιμῶσι καὶ παῤῥάσιον εἰκόνων θησέως γραφεῖς καὶ πηλᾶς γενομένους· ἔθους δ' ὄντος ἐπὶ τότε τοὺς μεταβαίνοντας ἐκ παίδων ἐλθόντας εἰς δελφοὺς ἀπάρχεσθαι τῷ θεῷ τ̃ς κόμης, ἦλθε μέν, εἰς δελφοὺς ὁ θησεὺς· καὶ τόπον ἀπ' αὐτοῦ τὴν θησείαν ἔτι νῦν ὀνομάζεσθαι λέγουσιν· ἐκείρατο δὲ τ̃ς κεφαλ̃ς πρόσθεν μόνον, ὡς ὅμηρός ἐφη τοὺς ἄβαντας· καὶ τοῦτο τ̃ς κουρᾶς τὸ γένος θησηὶς ὠνομάσθη δ' ἐκεῖνον· οἱ δὲ ἄβαντες ἐκείραντο πρῶτοι γὰρ τὸν τρόπον τοῦτον· οὐχ ὑπὸ ἀφάβων

Page from the first edition in Greek (1517) of Plutarch's Parallel Lives *(courtesy of the Lilly Library, Indiana University)*

prising omissions, such as the poet Horace, whom he cites only once, or Lucretius, whom he cites not at all. The fact that both of these authors are poets suggests that their work was perhaps a bit too challenging for Plutarch's Latin skills.

Plutarch also traveled extensively in Greece, visiting Tanagra, Helicon, Hyampolis in Phocis, Adepsus and Chalcis in Euboea, Patrae, Eleusis, and Sparta, ultimately settling in his small hometown of Chaeronea. He was aware that this choice of residence meant sacrificing a certain level of achievement, particularly in historical writing, since he would be lacking certain tools. As he says in "Demetrius" 2.2 in *Parallel Lives:*

> it is really necessary, first and above all things, that [one wishing to write history] should live in a city which is famous, friendly to the liberal arts, and populous, in order that he may have all sorts of books in plenty, and may by hearsay and enquiry come into possession of all those details which elude writers and are preserved with more conspicuous fidelity in the memories of men. He will thus be prevented from publishing a work which is deficient in many, and even in essential, things.

Plutarch was a priest of Delphi for many years; an inscription naming him as the officiating priest is still visible on the base of a statue dedicated to Hadrian when the emperor visited Delphi. He wrote three treatises about the oracle, known collectively as the *Pythikoi Logoi,* which he sent as a gift to his friend Serapion. "Of the *Epsilon* at Delphi" is a discussion of three possible meanings of the Greek letter *epsilon* on Apollo's temple at Delphi: it may stand for five – a significant number in mathematics, physiology, philosophy, and music; it may mean "if," since people ask the oracle questions; or it may mean "you are" and be addressed to Apollo. "De Pythiae Oraculis" discusses the fact that oracles used to be delivered in hexameter verse and concludes that the present time calls for directness and simplicity rather than vagueness and riddling speech. It describes the Delphic statues and monuments, relates anecdotes and former oracles witnessed by young visitors, and essentially tries to defend the progressively declining reputation of the oracle. "De Defectu Oraculorum" discusses but does not resolve the question of why the oracle was becoming obsolete (the gods were withholding information because humans had become evil; the oracles had become fewer because of the decline in population; the intermediary daemon had fled). Plutarch felt strongly that religion and religious ceremonies were an important part of any politically active individual's life.

In "On Superstition" Plutarch sharply distinguishes between religion and superstition, defining superstition and atheism as the two extreme results of ignorance of the gods, as manifested in the personalities of those with soft and hard characters, respectively. According to Plutarch superstition is worse than atheism because the atheist remains unmoved in respect to the divine, but the superstitious man is moved by the divine in the wrong way, by fear. This fear lies at the heart of Plutarch's intense dislike of superstition, believing as he did that superstition was a fear so intense that it completely debilitated and flattened the affected individual. Furthermore, both the religious and the logical facets of Plutarch's personality were offended by the implication of the gods as a source of pain and injury. He thought that such fear affected those ignorant of the causes of natural phenomena but not those who understood such things. Thus, it was the mark of wise men and leaders to be able to counter the effects of superstition among their followers, as Plutarch notes in some of the biographies from *Parallel Lives:* Pericles, when an eclipse took place as he was sailing to Epidaurus on a campaign, allayed the fears of his steersman by a rational explanation of the eclipse; Dion, in a similar situation, prevailed upon his seer Miltas to allay the fears of the soldiers, not by rational explanation but by favorable interpretation; Nicias, by contrast, could not control his own fear, much less that of his soldiers. In "On Superstition" Plutarch gives two examples of how superstition "creates volcanoes out of molehills," or turns a minor problem into a major one: Midas became so distraught by dreams that he committed suicide; the Messenian king Aristodemus, during the Messenians' war against Sparta, became so despondent over the omens that he slew himself. Plutarch goes on to suggest that the Athenian general Nicias should have done likewise rather than bring about the destruction of the Athenian expedition to Sicily through the delay caused by his superstition.

Like his strong religious feelings, Plutarch's Roman context is another important element in understanding his work. Although he drew from a heritage of Greek learning and culture, Plutarch was a Roman citizen, working within the environment of the Roman Empire. D. A. Russell even suggests that Plutarch intended via the *Parallel Lives* to vindicate the reputation of Greece and Greeks in the eyes of the Romans. On the other hand, Plutarch has an almost cynical view of the glorious Athenian past. He suggests that those who wish to emulate their famous ancestors should do so by remembering inspiring events, such as their fining of the playwright

VITA i

THESEI VITA PER LAPVM FLORENTINVM EX PLVTARCHO GRAECO IN LATINVM VERSA.

QVEMADMODVM IN ORBIS TERRAE SITV DESCRIbendo hiſtorici ſolent: ut ad quæ ipſi cognitione aſpirare non poſſunt: extremis tabularum partibus ſupprimentes quibuſdam adiiciunt locos eſſe uaſtos arenoſos & cælo terræq; penuriam aquarum aut limum inſuperabilem: aut montem ſilueſtrem: aut aſtrictum frigore pontum: ita & nobis in hac uirorum collatione perpetua rege hiſtoria quantum probabili oratione aſſequi potuimus: de his quos ſupra memorauimus uitis tẽpora percurrentibus uere licuit affirmare. Quæ uero antiquiora ac uetuſtiora ſunt: tragica & mõſtruoſa poetæ & fabuloſi rẽ ſcriptores occupant: nec ultra fidẽ ullam nec certitudinem præſe ferunt. Cum igitur Lycurgi legum latoris & Numæ regis res geſtas litteris mãdauerimus: haud ab re fuerit ad Romuli uitam orationem conuertere: quando hiſtoria ipſa ad eius tempora qprope acceſſimus. Sed mihi diu cogitanti hunc uirũ (ut inquit Aeſchilus) quis cõueniret: quem illi opponerem: quis dignus ſecum in comparatione conũgi: uiſum eſt tandem faciendum eſſe: ut a quo celebrata Athenienſium ciuitas amplificata eſt eam cum

a ii

Page from a 1496 Latin translation of Plutarch's Parallel Lives. *The illustration shows Theseus and the Minotaur.*

Phrynichus for his play *Capture of Miletus,* which reminded them of their brothers' troubles, or their wreathing themselves in garlands when Cassander refounded Thebes, a traditional enemy of Athens. Concerning Athens's famous military victories of her "golden age," the fifth century B.C. – Marathon, Eurymedon, Plataea Eurymedon – Plutarch suggests that such history, which makes hoi polloi swell with pride, should be left to the schools of the Sophists.

The "Lamprias Catalogue," named after the putative author, purports to be a complete list of Plutarch's writings (some 227 titles). Although only 83 of those works exist now, another 18 extant titles are absent from the list, and another 15 works missing from the catalogue are mentioned elsewhere in Plutarch's writings. The most that can be learned from the Lamprias Catalogue is that Plutarch wrote more than is now extant.

Plutarch began his writing career with the essays known collectively as *Ethika* by the Byzantine scholars who first collected them, or *Moralia* in the Latin translation. These works cannot be dated with any accuracy, although there is some progression in them of sophistication in literary technique and power of persuasion. Although they cover a wide range of topics, they have in common a plethora of illustrative examples, quotations from all kinds of authors, Homeric-style similes, and dramatic foils or counterexamples. Plutarch was trained in rhetorical technique; it is, therefore, not surprising that his writing exhibits these qualities.

The essays cover a wide range of topics. Since Plutarch was trained in philosophy at school and was a confirmed Platonist, some essays deal with technical philosophy, like his essays about Plato ("About the Procreation of the Soul in Timaeus") and Stoicism or Epicureanism ("About Refuting the Stoics," "That Epicurus Makes a Pleasant Life Impossible," and "Against Colotes"). Plutarch's admiration for Plato can also be seen in the former's use of the dialogue form, as in "The Sign of Socrates," "Table Talk," and "On the Delays of the Divine Vengeance." Most essays offer opinions and advice on general education, moral education, and conduct. Others are almost forensic exercises, debating, for example, "Whether the Athenians Were More Famous in War or Peace," "Whether Alexander the Great's Career Depended on Luck or Bravery," and "The Glory of the Athenians, or the Glory of the Romans." Other essays deal with nature, such as "Is Water or Fire More Useful?" and "The Face on the Moon." Some of the essays appear to have been collections of notes for Plutarch to consult in other works, for example, "Spartan Institutions," "Roman Questions," "Greek Questions," and "Platonic Questions." Others concern human nature, politics, historical and literary criticism, and the nature of divinity.

Plutarch's biographies are part of a long tradition closely connected with the development of historiography. Just as Herodotus's *History of the Persian Wars* (circa 430 B.C.) was a step forward from the earlier local histories (*atthides*) or mythological backgrounds, and as Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War* (circa 431–404 B.C.) was a step even farther forward, so did biography develop out of the so-called encomiastic tradition. In the fifth century B.C. Xenophon wrote *The Education of Cyrus,* about the founder of the Persian Empire, and *Agesilaus,* about a Spartan king. These works are excessively laudatory of their subjects and belong more in the realm of hagiography, or eulogistic writing. During the fourth century B.C. interest in individuals as characters, or types, was

manifested in such works as Aristotle's *Nichomachean Ethics* and Theophrastus's *The Characters,* works that discuss human nature and personality. The humor of the fourth century, known as New Comedy, depended almost exclusively on stock characters such as the Braggart Soldier, the Glutton, and the Wily Slave and stock situations such as twin recognition scenes. During the third and second centuries B.C. appreciative Romans translated Greek comedies into Latin. In the latter part of the first century Cornelius Nepos wrote *Lives of Illustrious Men.* Plutarch cites Nepos in his lives of Marius, Tiberius Gracchus, and Lucullus and may have gotten the idea of pairing biographies from Nepos. His "comparisons," however, are a welcome addition to the basic pairs. In them Plutarch discusses the similarities and differences of his subjects, explains why he chose the two, and often renders a final judgment of sorts. The "Comparisons" frequently present Plutarch's personal verdict.

Plutarch began writing the *Parallel Lives* relatively late in his career, after his *Moralia.* He distinguishes these biographies from history, emphasizing that he is writing the former rather than the latter. In an almost Horatian refusal (*recusatio*) he claims the right to leave grand deeds and sweeping history to others, while he will attend to the "signs of the soul," more often revealed in "small things, like a turn of phrase, or a joke." This self-effacement is characteristic of Plutarch, who seems to have been an unpretentious individual. For instance, in "Precepts of Statecraft" in the *Moralia* he includes a revealing vignette:

> no doubt I myself seem ridiculous to visitors in our town when I am seen in public, as I often am, engaged in such matters. But I am helped by the remark of Antisthenes which has been handed down to memory; for when someone expressed surprise that he himself carried a dried fish through the marketplace, he said, "Yes, but it's for myself"; but I, on the other hand, say to those who criticize me for standing and watching tiles being measured or concrete or stones being delivered, that I attend to these things, not for myself, but for my native place.

The picture of Plutarch happily watching a load of building materials being delivered seems quite modern. Less so is the picture evoked by an anecdote from "Should Old Men Govern":

> Now surely you know that I have been serving the Pythian Apollo for many Pythiads, but you would not say "Hey Plutarch, you have done enough sacrificing, arching in processions and dancing in choruses, and now that you are older it is time to put off the garland and to desert the oracle on account of your age."

Most of the biographies in *Parallel Lives* have a typical program. Many, but not most (thirteen of twenty-two), begin with a proem that serves to ease the reader into the story. Sometimes the proem is specific to the subject: detailing events surrounding his birth, family background, myths about his family and/or country. Frequently the reason for the selection of the paired Roman is brought forward and discussed, and at other times Plutarch discusses his philosophy of biography and history, his reasons for writing, and his methods. The protagonist's youth, education, and early signs of greatness come next. Eventually the narrative begins a chronological account of the main events.

Producing the desired effect, that of a good example, was Plutarch's principal aim in writing the *Parallel Lives.* If he had intended to write history in the modern sense of the word, he would never have undertaken subjects such as Theseus, Romulus, Lycurgus, and Solon. In his biography of Timoleon he says:

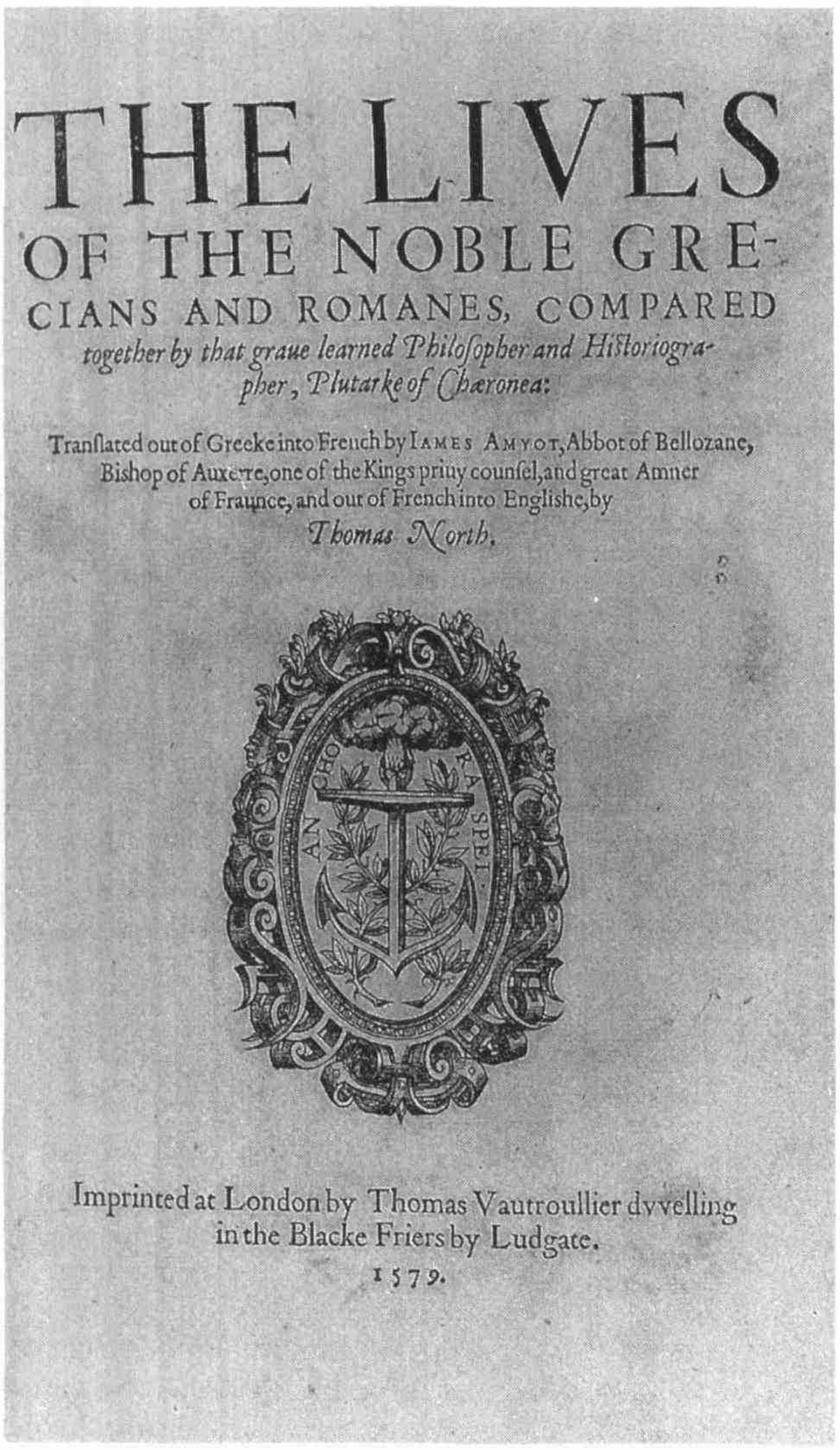
> I began the writing of my Lives for the sake of others, but I find that I am continuing the work and delighting in it now for my own sake also, using history as a mirror and endeavoring in a manner to fashion and adorn my life in conformity with the virtues therein depicted. For the result is like nothing else than daily living and associating together, when I receive and welcome each subject of my history in turn as my guest.

"Pericles" presents a similar sentiment:

> It is fitting for a man to pursue what is the best, not only to contemplate it, but to benefit from the contemplation. . . . This is inherent in virtuous deeds, which inject eagerness and zeal for imitation in those who search for them. What is noble stirs activity directed toward itself and promotes a vigorous impulse.

Perhaps Plutarch's best-known statement on his method is that with which he begins "Alexander":

> I am not writing history, but biography, nor does the revelation of virtue or vice lie completely within glorious deeds, but many times rather by a small jest or word is a man's character revealed, rather than by battles with thousands of casualties, or the largest battle lines or sieges of cities. Therefore, as painters garner a likeness from the subject's face and eyes, which reveal the spirit, and think less of the remaining parts, thus must I be permitted to enter into the distinguishing marks of the



Title page for the first English translation of Plutarch's work, a major source for William Shakespeare's classical plays

soul and through these represent each biography, leaving to others great deeds and contests.

In "Cimon" Plutarch explains that "the truth must sometimes be rounded out" and that if one of his subjects has faults, they must not be "too eagerly depicted." Modern historians are frustrated by this seemingly cavalier treatment of facts, but Plutarch is consistent: he says in "How Young People Should Hear Poetry" in the *Moralia* that altering poetry to obtain a specific effect in young people was not only permissible but desirable. Yet his desire to make a point does not mean that Plutarch was without discrimination when it came to the evidence that confronted him. He spends the entire first chapter of "Aristides" evaluating the relative merits of the sources for Aristides' wealth, weighing the literary sources against inscriptions, and making logical deductions. In "Crassus" he evalutes the merit of a Ciceronian oration (now lost) implicating Caesar and Crassus in the Catilinarian conspiracy in light of the latter's son's friendship with Cicero. In "Themistocles" he criticizes Stesimbrotus's chronology for his statement that Anaxagoras was Themistocles' teacher. He makes the astute observation in "Lysander" that Theopompus "is more to be trusted when praising than blaming." In "Pericles" he repeats the testimony of Duris of Samos about Pericles' alleged treatment of the Samian trierarchs after the seige of Samos, but then adds the caveat that Duris is unreliable at the best of times and almost certainly so when discussing "the misfortunes of his fatherland."

Plutarch preferred to follow eyewitness sources when possible, as he considered them most reliable. He cites Asinius Pollio on Pompey's defeat at Pharsalia; Fannius on his comrade Tiberius's exploits; Sulla on his commander Marius and the Cimbri; and Cleopatra's attending physician, Olympus, on her death. Plutarch was also aware of and used nonliterary sources. In "Agesilaus" he mentions consulting the official Spartan chronicles, and in "Solon" he describes the *axones,* or wooden tablets, upon which were written Solon's laws. He was interested in inscriptions, citing more than forty, according to W. C. Helmbold and E. N. O'Neil, such as the Athenian decree to send to Sparta for help against Mardonius and the inscription on the altar at Plataea of Zeus Deliverer after the victory over the Persians at Plataea mentioned in "Aristides."

Parallel Lives was meant by Plutarch to be a source of good examples for his readers, yet they are more than entertainment for scholars of antiquity. The narratives are enlivened by asides from Plutarch; many quotations from tragedy, comedy, history, philosophy, and poetry; and anything that might seem pertinent to the author. For instance, in the "Comparison of Nicias and Crassus" Plutarch brings up an incident in which Crassus punched Lucius Annalius, a senator, as he was speaking in the forum and drove him, bleeding, from the room. Plutarch includes this anecdote to illustrate the difference between his two subjects' temperaments, adding that he had forgotten to include it in Crassus's biography.

Examination of Plutarch's citations of other authors shows that he has his favorites. Homer and Plato are cited the most often. Plutarch's penchant for literary quotations means that his works are among the most fertile source of literary frag-

ments: otherwise unattributed citations of both known and unknown authors that provide tantalizing glimpses into lost literary works.

Plutarch's works have experienced a variable popularity. He was well known and often cited in antiquity, as can be seen from the fact that the hero of Apuleius's *The Golden Ass* (mid second century A.D.) was descended from "the famous Plutarch" and that Aulus Gellius imitated Plutarch's style and technique in his *Attic Nights* (circa A.D. 180). Nevertheless, from the time of Boethius or so up until the reclamation of classical texts during the Renaissance, there is no reference to Plutarch or his works in the admittedly scanty literary remains of the time. By the middle of the sixteenth century, the *Parallel Lives* had been translated into most modern European languages (Italian, Spanish, German, and French), and the entire *Moralia* had been printed in Latin by W. Xylander in Germany.

It was the sixteenth-century translation of the *Parallel Lives* by Jacques Amyot into French, however, that had the greatest impact on European literature, politics, historiography, and philosophy, as can be seen in the works of authors such as Michel de Montaigne and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Amyot, a priest like Plutarch, was a translator after the Greek's own heart, in that Amyot was more interested in conveying the effect, or impact, of Plutarch's words than the words themselves. His audience had little knowledge of antiquity–historical, literary, or otherwise–and Amyot wished his translation to include unobtrusive explanations when necessary. R. H. Barrow has collected details about Amyot's attempts to translate Greek with Christian terms, such as translating the Greek *to hieron* ("temple") as *église* ("church") or *chapelle* ("chapel"), or the Greek *enauges* ("under a curse") as *maudit et excommunie* ("accursed and excommunicate").

Plutarch's influence traveled north to Elizabethan England after Thomas North, having visited France earlier in diplomatic service (again, like Plutarch) with his brother, published his translation of *Parallel Lives* in 1579. Between 1683 and 1686 another version was published. Although it was the work of many translators, John Dryden contributed an introduction and biography of Plutarch, and it came to be referred to as Dryden's version. In 1770 William and John Langhorne published a cleaned-up version of *Parallel Lives,* shorn of Amyot's and North's marginalia. *Parallel Lives* was extremely popular with the American Founding Fathers, particularly Benjamin Franklin, Alexander Hamilton, and James Madison. The subjects of the biographies provided excellent role models for those who were pursuing liberty, and the city-state of Sparta was an excellent representation of a stable, free, and civic-minded political entity. The essays in the *Moralia* were less well known until Ralph Waldo Emerson began to use them as models for his own moral essays. In 1860 A. H. Clough published yet another revised translation; and between 1914 and 1926 the Loeb Classical Library published the translation of Bernadotte Perrin, which has become the standard in the field.

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Polybius

(circa 200 B.C. – circa 118 B.C.)

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MAJOR WORK: *The Histories.*

Editio princeps: *Polybi historiarum libri quinque opera,* edited by Vincentius Opsopoeus (Grossenhain: J. Secerius, 1530).

Standard editions: *Historiae,* 3 volumes, edited by F. Hultsch (Berlin: Weidmann, 1870–1892); *Polybii Historiae,* 5 volumes, edited by T. Büttner-Wobst (Leipzig: Teubner, 1889–1905).

Translations in English: *Polybius. The Histories,* 6 volumes, translated by W. R. Paton (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1922–1927); *The Histories* [selections], translated by I. Scott-Kilvert (Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin, 1979).

Polybius is the most trustworthy guide to one of the most momentous periods in Roman history. He also has had an immense impact on historiography. In the eighteenth century he was regarded as a prime source for the history of Federalism, and his theory of the mixed constitution with its system of checks and balances had a profound influence on the framers of the U.S. Constitution. In the nineteenth century Polybius was the model of the critical, scientific, and objective historian. And in the twentieth century his reputation as a historian of the first rank has remained intact. But scholars have viewed Polybius primarily as a Machiavellian pragmatist for whom only political success and power mattered.

Polybius's prose is of a straightforward style that rejects rhetorical embellishment and literary ornamentation, and by comparison with what is known of the historical writings of his contemporaries, he employed rigorous historiographical standards of factual accuracy and chronological precision. For Polybius, the historian must be a man of affairs; he must have experience in politics and war; and he must be a painstaking researcher who has gained historical knowledge by direct observation of important sites and from the cross-examination of eyewitnesses. Polybius consequently felt that the only history worth writing was contemporary history. Along with Thucydides he set politics and warfare as the subject matter for history. The discipline of history would not emerge from these strictures until the twentieth century.

Polybius was born near the end of the third century B.C., when the political independence of the Greek states was about to come to an end, as the Romans began to assume hegemony over the Mediterranean basin. He belonged to the aristocratic elite of the Greek city of Megalopolis, a powerful member of the Achaean Confederation of Peloponnesian Greek states. His father, Lycortas, had served as *strategos,* the highest political office in the confederation. Polybius's early career was distinguished, and his honors were many and rapid: he carried the remains of the great Achaean statesman Philopoemen at the latter's funeral in 182 B.C.; he was selected as an envoy for a diplomatic mission to the Ptolemaic court in Egypt in 181–180 B.C., when he was some twenty years old; and he was elected to the second highest office in the confederation – that of Achaean *hipparchos,* or cavalry commander – for 170–169 B.C., when he was thirty, the youngest age of eligibility for that important post. It seemed to be only a matter of time before Polybius would serve as elected leader of the Achaean Confederation. Events on the international political scene, however, changed this situation.

Along with the Aetolian League, the Achaean Confederation was one of two Greek political experiments in federal government. The Greek federal state held out the promise of establishing the Greeks' cherished ideal of autarchy as a political reality, while at the same time breaking down the insularity, exclusivity, and parochialism of the individual Greek city-states that had plagued the political history of Greece in the high classical period. These experiments came to a halt with the rise of Rome to Mediterranean superpower, and

Polybius's Achaean Confederation ceased to exist with the catastrophic destruction of the Achaean city of Corinth in 146. Some twenty years earlier, after the Romans had defeated the Macedonian king Perseus in the battle at Pydna in 168, Polybius's stance of political independence got him into trouble with the Romans, and he was deported to Italy as a political suspect, along with some one thousand other neutrals and suspected pro-Macedonians. Polybius remarks that in his time Greeks devoted themselves to scholarly pursuits, as the avenues to political and military power and responsibility had been closed to them. In his case this meant the writing of a universal history, the intention of which was to explain Rome's remarkable success story to his fellow Greeks. Polybius proposes to answer "by what means and under what system of polity the Romans in less than fifty-three years have succeeded in subjecting nearly the whole inhabited world to their sole government – a thing unique in history."

Most of the Greek hostages lived the rest of their lives in isolated confinement in small municipal towns in the Italian countryside. When the Roman Senate finally decided to release the remaining detainees in 150 B.C., the elder Roman statesman Cato marveled that there should be so much fuss over whether a few old Greeks would be buried in Italy or in their homeland.

Polybius, however, had fared much better. Q. Fabius Maximus Aemilianus and Publius Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus Africanus, the sons of the great Roman general and conqueror of Macedonia, L. Aemilius Paullus, befriended the Achaean exile. Polybius enjoyed a particularly close relationship with Scipio Aemilianus, who soon was to become one of the most powerful Roman politicians of his day. Based in Rome, Polybius apparently had considerable freedom of movement and other privileges during this period. Internal textual evidence suggests that he journeyed throughout Italy and that he perhaps visited northern Africa, Spain, and Gaul in the 150s, while he technically remained a political hostage. After the Roman sack of Corinth in 146, he was instrumental in the resettlement of Greece, and the evidence of inscriptions corroborates his important role in international politics.

In a twenty-year period Polybius had moved from political prisoner at Rome to Roman agent. He traveled in the circles of the Roman aristocratic cultural elite; he accompanied Scipio Aemilianus at the Roman siege of Carthage in the so-called Third Punic War; and he may have been present at Scipio's siege of Numantia in Spain in 133. Repatriated after 150, he is said to have died from injuries sustained in falling from his horse on a hunting expedition at the age of eighty-two, probably around the year 118.

Polybius composed a eulogistic biography of his Achaean political hero, Philopoemen; a monograph on the Numantine War; and a work on military tactics. These works, however, are no longer extant, and modern readers must judge Polybius as historian and author on the basis of the extant portions of his monumental historical work on Rome, *The Histories*. Books 1–5 are intact; book 6 is nearly complete; and the rest survive in fragments, some of which are extensive.

As originally conceived, the work was to comprise thirty books, covering the period from 220 B.C. to 167 B.C. The first two books are prefatory and cover in summary form the earlier histories of the western Mediterranean powers of Rome and Carthage, with which most Greeks were unfamiliar. The history proper begins with book 3 in the years of the 140th Olympiad (220–216), which Polybius interpreted as the period in which events in the East and in the West had become intertwined. Henceforth, Polybius asserts, histories must be world histories, synoptic and universal in scope. Polybius handled this immense historical canvas by progressing through four-year periods of Olympiads and by following a geographical sequence within these periods that moves from Italy to Sicily, Spain, and Africa; then to Greece and Macedonia; then to Asia; and finally to Egypt.

Polybius at some time felt the need to extend the work to forty books to cover a disturbed and troubled time in which the Romans no longer had any serious opposition from external powers, a period that culminated in the Roman destruction of both Corinth and Carthage in 146. This extension was necessary for an assessment of Rome's universal rule: "For it is evident that contemporaries will thus be able to see clearly whether the Roman rule is acceptable or the reverse, and future generations whether their government should be considered to have been worthy of praise and admiration or rather of blame."

Polybius's historical work, then, has both practical and moral dimensions. Polybius states the dual aspects of his work's utilitarian value at the outset: to instruct politicians and statesmen and to enable the reader to cope with the vicissitudes of life. Polybius's work does have a sternly utilitarian bent, and it in part constitutes a kind of practical handbook for the general and the politician. Modern scholarship, however, has begun to emphasize

Cast of a slab found in Kleitor (ancient Arcadia) bearing a portrait of a warrior tentatively identified as Polybius

strong didactic and moralizing elements in Polybian historiography that counterbalance the image of Polybius as Machiavellian pragmatist. Polybius's historical outlook was informed by traditional aristocratic ethical values. Situations might arise in which traditional virtues of honor, courage, a level-headed rationality, and self-control would conflict with pragmatic success, but it is important to realize that in the Polybian scheme of things these virtues more often than not would contribute to success in the political and military realms.

Polybius believed that the historian must be deeply committed to establishing the truth. By any standards he earns high marks for adhering to his demanding historiographical principles in researching and checking his data. He has no patience for historians who distort the truth to titillate the reader. He says that truth is to history what eyesight is to the living creature and that history without truth is an idle tale.

Historical truth, however, is a problematic notion. One can judge the accuracy of historical data and the acuity of historical research in a fairly objective way. The selection of the data, its synthesis, and its interpretation, on the other hand, are subjective authorial choices. Polybius's work compares favorably with most histories, ancient or modern, by the first set of criteria, but *The Histories* is as subjective as any other historical writing. Contextualist approaches that frame the subjective arrangement of the material and the recurrent thematic patterns and trajectories in the work as a whole in their ideological and political contexts will lead to the most exciting developments in the future of Polybian studies.

Polybius's representation of the Romans as a collectivity serves as a fine example of the possibilities that may open up through such contextualist enterprises. In the first five complete books Polybius censures the actions of individual Roman commanders, and he accuses the Romans of gross injustice in their seizure of Sardinia from the Carthaginians in the aftermath of the First Punic War. With the exception of this single Roman action, however, the reader will search in vain in these books for condemnatory comments on the group character of the Romans. Book 3 treats the Hannibalic war (218–202) to Hannibal's crushing defeat of the Roman forces at Cannae in 216, and Polybius states that in this period of severe trials the Roman state had reached its zenith. In the fragmentary books of the extended work – books 30 and following – by contrast, where the narrative moves toward the contemporary scene, Roman moral fiber clearly has deteriorated.

Polybius agrees with the elder Roman statesman Cato that Roman youth had become dissipated after the Roman victory over Macedonia in 168 (book 31):

> some of them had abandoned themselves to amours with boys and others to the society of courtesans, and many to musical entertainments and banquets, and the extravagance they involve, having . . . been speedily af-

> fected by the Greek laxity in these respects. . . . This aroused the indignation of Cato. . . . It was just at the period we are treating of that this present tendency to extravagance declared itself, first of all because they thought that now after the fall of the Macedonian kingdom their universal dominion was undisputed, and next because after the riches of Macedonia had been transported to Rome there was a great display of wealth both in public and in private.

The theme of decay and decline from a pristine golden age was commonplace in Greek literature, stretching back to Homer and Hesiod. However, a more immediate and contemporary context in Roman political discourse helps to explain its expression in Polybius. Conservative Roman statesmen, men such as the elder Cato, bemoaned an alleged Roman moral degeneration and sought to stem the tide through restrictions on Roman high officials, sumptuary legislation, and sporadic expulsions of Greek intellectuals. These conservatives were concerned with the negative by-products of Rome's imperial success. They feared that the Roman political structure, controlled in effect by the narrow circle of the wealthiest Roman aristocrats who comprised the Senate, was threatened by pernicious foreign influences and by the economic dislocation brought on by the sudden influx of wealth. The new danger lay in the Roman commander of the major campaigns, who, through war booty and a broadly based clientship, could outstrip his senatorial colleagues and undermine republican government. This dreaded scenario for Roman conservatives of the Middle Roman Republic would become a reality a century or so later in the person of Julius Caesar.

Polybius's narrative reflects these aristocratic, conservative concerns. Polybius finds the answer to Roman power and success first and foremost in the social and political structure of the Roman state, to which he devotes an extensive analysis in book 6. Polybius subscribes to a biological model of the rise and fall of states. Polities of the simple constitutional types – monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy – degenerate in a fixed order. Monarchical regimes become tyrannies, which in turn develop into aristocracies, and these over time decay into oligarchies. At this point democracy arises, which in turn is perverted into the final stage of political degeneration: ochlocracy, or mob rule. The Roman constitution balanced monarchical, aristocratic, and democratic elements: kingship corresponded to the Roman consuls; the Roman Senate provided aristocratic rule; and the popular assemblies and the tribunate comprised the democratic component at Rome. In this way the Roman state was able to stave off the deterioration of the life cycle, or *anacyclosis,* of the simple constitutional forms.

In Polybius's view, however, the Roman system will not be able to hold off decline indefinitely. The structure of the Roman polity has been responsible for Roman success, he says, but the seeds of Roman decline must be sought there as well. This much is clear from his statement in book 6:

> That all existing things are subject to decay and change is a truth that scarcely needs proof; for the course of nature is sufficient to force this conviction on us. . . . When a state has weathered many great perils and subsequently attains to supremacy and uncontested sovereignty, it is evident that under the influence of long established prosperity, life will become more extravagant and the citizens more fierce in their rivalry regarding office and other objects than they ought to be. . . . for this change the populace will be responsible. . . . When this happens, the state will change its name to the finest sounding of all, freedom and democracy, but will change its nature to the worst thing of all, mob rule.

The parallel with the passage from book 31 on the dissipation of Roman youth in Polybius's own time is patent.

The political context of *The Histories* illuminates its narrative structure. Polybius composed much of his history as a political hostage, and the Roman Senate was the implacable enemy of radical, populist politics. In fact, Greek politicians routinely accused their enemies of proposals for the cancellation of debts, land redistribution schemes, and other populist measures before the Roman Senate.

Polybius's diachronic representation of the Romans' collective character is both didactic and admonitory. His prescriptions conform to Roman conservative political ideas and distance the author from radical democratic politics, which Romans such as Cato associated with Greek traditions. The depiction of Roman group character and Polybius's own political analysis serve as an apology for Polybius's politics: they break down any barriers between Polybius's Hellenism and Roman political virtue, and they demonstrate the author's conservative political views. The history is both an impressive example of fidelity to rather exacting standards in the researching and accurate reporting of historical details and a masterful selection and arrangement of historical material as an exercise in politically motivated persuasion. In the latter regard, the work may have played no small role in the remarkable reversal in Polybius's personal fortunes.

Polybius's sober and pragmatic concerns result in a matter-of-fact, somewhat dry prose style, but the value of his work does not lie in its literary qualities. Of the surviving works of classical antiquity, the importance of *The Histories* is of the first order. Polybius's work provides far and away the most reliable account of a crucial period in world history; it is the clearest statement on the working principles and methodologies of ancient Greek historians; it serves as a biography of one of the most fascinating political figures in Greco-Roman history; and it has had a pervasive and abiding impact on subsequent political theory.

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Protagoras

(circa 490 B.C. – 420 B.C.)

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MAJOR WORKS – ALL NONEXTANT or FRAGMENTARY:

Antilogies;
The Art of Debating;
Direction;
The Great Speech;
On Ambition;
On Being;
On the Gods;
On Government;
On Human Errors;
On Mathematics;
On the Original State of Things;
On Those in Hades.
On Truth;
On the Virtues;
On Wrestling;
Refutations;
Trial over a Fee.

Standard editions: *Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers,* edited by K. Freeman (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1948); *Protagora: Le testimonianze e i frammenti,* edited by A. Capizzi (Florence: Sansoni, 1955); *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker,* edited by Hermann Diels and Walther Kranz, tenth edition (Berlin: Weidmann, 1961).

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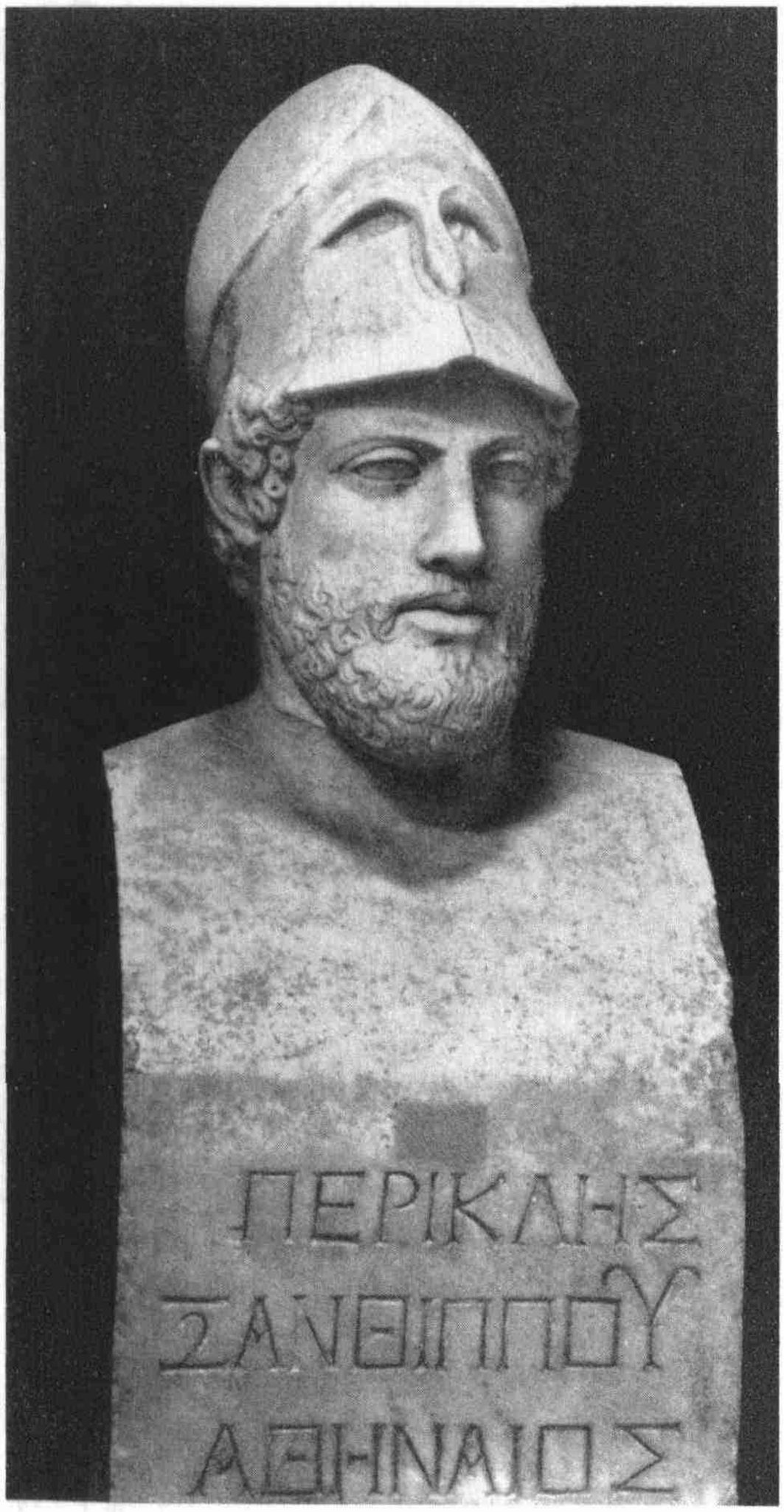
Protagoras of Abdera was the most renowned of the Sophists; he was also the one who, by being the first to charge tuition fees for his courses, established Sophistry as a profession. He, more than anyone else, was responsible for the two key themes of Sophistry: the relativity of judgment and the teaching of the rhetorical arts. His intellectual reputation was therefore immediate and enduring. In Plato's *Protagoras* (circa 399 B.C.–387 B.C.) he was treated with great deference, and by the Hellenistic period he was regarded as sufficiently significant to have a statue of himself included among those of such respected figures as Plato and Aristotle in the Serapeum at Memphis, Egypt. Little of Protagoras's work has survived; what has survived exists only in fragments, few of which can be reliably assigned to Protagoras. Nevertheless, and despite the extensive controversy over the correct interpretation of his views, Protagoras's contributions to philosophy, rhetorical and grammatical theory, and skeptical theology are now generally recognized to have had multiple and profound effects upon the history of ideas in the West.

Born about 490 B.C., Protagoras was a native of Abdera, a town on the Thracian coast of the Aegean. Philostratus reports in his *Lives of the Sophists* (circa A.D. 222) that the father of Protagoras was Maeandrius, an extremely wealthy man who once entertained the Persian king Xerxes and who, through an offering of gifts, persuaded Xerxes to enlist Protagoras as a student of the Persian magi. Hesychius cites evidence in his *Onomatologus* (circa fifth century A.D.) of a less-well-endowed beginning, listing Protagoras's father as Artemon and Protagoras's initial occupation as that of porter.

Protagoras is thought to have traveled widely from Abdera, as far as Sicily, and to have visited Athens at least twice. On one of these visits to Athens he became acquainted with Pericles, who appointed him in 444 B.C. to frame the constitution for the new Athenian colony of Thurii. Hence, it may be inferred that this relationship was an important one, marked by great esteem on the part of Pericles. In his life of Pericles (circa A.D. 90) Plutarch says that the two men spent an entire day discussing a rather fine point of legal responsibility and "action theory": a competitor in the pentathlon had unintentionally killed a



Bust of Pericles (Sala delle Muse, Vatican), who in 444 B.C. appointed Protagoras to draft the constitution for the Athenian colony of Thurii

man with a javelin; should the javelin, the man who threw it, or the directors of the games be regarded as the cause of the death? There is no record of the outcome of these deliberations.

During his forty or so years as a professional Sophist, Protagoras became a much admired and sought-after teacher and writer, one who was renowned for his courtesy and eloquence – perhaps also for his pomposity, vanity, and long-windedness – and who was able to charge large fees for his various educational services (for which he was nicknamed "Calculation"). His courses were offered to two classes of students: young men from well-to-do families who desired to enter politics and young men who wished to become Sophists themselves. A concise statement of what Protagoras taught may be contained in Plato's *Protagoras* (318e–319a), where Protagoras says that he teaches a student "the proper care of his personal affairs, so that he may best manage his own household, and also of the state's affairs, so that he may become a real power in the city both as speaker and as a man of action."

This remark would mean that Protagoras taught a course of study in the techniques of persuasive speech, but he undoubtedly would also have shared with his students some of the results of his wide and varied investigations. These extended to the subjects of epistemology, metaphysics, ethics, logic, rhetoric, politics, theology, education, cultural history, literary criticism, and linguistics (especially – or solely – their practical aspects). Any survey of his contributions to these fields is seriously hobbled by the almost total lack of surviving reliable material; a scholar must, therefore, make large interpretive assumptions. The following discussion presupposes that Plato's *Protagoras* and *Theaetetus* (circa 399 B.C.–369 B.C.), despite the tensions that some find between their portraits of Protagoras, state a basic Protagorean position that is corroborated by the testimony of both Aristotle and Sextus Empiricus (both of whom are here understood – controversially – to have been working from sources uncontaminated by Platonic accounts).

Protagoras is best known for his maxim "Man is the measure [*metron*] of all things, of things that are that [or "how"] they are and of things that are not that [or "how"] they are not." This maxim begins his work *On Truth* (which may be the same work sometimes known as *The Great Speech* or *Refutations*). Interpretations of the "man-measure" doctrine of relativism exemplified by this fragment vary, especially in their accounts of its scope; regardless of the interpretation, however, the doctrine represents an original contribution to philosophy, one whose interest continues unabated. One intriguing gloss, to be found in Plato's *Theaetetus,* is that *man* is not to be understood collectively, as referring only or primarily to the human race, but individually as referring chiefly to individual persons; secondary extensions of the principle to groups of people are easily made, and Protagoras probably did so himself.

It is the individual, then, who is the "measure" of "all things," assessing all judgments against the privileged standard of his or her private perceptions, feelings, and convictions. According to Plato's example in the *Theaetetus,* this doctrine means

that when the same wind appears warm to one person but cold to another, the wind itself is warm for that person to whom it seems so and is cold for the other. From this position it is thought to follow that all perceptual judgments are infallibly true and hence that the limits and nature of reality vary from individual to individual. Thus, Protagoras rejects the standard view that in cases of disagreement some accounts are true and others false; rather, he holds that, since all accounts are true within each individual sphere of individually determined "reality," contradiction is impossible.

The two leading and sharply divergent accounts of the metaphysical underpinnings of this doctrine are, first, the realist position that maintains that the different qualities perceived by different individuals are due to the coexistence of those qualities within one and the same independently existing object. For example, the "same wind" reported by one individual to be hot and by a different individual to be cold is the subject of equally true, though conflicting, perceptual judgments, since that "same wind" really possesses both hot and cold material components within it. Differences in perception are therefore the result of accurate but selective perceptions of qualitatively different "parts" of objects. Second, and in vivid contrast to this position, the subjectivist account of Protagoreanism holds that the things that "seem" to a perceiver are entirely dependent for their existence upon that perceiver, having no existence in an independently existing object. The wind is hot for one person and cold for another when so perceived, but that is because there is no one objective "same wind" (or winds) to serve as the common subject(s) of their perceptions. Rather, there are just two "private winds" – one hot and one cold – existing only within two discrete realms of perception. This version of Protagoreanism may have been part of the subjectivist "secret doctrine" of perception that Plato attributes to Protagoras in the *Theaetetus.*

Under either understanding the doctrine of relativity became notorious by its extension to evaluative qualities such as "just" and "beautiful." Protagoras himself – relying upon the popular observations of moral variability ("Greeks loathe incest but Egyptians think it fine") – probably made the extension, but its interpretation is again controversial. Although he would agree that whatever seems just (or good, and so on) to a person or group of persons (for example, a city) is just for them so long as it seems so, that claim may be understood to express two quite different forms of value relativism that parallel the previous metaphysical dichotomy. First, the claim may be understood to assert that evaluative predicates such as "just" may never be correctly applied to things absolutely and without qualification, since whether or not something is just or good is dependent upon – is "relative to" – its real but differing effects upon differing individuals as they are found in variously unique circumstances. A drug may be good for A and bad for B at one moment, bad for both later, and so forth, but it cannot be good or bad in itself, independent of its context-dependent effects. Hence, although a thing and its effects may be objectively good or bad (for example, a drug may be good for A even though it seems otherwise to A), its goodness or badness is situationally relative and variable. Incest, then, really may be fine for the Egyptians, and the Greeks may really be correct in loathing it.

The second, and more extreme, version of "man-measure" ethical relativity makes the goodness and badness of things entirely subject to the judgment of the individual evaluator: nothing is good or bad really, but thinking makes it so for the person to whom it seems to be so. For instance, a drug will be bad for A if, and only if, the drug appears bad to A. Neither approval of incest nor repugnance at it is a correct response to an objective and public reality; instead, both responses are "true" within the separate, diverse, and private realities of individual judgment.

Despite the popular tradition that ascribes the latter position to Protagoras on the basis of Plato's portrait in the *Theaetetus,* there are good reasons for supposing that Protagoras would have placed firm restrictions on the view, thus endorsing only a limited situational relativism. Protagoras seems to have thought, for instance, that although all individual judgments as to how some food tastes will be true, not all judgments about whether the food is beneficial to its consumer will be true: some things are better than others, independently of the judgment of the individual affected. It is in fact the task of the Sophist to help effect a change within a "patient" – be it an individual person or a polis – so that the patient comes to find true those things that are better for him than those things he previously found true (although in neither case was the patient mistaken about the truth). As a consequence of Protagoras's retaining some objective measures of evaluation, his general relativism cannot be a thoroughgoing subjectivism. Rather, it seems more likely to have been a realist account of the sort previously sketched.

In either case Protagoras's position represents an empiricist-like reaction against the denial of appearances that is implicit in Eleatic monism. Indeed,

it is reported that Protagoras took time off from his teaching to write a tract, *On Being,* directed against "those who uphold the unity of Being," Parmenides, for example. Protagoras may have held that the Eleatic opposition of appearance to reality collapses in the recognition that there are no realities beyond those of appearance and hence no one knowledge that is opposed to the many subjective beliefs of individual perceivers.

Regardless of whether Protagoras's reputation as an extreme subjectivist is deserved or resulted from misunderstanding or deliberate distortion, his ancient opponents made quite clear what sorts of problems an unmitigated subjectivism would encounter. Plato's objection was roughly this: If we suppose that Protagoras's doctrine that "whatever seems true for a person *is* true for that person" is true, then, since Protagoras will concede that it appears to some that his doctrine is false, Protagoras must hold that those who hold his doctrine to be false are correct. If Protagoras objects that in his theory nothing – not even his own theory – is true, then Protagoras's objection cannot be true; there is thus at least one truth: namely, that his "Nothing is true" cannot be true.

There are fairly clear connections between the "man-measure" doctrine and Protagoras's decisive contributions to rhetoric and logic, some of which likely appeared under the titles *Antilogies* and *The Art of Debating.* According to Diogenes Laertius in his *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* (circa A.D. 200–circa A.D. 250), Protagoras was the first to say that on every issue there are two opposed arguments to each other, the first to teach his students to argue with equal success on both sides of any issue, and the first to introduce what has come to be called, after its better-known practitioner, the Socratic method of discussion. Hence, *Antilogies* and *The Art of Debating* may well have included some samples of the paired, opposed arguments that were the stock-in-trade of Protagorean sophistry; perhaps one would also find the usual examples of widely divergent customs and ethical beliefs (and thus their "opposite" justifications). Finally, Aristotle adds in his *Rhetoric* (II24, 1402a23) that Protagoras prescribed "making the weaker argument the stronger." The connections between these points and the "man-measure" doctrine seem fairly straightforward.

The claim that "there are two arguments opposed on every issue" presupposes the observation underlying the "man-measure" doctrine: namely, that on every issue – given the differences in people and their circumstances – there will inevitably be different judgments on an issue, both "true for each to whom it seems" and both backed, therefore, by different "opposed arguments." Each of these is persuasive for each to whom it seems so, and so the argument opposed to one's own position will appear to be the "weaker argument." But since some appearances have better consequences than others for the perceiver, regardless of the fact that both appearances are true (perhaps in the sense that both grasp some real facet of the world), the professional task of the Sophist is to use persuasive speech to make the weaker-appearing argument appear (and so be for that person) the stronger. This results in a change in judgment advantageous to the person judging. The rhetorical procedures that the Sophist used to effect this "change for the better" may have involved the Socratic method of belief-testing, eliciting from the patient-interlocutor statements of belief (of "how things *are* for that person") and then, by the well-known method of question and answer, displaying to the interlocutor the contradictions within his belief structure.

This would then lead to the rejection of the unhealthy beliefs and the adoption of more hygienic views. A less benign use of this procedure, however, is suggested by those who connect Protagoras's influence – no doubt rightly – with the notorious "two logics" to which Aristophanes refers in his comedy Clouds (circa 423 B.C.). In the play a certain Strepsiades is seeking instruction in the sort of forensic virtuosity that Protagoras was known to teach so that he can argue his way out of paying his legitimate debts. He seeks, in other words, to learn the art of using "unjust speech" (the "weaker argument") to overthrow the stronger argument of "just speech." By the time of the trial of Socrates in 399 B.C., "making the weaker argument the stronger" had become a common pejorative reference to the rhetorical art of all Sophists and the term *sophistry* had become a sobriquet for any instance of clever, specious fallacy mongering. It is, however, interesting to note that Plato, Protagoras's most severe opponent in theoretical matters, never accused Protagoras himself of violating the established moral rules. In fact, Plato goes out of his way to portray Protagoras as a person of high moral character.

Diogenes Laertius mentions an incident that may give one a sense for Protagorean argumentative style. As one heavily interpreted account goes, an impecunious student named Euathlus took Protagoras's course in forensics after negotiating a tuition waiver. The arrangement called for Euathlus to receive the entire series of lessons, deferring payment until the occasion of his first legal victory.

After graduation, however, Euathlus delayed going into practice, and Protagoras finally brought suit for the tuition fee. His argument, in effect, was: If Euathlus loses the case, then he must pay me according to the judgment of the court; if he wins the case, then he must pay me according to the terms of our contract. He must either win or lose this case, and therefore, he must pay me.

But Euathlus had taken his Protagorean logic – if not his Protagorean moral theory – to heart, responding with a counterdilemma in which he said, in effect: If I win the case, then I need not pay Protagoras according to the judgment of the court; if I lose the case, then I need not pay Protagoras according to the terms of our contract. I must either win or lose the case, and therefore I need not pay Protagoras.

There is some evidence to support associating the title of Protagoras's lost work *On the Original State of Things* (or, possibly, *On the Original Social* [or *Political*] *Structure*), as well as the work *On Government,* with the social and political theory attributed to Protagoras in Plato's *Protagoras.* According to the mythical exposition presented in the theory, human beings in their original state in nature were naturally capable of solitary survival but were insufficiently equipped by nature for communal existence: they possessed the necessary practical skills such as fire making but lacked the "political art." Consequently, when they came together for protection from the more powerful wild beasts of the countryside, they were unable to cooperate and acted with injustice toward one another; such behavior inevitably escalated into large-scale aggression and homicide.

Fearing the annihilation of humanity, Zeus sent Hermes to give human beings the gifts of mutual respect and justice, in which, to make community life possible, they all share, though in unequal portions. These "gifts," however, do not come to human beings as instinctual or natural impulses; they require the intentional pursuit of instruction and practice: "Teaching requires natural endowment and practice." Hence, since free public access to education makes it possible for all to share in the beliefs requisite to just relations, Athens and the other democracies are correct in allowing the entire citizenry to advise and consent on the governance of the community. The laws (*nomoi*) at which such communities arrive will therefore save their citizens from the state of nature by providing them with the rational limits of behavior necessary for the preservation of human society and, thus, of humanity itself.

This surprisingly novel and sophisticated account is especially noteworthy for its influential justification of Periclean-style democracy and the important role it assigns to the Sophist. Although the citizenry as a whole teaches its members the political virtues, there are experts such as Protagoras who – for an appropriately professional fee – can improve the opinion of the citizenry through instruction. On the crucial educational topic of the day, Protagoras was therefore a leading optimist: virtue *can* be taught. In fact, since virtue is not a natural acquisition and since "man" is its "measure," teaching virtue is essentially a matter of instilling invented and communally beneficial conventions of behavior and belief. What is then agreed upon by a city to be just will be just for the city, so long as the agreement, and thus the social order, is maintained (though other arrangements that will appear and so be beneficial may later be substituted).

Unlike certain Sophists (for example, Antiphon, Hippias, and Callicles), Protagoras seems to have held that the observance of such flexible laws is objectively better than moral anarchy and is thus a binding obligation on the individuals of a state. In any case the Sophists not only assist in providing the civic education necessary to a democracy, they also render expert advice and legal services (for example, draw up constitutions and serve as emissaries: Protagoras himself sets the example for "nonpartisan" academics in government service). Concomitant to this optimistic picture of the difference education can make to communal life is Protagoras's enlightened rejection of retribution in his theory of punishment. Punitive sanctions ought to be applied for the sake of future deterrence, not for the sake of retribution. Appropriate punishments, therefore, will be those that serve in the education in virtue of both wrongdoer and community.

There is little evidence for doubting the reports that at the end of his life Protagoras was tried and convicted of impiety by an Athenian court on the basis of the agnostic opening to his *On the Gods:* "Concerning the gods I cannot know either that [or "how"] they are or that [or "how"] they are not, or what form they might have; for there is much to prevent one's knowing: the obscurity of the subject and the brevity of human life." Copies of this work were allegedly called in by the court's herald and burned in the public marketplace. Immediately following his banishment Protagoras is said to have set sail for Sicily and to have drowned when the ship sank.

Because *On the Gods* has not survived, it is entirely speculative what positive claims might have

followed its epistemologically bleak introduction. Anthropological accounts of widely varying religious practices might have figured in a relativistic justification of Protagoras's personal agnosticism and his view of the subject as "obscure"; the argument could be made that, since religious beliefs vary and since all beliefs are true, there is no one true theology. Thus, it is man – not the gods, as in the traditional formula – who is the measure of how things are, even with "the gods." Reference might also have been made in this work to Protagoras's reported view of the soul as being nothing apart from its perceptions (thus making *On Those in Hades* a skeptical work). Such accounts might also have introduced the popularly discussed topic of the "nature-convention" distinction, maintaining, under the influence of Xenophanes, that the gods are human contrivances, existing not in nature but only by the convention of human custom and law, which themselves differ from society to society. As an advocate of the instrumental value of social agreement, however – and despite his personal agnosticism – Protagoras may have upheld ancestral worship and cult in the book. Such traditional laws and customs and the instinct that gives rise to them are not only "true" for those who find them so, but may also be thought integral to the social and political survival of the community; hence, they are institutions that require respect and preservation, regardless of the seeming demands of natural philosophy.

Because so little of his work has survived, it is impossible to know in detail the substance of Protagoras's no doubt extensive views on the nature of language and its use: his views, for example, on effective speech and rhetoric; the correctness of names, definitions, and grammar (for instance, the division of speech into parts); or the interpretation of poems. One question he would probably have addressed is the issue of whether names have a natural fitness for their objects or instead gain their significance by arbitrary convention; Protagorean subjectivism suggests he held the latter view. Protagoras might also have explored the linguistic components of his view of the impossibility of contradiction by postulating different "true" referents for "opposed" assertions made by different speakers. Protagoras is reported to have divided speech into four basic kinds: questions, answers, requests, and commands (others report his making seven basic divisions); to have distinguished nouns from verbs; and to have divided nouns into masculine, feminine, and neuter. While much of this activity was descriptive, some seems to have been normative: Protagoras apparently contended, for example, that the feminine terms *wrath* and *helmet* ought to be masculine. Protagoras also had something to say on physics, mathematics, and wrestling, but virtually all that remains is the evidence that he had views and that in ways hard or impossible to specify they influenced the investigations of his heirs and opponents.

In sum, what little of Protagoras's work that has survived can be understood in its philosophical guise to be a response to the Eleatic rejection of the empirical world of fluid appearance in favor of a static, rationally apprehended realm of unitary being. Protagoras seems to have thought, for instance, that contrary to the nonsensuous definitions of the geometers, human senses are to be trusted in their report that a tangent touches a circle at more than one point. In this, then, he exhibits the undeniable influence of Heraclitus and Anaxagoras: the world really is as it seems and so is composed of innumerable contrary properties. Water, for example, is both hot and cold, as different perceivers report. The soul is nothing apart from such perceptions by the senses and thus does not ascend at the death of the body to an apprehension of a realm of nonsensuous truth, the residence of immortal gods. Protagoras apparently held that human reason has a useful role to play so long as it remains within its proper sphere of operation: namely, the practical, empirical world of common sense that is revealed by the human senses. Material and social progress within this world is made possible by the sophistic education that provides the beliefs and justifications underlying progressive, democratic forms of community.

The influence of this picture was profound and far-reaching. Socrates, Plato, and others (including perhaps Democritus) accepted Protagoras's account of the phenomenal world, but they were deeply disturbed by the extreme subjectivism they saw in his account (or in distorted versions of it). Committed as they were to achieving a true explanation of the phenomenal world, realist philosophers were challenged to come to grips with a position that appeared to undermine their entire project. Together with his work in rhetoric and logic, Protagoras came to be seen as the main progenitor of the new sophistic humanism and of philosophical skepticism and/or relativism as well, and thus a perennial – and so productive – challenge to the entire project of theoretical knowledge. Finally, the importance of Protagoras's social doctrines in the history of political and educational thought is equally hard to exaggerate; not only was he the first to have produced a systematic justification for par-

ticipatory democracy, but he also made a place within it for formal educational structures. Furthermore, his development of Sophistry as a professional craft ranged equally as far in its influence as his intellectual doctrines did and led not only to the achievements and profound social consequences with which these early thinkers are associated, but also to contemporary educational institutions. The many recent studies of Protagoras and his influence give witness to the continuing interest and originality of his thought, while their diversity of interpretations testify to the unfortunate barrenness of surviving records.

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Pythagoras

(circa 570 B.C. – ?)

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As is true of another enormously charismatic and influential ancient Greek philosopher – Socrates – Pythagoras seems to have written nothing; certainly nothing reliably attributed to him survives. So, as in the case of Socrates, information about his life and works must be gathered from later sources, many of which are worthless historically and none of which merits complete trust. The best evidence is from nearly two centuries or more after Pythagoras's death and is thus already deeply infected by the growth of Pythagorean legend; later sources become ever more contradictory and tendentious. Worse, some of Pythagoras's earliest biographers – Aristoxenus, Dicaearchus, Neanthes, and Timaeus – freely distorted whenever they saw fit.

Perhaps the most reliable biographical testimony comes from Aristotle in his fourth-century-B.C. *On the Pythagoreans,* which survives only in fragmentary form. Even Aristotle's information was tainted: Aelianus in *Varia Historia* reports Aristotle as saying that Pythagoras had been seen by many people in two places at one time, had a thigh made of gold, and had once been spoken to by a river. Doubtless, Aristotle would not have believed such stories, but their existence in his time shows the degree to which Pythagorean legend was already a well-established genre by the mid fourth century B.C.. The testimony of Plato, who is universally regarded as strongly influenced by the Pythagoreans, is extremely disappointing. Plato mentions Pythagoreanism twice in the *Republic* (circa 385 B.C.), but neither reference is especially illuminating. Earlier references to Pythagoras can be found in Heraclitus, Empedocles, and Herodotus, but they reveal little.

The case of Pythagoras is more difficult than the case of Socrates in other ways, as well, for most of what is known about the former derives from sources that were not close to him. Pythagoras was, to his earliest and closest associates, something of a cult figure; one feature of the cult was a vow of secrecy concerning its most central figure and his tenets. Though later the cult became more relaxed in ways, much of its history remains hopelessly shrouded in mystery.

Pythagoras is believed to have been the son of a merchant (or gem engraver) named Mnesarchus and his wife, Parthenis (or Pythais), on the island of Samos circa 570 B.C. (Other accounts make him a Tyrrhenian from Lemnos or a Syrian from Tyre.) Some biographers claim that Pythagoras had two older brothers. Pythagoras is said to have had a son, Arimnestus, who taught the atomist philosopher Democritus (this seems most unlikely). Various other sources mention other children: Mnesarchus (a likely name, given the Greek tradition of naming children for their grandfathers), Telauges, Theano, Arignote, and Myia. Some accounts claim that Pythagoras was the pupil of Anaximander, and other accounts, of Thales of Miletus, but both stories are certainly later fabrications. Several sources say Pythagoras studied with Pherecydes of Syros, but the evidence for their connection is not compelling and may have been a later fiction. Still other sources mention Hermodamas as Pythagoras's teacher.

Despite the many tales of Pythagoras's travels to Egypt, Babylon, Crete, and Delos, none is convincing. At least one trip seems likely, however: soon after Samos came under the control of the tyrant Polycrates, Pythagoras, whose reputation as a sage was apparently already established, fled to Crotona, then a Greek colony on the toe of Italy. In Crotona, Pythagoras was immediately well received, and soon afterward he drew a following, especially among the young men. Among these early Pythagoreans, it is said that a brotherhood formed, segregated from the rest of the Crotoniates. Closely bound by a variety of Pythagorean religious and philosophical doctrines and adhering to a communalism of property, the Pythagoreans soon controlled the political life of Crotona and became politically powerful throughout the region.

52. Pythagoras

Pythagoras; portraits on a silver coin from Abdera, circa 430–425 B.C., and on a bronze coin from Samos of the Roman imperial period

Late in Pythagoras's life, however, things began to sour. Cylon, a native Crotoniate from one of its older and more distinguished families, is said to have sought to join the Pythagoreans but was turned away because of an evil disposition. Infuriated, Cylon and his friends stirred up violence and hostility against the Pythagorean community. The Pythagoreans nevertheless managed for a while to maintain their political power in Crotona and the rest of the region, despite the unceasing enmity of the Cylonians. But a terrible act brought their influence to an end: as they were convened at the house of a six-time Olympic victor, Milo, several Cylonians set fire to the place and burned to death all but a few of the Pythagoreans within. Two of the survivors, Archippus and Lysis, and the other remaining Pythagoreans, soon found that the cities in the region did not plan to take retaliatory action against the Cylonians. Archippus returned to Tarentum; Lysis left for Greece, ending up in Thebes, where he eventually died; the rest of the Pythagoreans gathered in Rhegium for a while but, seeing the situation in Italy continuing to worsen, eventally left Italy for Greece. The only one said to remain was Archytas of Tarentum, with whom Plato became so closely associated.

Diogenes Laertius reports a variety of accounts of Pythagoras's death. In two, Pythagoras is captured attempting to escape the conflagration at Milo's house and put to death. In yet another, he escapes, withdraws to Metapontum, and starves himself to death. In still another, Milo's house is not mentioned; rather, Pythagoras returns from burying his master, Pherecydes, in Delos to find Cylon in power. Dispirited, Pythagoras withdraws to Metapontum and starves himself to death. In the last, and most unlikely account of all, Pythagoras is said to have died leading the people of Acragas in a war against Syracuse – trapped between the advancing Syracusans and a field of beans, Pythagoras was killed in battle.

Many of the teachings associated with the early Pythagoreans cannot be easily explicated, though scholars who enjoy the challenge they present are often tempted to try to account for them. The various accounts generally agree that Pythagoreanism has two important aspects. As Iamblichus says in his early-third-century-A.D. work *On the Common Mathematical Science,* "There are two types of the Italian philosophy called Pythagorean. For those who pursued it were also two in kind, the akousmaticians and the mathematicians."

The collected teachings of the Pythagoreans came to be known as the *akousmata* (things heard) or the *sumbola* (signs or signals). These life-guiding principles were no doubt passed on by word of mouth and committed to memory by those initiated into the brotherhood, acting as passwords for those occasions when one might need to identify himself as a member. At least some of these

appear to have been formulated into ritual questions and answers, as described by Iamblichus in his *Life of Pythagoras* (circa A.D. 300):

> All the so-called *akousmata* are of three forms: some of them signify what a thing is, some say what is the most, and some tell what one must or must not do. Examples of the form that tell what a thing is are: "What are the Isles of the Blessed? Sun and Moon." "What is the Oracle at Delphi? The *tetraktus* [a Pythagorean sacred symbol – the numbers 1 through 4 signified by points and arranged into a triangle composed of the 10 points, where *10* is viewed as the most perfect number]: which is the harmony in which the Sirens sing." Examples of the form that tell what is the most are: "What is the most just thing? To sacrifice." "What is the wisest? Number; but second, he who named things." "What is the wisest of our [human] things? Medicine." "What is the best [of human things]? Happiness." "What is the truest thing said? That humans are wicked."

In Iamblichus's third category of teaching, which "tell what one must or must not do," various sources report that the Pythagoreans followed a variety of eating prohibitions, which are sometimes (implausibly) supposed to flow from their well-attested belief in the transmigration of souls. In fact, the eating prohibitions do not include a general proscription against eating the flesh of animals; only certain animals and specific parts of other animals are explicitly prohibited, and the specificity of these prohibitions strongly suggests that other meats were accepted fare. Iamblichus even reports that traditionally sacrificed animals may be eaten, though Porphyry's *Life of Pythagoras* (circa A.D. 260) adds that of these, the loin, testicles, genitals, marrow, feet, and head should not be eaten. The Pythagoreans also forbade the eating of beans, for reasons upon which even the ancients could not agree. Porphyry offers a few other Pythagorean prohibitions and interprets them as follows:

> Do not step over a balance (do not seek more than your fair share).
> Do not stir the fire with a sword (do not annoy with sharp words an already angry man).
> Do not tear off the crown (do not outrage the laws, which are the crown of the state).
> Do not eat the heart (do not trouble yourself with grief).
> Do not sit on the stored wheat (do not be idle).
> Do not turn back when on a journey (when dying, do not cling to life).

Not all of the maxims attributed to the Pythagoreans are amenable to clearly moral interpretations. For example, no plausible interpretations of this sort have been offered for such puzzling Pythagorean maxims as "Spit on the trimmings of your hair and your fingernails," or "When putting on shoes, start with the right foot, but wash the left foot first" (found in Iamblichus's *Exhortation to Philosophy,* circa A.D. 300). Equally bewildering examples may be found collected in the works of various ancient authors, such as Diogenes Laertius, Porphyry, Iamblichus and Hippolytus.

Some connection to Orphic religion seems certain, but the specifics of actual cult practices and beliefs for either are difficult to discern. Perhaps the best summary of what scholars do know comes from Porphyry in his *Life of Pythagoras*:

> What he said to his associates, no one can say for sure – for they were extraordinarily secretive. But these things became known by everyone: first, he said the soul is immortal; then, that it changes into other kinds of living things; in addition to this, he said that things go in cycles, coming around again in time, and that nothing is ever absolutely new; also, all living things should be thought of as akin. Pythagoras seems to have been the first to bring these beliefs into Greece.

Theoretical mathematics emerged as one of Greece's greatest contributions to later times, and scholars widely attribute this contribution mainly to the Pythagoreans. John Burnet has speculated that the widespread interest in mathematics in Greece by the end of the fifth century B.C. can only be explained by the appeal and charisma of a single original proponent, and he proposes that no one but Pythagoras could have been this charismatic proponent. Burnet's claim betrays precisely scholars' frustrating ignorance: they do not know in fact if Pythagoras himself was the "great man" who introduced the study of pure (as opposed to applied) mathematics to Greece; all that is known is that later Pythagoreans were renowned for their mathematical work and that most of their discoveries were attributed to Pythagoras himself.

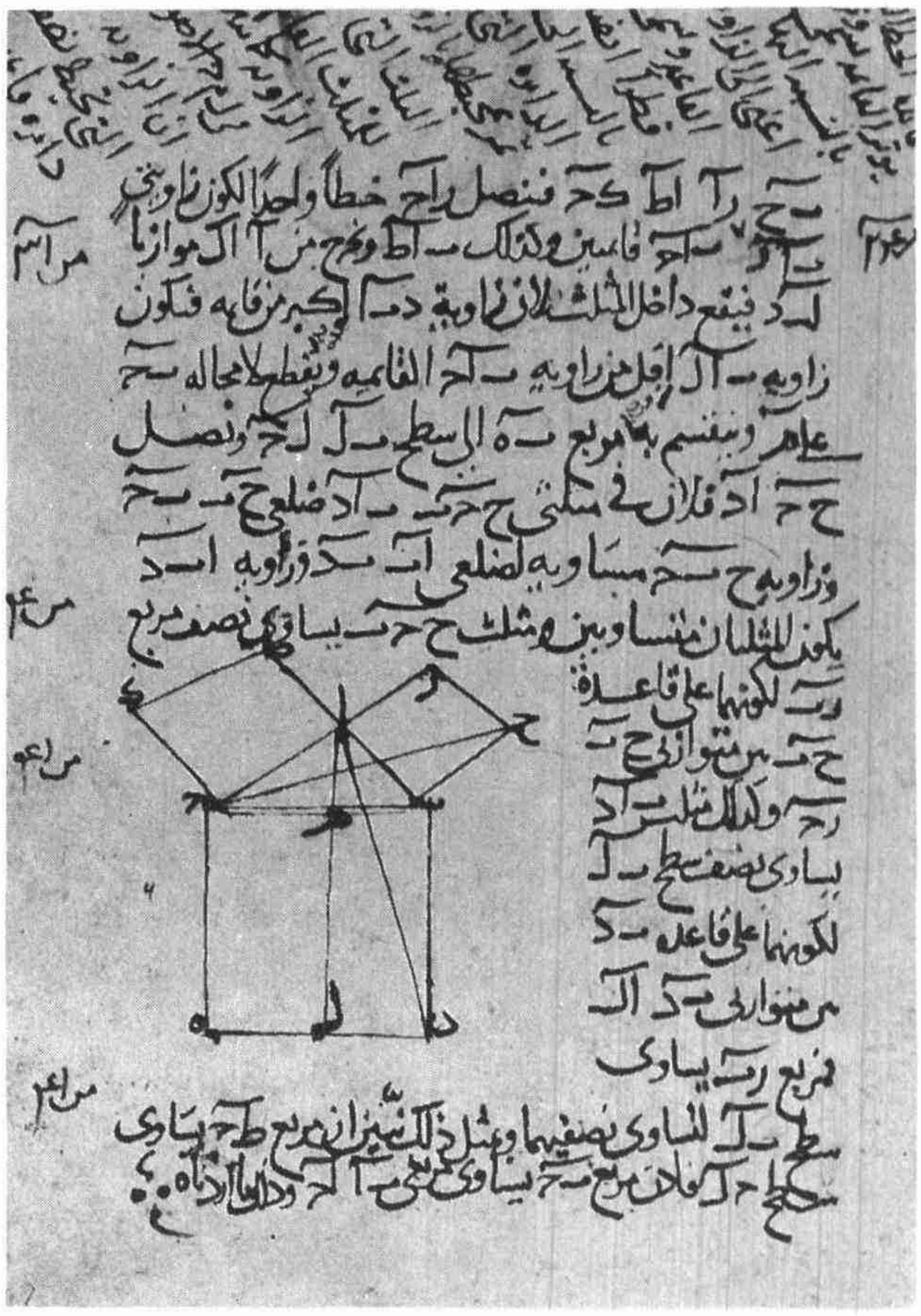
Contrary to the claims of the later Pythagoreans, however, Iamblichus reports in *On the Common Mathematical Science* (circa A.D. 300) that the akousmaticians did not accept the mathematicians as true Pythagoreans, claiming that the latter's interests did not derive from Pythagoras but rather from Hippasus of Metapontum. In fact, Hippasus is mentioned repeatedly with, or in place of, Pythagoras, in early accounts of Pythagorean mathematics, especially in regard to the "Pythagorean" connection between mathematics and music/harmony. It is nevertheless likely, given later Pythagoreans' attributions, that Pythagoras made some substantial contribution to mathematical studies. It is impossible,

however, to determine what that contribution was, and it seems likely that whatever Pythagoras's own original contribution was, it was further elaborated on or substantially added to by others, such as Hippasus. Later Pythagoreans took the accumulated discoveries they inherited as having their sole source in Pythagoras; though there is ample reason to doubt this, the state of evidence does not allow a clear distinguishing of later contributions from earlier ones.

The Pythagoreans saw metaphysical significance in the study of mathematics, regarding its objects not as proper models for scientific explanation but rather as the actual constituents of things. In the *Metaphysics* (circa 335 B.C.) Aristotle offers the most complete account of the Pythagorean view:

> Contemporaneously with these philosophers [namely the atomists, Leucippus and Democritus] and before them, the so-called Pythagoreans, who were first to take up mathematics, not only advanced this study, but also having been brought up in it they thought its principles [*archai*] were the principles of all things. Since of these principles numbers are by nature the first, and in numbers they seemed to see many resemblances to the things that exist and come into being – more than in fire and earth and water (such and such a modification of numbers being justice, another being soul and reason, another being opportunity – and similarly almost all other things being numerically expressible); since, again, they saw that the modifications and the ratios of the musical scales were expressible in numbers; – since, then, all other things seemed in their whole nature to be modelled on numbers, and numbers seemed to be the first *things in the whole of nature, they supposed the* elements of numbers to be the elements of all things, and the whole heaven to be a musical scale and a number. . . . Evidently, then, these thinkers also consider that number is the principle both as matter for things and as forming both their modifications and their permanent states, and hold that the elements of number are the even and the odd, and that of these the latter is limited, and the former unlimited; and that the One proceeds from both of these . . . and number from the One; and that the whole heaven, as has been said, is numbers.
>
> (translated by W. D. Ross)

As Aristotle's account shows, the Pythagoreans conceived the objects of mathematics to be the elements of virtually every area of intellectual inquiry, including ethics (justice), psychology (the soul), and of course, music. They endowed numbers with mystical significance – Sextus Empiricus, in *Against the Mathematicians* (late second century A.D.), relates that the Pythagoreans would even swear oaths by the tetraktus.



Page from a thirteenth-century Arabic commentary, with a diagram of the Pythagorean theorem (British Museum)

The Pythagoreans seem also to have generated their geometrical inquiries through observations of numbers, spacially depicted, in relation to one another. Hence, the tetraktus was depicted as the triangle formed by the numbers *1* through *4,* with a base of four dots and an apex of one dot. Further sums of successive integers were called "triangular numbers." Series of odd numbers, in the form of gnomons, were formed into squares, whereas series of even numbers formed "oblongs," or rectangles. The numbers *3, 4,* and *5* may be used to construct a right triangle, which later writers call the "Pythagorean Triangle," a figure readily seen to fit what has come to be known as the Pythagorean theorem, namely, that the square of the hypotenuse of a right triangle is equal to the sum of the squares of the other two sides. From this one can fairly readily see that the square of the diagonal of another square is equal in area to twice that of the latter square. The incommensurability of the diagonal and the side of

a square can easily be seen from this and caused a quarrel among Greek mathematicians – Hippasus was said to have been drowned for revealing this embarrassing fact.

One of the earliest and best-attested applications of Pythagorean mathematics was to the study of harmony – musical relationships are still referred to by their Pythagorean numbers (such as "the third" or "the fifth"). Another area of application was to astronomy, though this no doubt came somewhat later and may have been mainly the work of Philolaus, a Pythagorean of the mid to late fifth century. Plato has the Pythagoreans call harmony and astronomy "sister" sciences, because of the mathematical expressibility of so many of their aspects. The various tenets of Pythagorean astronomy and music are, however, matters of extreme unclarity and controversy.

Far more significant than any of Pythagoras's own views, or perhaps even those of his "school" of followers in the following centuries, is the influence and effect of what came to be known as "Pythagorean" thought and doctrine on such important thinkers as Plato, Aristotle, and Euclid. Various aspects of Pythagoreanism are certain to have influenced Plato's mature work, though these influences can never be clearly untangled from Plato's own contributions. So too, Aristotle's writings abound with reactions to Pythagorean thought, especially in scientific areas (and perhaps partly because of Plato's effect on Aristotle). Though Aristotle's responses are invariably critical, the sophistication of his inquiries in many fields is greatly increased as a result of his study of Pythagorean thought. Euclid's brilliant mathematical work everywhere shows traces of what had by then become the research tradition firmly associated with the Pythagorean school. What the doctrines of Pythagoras specifically were continues to be a matter of scholarly dispute that is unlikely to be resolved, given the fact that the sources for Pythagoras's thought are extremely problematic. However, that his school played an important role in the development of Greek mathematics and philosophy can scarcely be doubted.

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Sappho

(circa 620 B.C. – circa 550 B.C.)

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MAJOR WORK: Poems, extant only in fragments, circa sixth century B.C.

Editio princeps: *Carminum poetarum novem,* edited by Henri Estienne (Paris: Henri Estienne, 1560).

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[References in the text are to Lobel-Page system]

The greatest importance of Sappho in literary history has been her contribution toward the definition of the lyric genre. While her early date and her gender guaranteed her a position of major significance, it was her brilliant creativity that made her a figure of renown. Sappho's poems – of which only a handful of fragments survive – have been applauded by readers in all eras, and she has been regarded by many as one of the greatest poets of European history. Ancient and modern critics alike use terms such as "incandescent" and "a marvel" in response to her passionate intensity. Before Sappho poets such as Archilochus had used the lyric to challenge or interrogate social norms with the individual voice, but in Sappho's works subjective emotion reaches new heights of intellectual dignity, comparable almost to Plato or, later, Bernard of Clairvaux. In emphatic directness, using few figures of speech, she celebrates love as the highest of human faculties while recognizing its complex nature, including elements of jealousy, rivalry, and aggression. In her work the power of Eros is self-justifying and literally, in its extremest dimensions, religious.

Little is known with certainty about the life of Sappho, or *Psappha* in her native Aeolic dialect. She was born probably about 620 B.C. to an aristocratic family on the island of Lesbos during a a great cultural flowering in the area. Apparently her birthplace was either Eressos or Mytilene, the main city on the island, where she seems to have lived for some time. Even the names of her family members are inconsistently reported, but she does seem to have had several brothers and to have married and had a daughter named Cleis. Sappho seems also to have exchanged verses with the poet Alcaeus. Scholars have discussed her likely political connections and have proposed plausible biographical details, but these remain highly speculative.

In antiquity Sappho was regularly counted among the greatest of poets and was often referred to as "the Poetess," just as Homer was called "the Poet." Plato hailed her as "the tenth Muse," and she was honored on coins and with civic statuary. Nonetheless, an ancient, scurrilous tradition attacked and ridiculed her for her evident sexual preferences. Indeed, the facts of her life have often been distorted to serve the moral or psychological ends of her readers. An Anacreontic fragment that was written in the generation after Sappho sneers at Lesbians. Sappho was lampooned by the writers of New Comedy. Ovid related the story of Phaon, who, according to some traditions, rejected Sappho's love and caused her to leap from a rock to her death. Christian moralists pronounced anathemas upon her. Many modern editors have exercised "gallantry" and "discretion" by eliminating or changing words or lines in her poems that they believed would be misunderstood by readers. This history of her reception is itself part of Sappho's significance.

Sappho; Roman period mosaic at Sparta

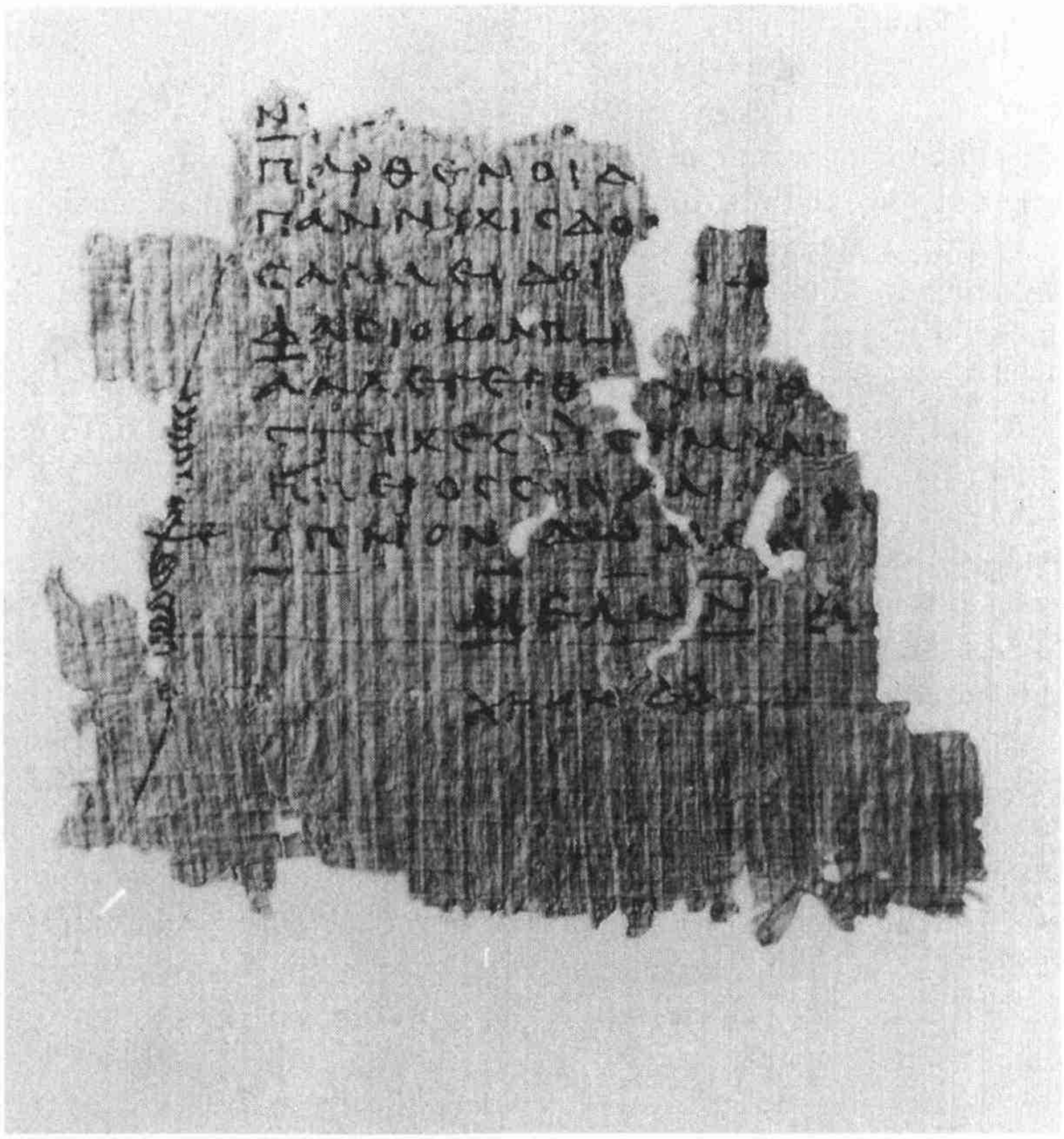
Perhaps the text that best represents the more purely poetic influence of Sappho is number 31, which catalogues the physical symptoms of love longing in the writer as she watches her beloved chatting with a man. This poem is preserved in *On the Sublime* (circa first century A.D.), whose author, traditionally known as Longinus, cites it as an example of the attainment of great sublimity by skillful arrangement of content. Noting the great passion, the accuracy of observation, and the felicitous combination of detail, he asks, in the impressionistic way characteristic of Sappho's admirers, "Are you not astonished?" For this critic, Sappho illustrates "the most extreme and intense expression of emotion," and his reading surely exemplifies the primary way in which her work has been read. For all her metrical complexity and innovation (one of the meters in which she composed her poems later became known as the "Sapphic" meter), for all the vowel-rich melody of her verse, it is the content that has fascinated her readers. Her poems are, for all their dazzling craft, repeatedly praised as spontaneous, simple, direct, and honest.

This particular poem was imitated by Theocritus and Apollonius of Rhodes; it was translated by Catullus; Sir Philip Sidney; Percy Bysshe Shelley; George Gordon, Lord Byron; Alfred Tennyson; and many others, including the nineteenth-century Greek poet Aléxandros Soútsos. That list alone may suggest something of the nature of Sappho's influence on the Romantic idea of the poet as a creature of feeling, one whose solitary song is overheard, as opposed to the classical model of the poet as a socially defined craftsperson who speaks to a group.

The same emphasis on the overwhelming power of love appears in many of Sappho's songs. Indeed, even when she wrote in the more conventional genres of ancient poetry, Sappho's erotic themes find expression. Poems addressed to individuals (such as the epistolary poem number 2) and ritual and religious poems manifest a similar content. What was once a considerable body of marriage songs, now known only from a few fragments, may be read as public, ceremonial affirmations of Eros. Similarly, the majestic hymn to Aphrodite (poem 1), while belonging to a familiar poetic form, strikes most readers as a personal outcry, more self-interested than religious in feeling. Only when one really takes seriously the testimony on the primary power of sexual energy in human life from the earliest so-called Venus figures of Anatolia to the work of Sigmund Freud do the nature and force of Sapphic piety become more explicable.

In her poetry, though, veneration for the erotic is freed from agricultural associations and traditional formulas and seems rather the natural expression of an individual whose observations are true to the complexity of her experience and include conflicted and aggressive emotion. Love, though apotheosized, is neither censored nor simplified. In poem 1, the hymn to Aphrodite, passion is strained almost to the point of vindictiveness. The author seems to seek mastery and not mutuality; it is ambiguous or irrelevant whether divine intervention will result in happiness for all. The urgent imperatives of the body rather than social or cosmic harmony suffice to motivate the goddess and her devotee. In other poems Sappho is yet more acerbic, approaching the level of a curse in poem 37, for instance. Rivals or those who reject her approaches provoke violent hostility, as may be seen in poems 55 and 158.

Most often, however, the emphasis is on the poet's own suffering, caused by "bittersweet" love (poem 130). The conventions of lovesickness – uncertainty, sleeplessness, bondage, slavery – familiar from Ovid, the troubadours, and more recent writers including the lyricists of blues songs are fully developed in Sappho. For examples, one might cite poems 51, 134, and many others. One small fragment, number 38, says simply "you burn me." In



Fragment of a second-century-A.D. papyrus text of Sappho's poems (Bodleian Library, Oxford)

powerful and memorable images the poet declares that her heart has been shattered by love, which has struck like a tree-battering mountain wind (poem 47), while in another she compares her beloved to a flower trampled on the path (poem 105c). Most commonly and movingly the emotion is simply awe before loveliness (as in poems 156 and 167 and others) or longing, as in the beautiful image of the fruit just out of reach (poem 105a).

Her attitudes toward love attracted a great deal of attention, both positive and negative. It is perhaps as an icon of the erotic that Sappho has been best known. In antiquity and in modern times there have been those who enthusiastically applauded her celebration of physical love. Catullus, Algernon Charles Swinburne, John Addington Symonds, Pierre Louÿs, "Michael Field," some contemporary feminist critics, and many other readers have found in her valorization of subjective experience an affirmation often absent in the European tradition. The critical vocabulary reveals this orientation, as when Kenneth Rexroth repeatedly uses the word *ecstasy* to refer to his reading of Sappho, thereby blurring her life experience into his own and into the literary experience of the text.

Much of the history of Sappho's reputation, though, is the story of her appropriation by moralists. Those New Comedians who picked up the strain of abuse initiated by the Anacreontic fragment mentioned earlier rendered the poet a popular burlesque comic figure on the stage. A good many plays centered around Sappho, though most were wholly unrelated to her life or her poetry. Later Christian censors in various ages in Alexandria, Rome, and Constantinople condemned her in words such as those of Tatian, who called her "a whore who sang about her own licentiousness." Saint Gregory of Nazianzus and Pope Gregory VII ordered her works burned.

In fact, a curious case study of the conflicts induced by Sappho's status as the world's most renowned Lesbian might be made from the comments of her learned editors in recent times. The classical scholar Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff defended her with great self-righteousness as a schoolteacher like himself who was devoted to educational and even spiritual aims, while Sir Denys Page strained to maintain that, while the nature of her desires is beyond doubt, there is no evidence that she actually made love to women in practice.

Surely the attitude of Maximus of Tyre is reasonable when he suggests that her group was similar to the group that surrounded Socrates. No perceptive reader can read Plato's accounts of the Socratic milieu without being aware of the erotic atmosphere that is often evident, although to accuse Socrates of hedonism would be ridiculous. In the present era, when homosexuality is widely accepted and the sexes are not so artificially polarized as in the past, it is time to go beyond the attacks and defenses of Sappho's supposed behavior. She remains an extraordinary poet of the Eros that animates every human being, and her works speak to both heterosexual and homosexual readers, to men as well as to women.

Apart from her fascination with the theme of love, Sappho contributed in other ways to the conventions of the lyric genre. Her emphasis on emotion, on subjective experience, and on the individual marks a stark contrast between her work and the epic, liturgical, or dramatic poetry of the period. Much earlier poetry had been liturgical, ceremonial, or courtly – in various ways emphatically public. But much of Sappho's work is intimate and putatively private, addressed to specific women or to her friends; and her tone of colloquial familiarity anticipates medieval and modern practice. Just as the troubadours recorded the names of friends and enemies with meticulous precision and modern poets often insist on the paradoxical importance of ephemera (for instance the American poet William Carlos Williams's wheelbarrow or plums), Sappho's texts assume an immediate net of circumstance and imply that only through the particular can the universal be manifested. Unlike earlier singers, who had memorialized the values and ideology of a whole social group while remaining themselves in anonymity, the lyricists, Sappho prominent among them, found the truest and most significant material in individual experience.

In terms of ideas this stance meant that, while much earlier literature had been sustained by the social consensus of collective vision expressed in myth and legend, Sappho was free to be critical, to point out the gaps and problems in the received opinions of her society. Like Archilochus, she challenges the heroic ethos that buttressed patriotism (most strikingly in poem 63), and throughout her work she asserts, in a way little known in archaic and traditional societies, the potentially subversive primacy of the individual consciousness and the validity of its opinions and impulses.

This does not, of course, mean that her poetic practice was wholly modern. Her work, though perhaps composed in writing, was meant to be performed orally, as can be seen from poems 118, 160, and others. Many of her texts suggest that she adhered, consciously or not, to the view that poetry was a form of magic and that, by manipulating language, one could also manipulate the reality that it described. Her poems of praise and blame contributed to the development of the epideictic, the most distinctly literary of the rhetorical types. But even these poems have not wholly lost the original sense of language's sympathetic magic, though that sense is sliding toward wish fulfillment in poems such as numbers 2 or 17. In these the aesthetic ends are replacing the shaman's reliance on external events to validate the efficacy of the word. The *locus amoenus* that had been that vision of heaven which by initiating the worshipper assured admission is moving here toward the less enchanting trance of modern *Unterhaltungsliteratur* and the glowing television tube. In the same way the negative images that had originally been designed to avert evil become instead critical, defamiliarizing explorations of contradictions in human experience or tensions in the psychic self.

In literary history and critical theory Sappho's greatest importance is to be found in her contribution to the idea of the lyric genre. Her work, which claims to be direct, impassioned, and simple and which is addressed to a circle of close friends and lovers rather than being impersonal or directed at connoisseurs, has significantly influenced the evolution of poetry. Her celebration of love has reechoed through the centuries not only in the work of translators and direct imitators, but also in all those other voices that have dared declare their love to be radically important, more compelling and serious than abstract notions of truth or justice or piety. At the same time Sappho reminds modern readers of poetry's roots in magic and religion while occupying a firm place in Greek literary history as a metrical inventor and an expert practitioner of her art. Finally, she is widely recognized as one of the great poets of world literature, an author whose works have caused her readers to repeat in many different forms Strabo's amazed epithet when he wrote that she could only be called "a marvel."

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Sophocles

(497/496 B.C. – 406/405 B.C.)

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MAJOR WORKS–EXTANT: *Antigone* (442 B.C. [?]);
Philoctetes, 409 B.C.;
Oedipus at Colonus (posthumous), 401 B.C.;
Women of Trachis;
Ajax;
Oedipus Rex;
Electra.

Editio princeps: *Sophoclis Tragaediae Septem cum commentariis* (Venice: Aldus Manutius, 1502).

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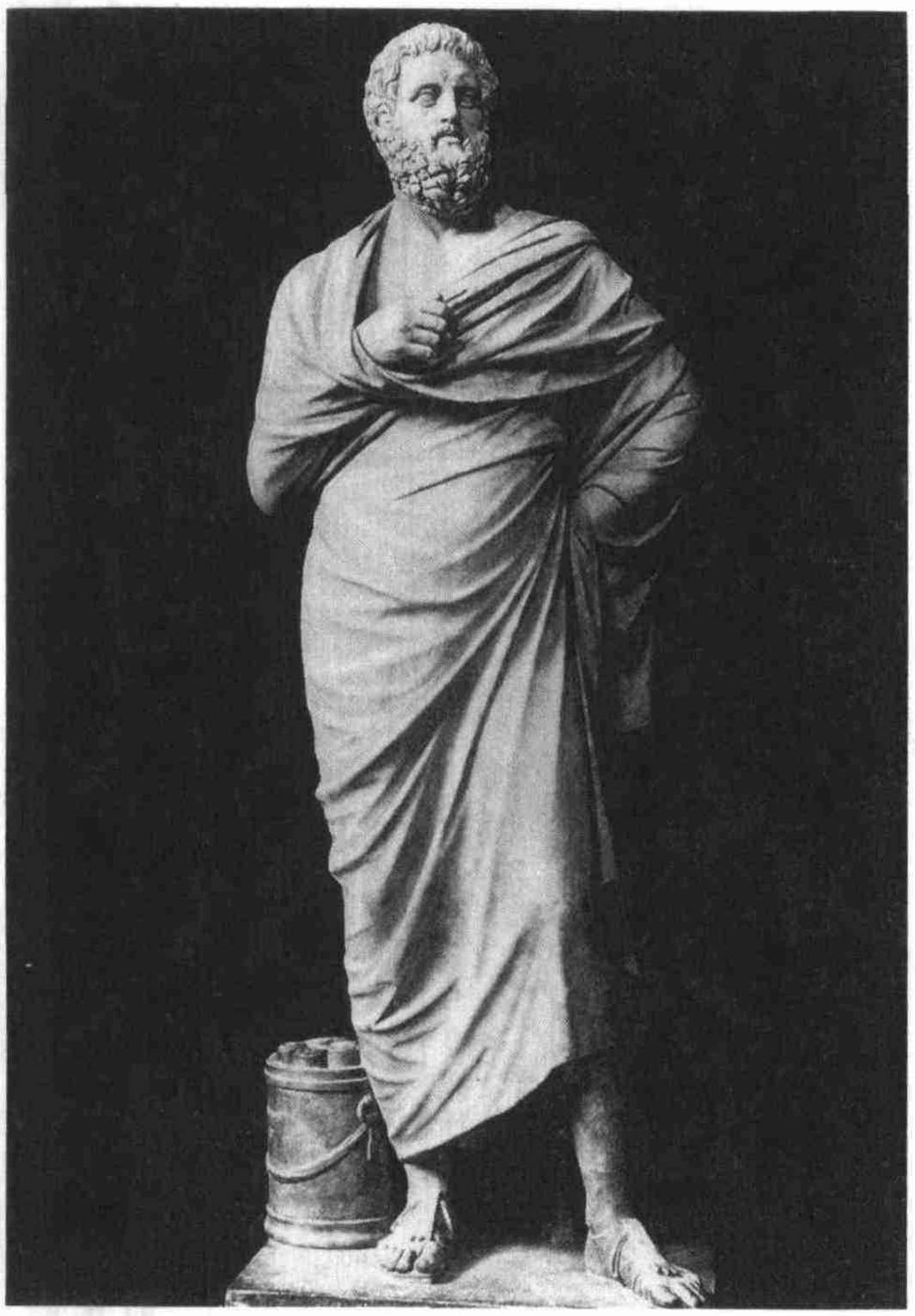
Commentaries: R. C. Jebb, *Trachiniae* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1892); Jebb, *Oedipus tyrranus,* third edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1893); Jebb, *Ajax* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1896); Jebb, *Philoctetes,* second edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1898); Jebb, *Antigone,* third edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1900); Jebb, *Electra* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1900); Jebb, *Oedipus Coloneus,* third edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1900); Malcolm Davies, *Trachiniae* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).

During the fifth century B.C., the Golden Age of Athens, new forms of art and literature were being developed with extraordinary speed and energy. One of the most important of these forms was Tragedy, and the preeminence of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides in this innovative field was instantly recognized by their contemporaries. The second named of these three dramatists is often taken, perhaps too conveniently, as the benchmark by which the other two are judged.

Sophocles' date of birth is variously given, within narrow limits, by the ancient authorities, but 497 B.C. or 496 B.C. is the likeliest inference. The date of his death is more secure: 406 B.C. or 405 B.C. His lifetime thus spanned the fifth century B.C., that period of history which, more than any other, deserves the adjective *classic;* and Sophocles is often thought of among poets as the embodiment of that classicism. (If, though, by that term one means a perfection of form characterized by symmetry and restraint, with Sophocles as a kind of literary counterpart to the Parthenon, one will be in danger of going seriously astray.) Other details of Sophocles' life that scholars are inclined to accept as true from the notoriously unreliable ancient biographies are that his father was a businessman called Sophillus; that he had a musical education and achieved success in that sphere (he sang a solo part in the victory paean after the battle of Salamis in 480 B.C.); that his first victory in the principal dramatic festival, the Greater Dionysia, occurred in 468 B.C.; and that he never won less than second prize and came in first on at least eighteen occasions.

Besides his artistic achievements Sophocles held the post of treasurer (*Hellenotamias*) in either 443 or 442, and in



Sophocles; statue found in 1839 at Teracina (Museo Gregoriano-Profano, Vatican)

the war to suppress a revolution in Samos from 441 to 439 he held the command as general along with Pericles as a reward, an ancient source records, for his *Antigone.* The reason given sounds hardly plausible, but since the dates, both absolutely and relatively, of Sophocles' plays are largely unknown, the story may count as possible evidence when the attempt to construct a chronological framework for his literary output is made. Later, after the military catastrophe of the Sicilian adventure in 413 in the war with Sparta, Sophocles was made a member of the Athenian senate. Other and more-suspect biographical details may be omitted from this sketch, except for two of a different kind: that he was a priest of an obscure god connected with healing; and that Aristophanes the comic poet, writing soon after his death, described him as a man of good humor, a verdict that other anecdotes support.

This good-humored, pious citizen of Athens wrote, on the most likely estimate, some 123 plays. (Among other writings ascribed to him, the name of one in particular, a prose work titled *On the Chorus,* provokes thought.) Apart from many extant fragments that range from the sizable remnants of a satyr play, *The Trackers* (*Ichneutai*), down to scraps of perhaps no more than a single word, all that has survived of Sophocles' dramatic work are seven of his 123 plays. Of these seven there is a firm date, 409, for *Philoctetes,* and *Oedipus at Colonus* is known to have been his last creation because it was produced posthumously in 401. As noted, there are grounds for placing *Antigone* close to 441. The date of *Women of Trachis,* a play whose authenticity has been doubted by a few in the past, is now generally put at sometime before *Antigone; Ajax* is also deemed to be relatively early. The date of *Oedipus Rex* has been endlessly discussed without agreement being reached; stylistically it seems not far from *Electra,* whose placing on the chronological table is bedeviled by equally endless discussion as to whether it precedes or follows Euripides' *Electra,* written in 413 (not that one play is necessarily a covert critique of the other, as is commonly assumed). It appears, then, that of the seven surviving plays, the ones deemed to be "early" belong to a time when the poet was already in his fifties; and some of his finest choral writing, in *Oedipus at Colonus,* belongs to a man of ninety.

If Aeschylus was primarily interested in questions of inherited guilt within the family, and Euripides, Sophocles' contemporary, in exploring the myths of Greece with a critical eye on such matters as the position of women in society or the validity of conventional views of the gods, for Sophocles the center of interest was always the individual human being–in particular the kind of human being who will not compromise even when he or she clearly perceives the advantages that compromise would bring. In that refusal to compromise Sophocles sees the seeds of a person's own destruction; yet at the same time such a character is plainly the kind that he admires and for whom he seems to invite admiration by others. In this respect his emphasis is on human free will: the hero has only to change his mind, to adapt to circumstances, and catastrophe will be averted. But there is another countertheme running through six of the seven tragedies, one that Sophocles does not hesitate to bring into play, even when it has no necessary foothold in the myth: the theme of oracular predictions and the inevitability of their fulfillment. This tension between human free will and divine predestination presents problems of interpretation to which no clear-cut answer can be given. Artistically the interest revolves around a person's own free decision, but the mechanistic data of the plot leave no doubt as to the outcome.

In what may be the first extant play, *Women of Trachis,* the relationship between these two themes is at its least satisfactory. In outline the story is about Deianeira and her errant husband, Heracles, whose love she tries to recapture by sending him the gift of a robe impregnated with a deadly poison that she believes will act as a love philter. Since this supposed philter was given to her by the centaur Nessus at the moment of his death and that death had been brought about by Heracles himself using poisoned

Antigone being brought before Creon; scene from Sophocles' Antigone *in a Greek vase painting, circa 380–370* B.C.

arrows, Deianeira's action has been not unreasonably compared to that of a woman looking for a gas leak with a lighted match. The folly of such an action robs the plot of all credibility. Then the depiction of Heracles in his last hours, and in particular his dying command to his son to marry Iole, the current mistress whom he will be leaving behind, is so unsympathetic as to make him the most unpleasant major character in Sophocles. By contrast the unhappy wife Deianeira, for all her intellectual shortcomings, comes across as a gentle, loving creature; unfortunately for the audience, she, in the realization of her error, commits suicide while the play still has more than a third of its length to run.

An equal lack of balance, as it appears to modern tastes, is seen in the other two plays that seem to comprise this relatively early group: *Ajax* and *Antigone.* In the first the warrior Ajax is so incensed by the decision to award the armor of Achilles to Odysseus and not to himself that he resolves to kill the Greek generals Agamemnon and Menelaus. The goddess Athene, familiar from the *Odyssey* (eighth century B.C.) as Odysseus's patron goddess, causes Ajax to suffer from mental delusions, and he kills sheep in the belief they are the army commanders. Returning to sanity, he is overcome by shame and resolves to commit suicide. The chorus and his wife, Tecmessa, plead with him, and after a choral interlude he appears onstage to deliver a speech that has given rise to contradictory interpretations. In it he seems to renounce suicide, but he does so in ambiguous language. Nothing is forever: the seasons change; darkness gives way to light; storms at sea are followed by calm; and sleep knits up the raveled sleeve of care–so why should I, Ajax, consider my earlier attitude to be an exception? The chorus takes him at his word and, in a dramatic technique that Sophocles uses elsewhere, delivers an optimistic ode just before the moment catastrophe strikes. What makes Ajax's refusal to compromise, which in this case means his suicide, so deeply impressive is the way in which he shows himself so fully aware of the arguments that a person of mild rationality might deploy against him.

But as with *Women of Trachis,* that suicide takes place with a third–on this occasion rather more than a third–of the play still to run. That third is occupied first by the arrival of Teucer, Ajax's half brother, who pronounces a kind of retrospective oration over the body; then by Menelaus, who

gloats and forbids burial, opposed by Teucer; and last by Agamemnon, the commander in chief, again opposed by Teucer. Only Odysseus, seen at the beginning of the play in a none too heroic light, now intervenes in a more generous spirit, and burial is granted. The latter part of these final scenes following the suicide was condemned as an artificial extension two thousand years ago by the anonymous contributor to the ancient commentary. Certainly such a moral postmortem is not to everyone's taste, and although modern scholarship fights vigorously to insist that *Ajax* is an artistic unity, scholarly protests that there is nothing to apologize for only strengthen the feelings of unease among skeptics.

If one looks at the clockwork of the plot, Athene's treatment of Ajax is in retaliation for his disrespectful attitude toward her on earlier occasions preceding the story of the play itself; and one notices that Sophocles is so wedded to the theme of oracles that he has a prophet declare that the goddess's anger will only be operative for one more day, so that if Ajax can be restrained for that time, his death need not follow. Needless to say, that condition is not fulfilled.

Antigone represents the clash of two different philosophies shown through the medium of two conflicting personalities. Both sides, in their different ways, have right on their side, and therein lies the tragedy. Two brothers, sons of the deceased Oedipus, have died at each other's hands in their dispute over who is to be king of Thebes. The regent, Creon, their uncle, whose sister Jocasta had been Oedipus's wife, rules that Eteocles, who was the sitting tenant, may be buried with full honors. Polynices, the unsuccessful aggressor–whose rights to the throne are hardly touched on in this play–is, on the other hand, to be denied burial altogether. This denial of burial would not have struck an Athenian audience as in any way outrageous: it was standard treatment for those who raised a hand against their homeland. Antigone, however, feeling bound by family ties and respect for the gods of the underworld, is determined to give her brother burial, come what may. She persists in her disobedience of the regent, who condemns his niece to death, and this in turn precipitates the death of Creon's son Haemon, to whom she was betrothed, and of Creon's wife, Eurydice, both by suicide. In this way Creon is forced to see the error of his ways, but too late. Some have therefore sought to see in Creon the true hero of the piece; but those who do so must shut their ears to the beauty of the poetry put into Antigone's mouth and the nobility of the sentiments she expresses. The brutalities of political reality are not for her. As with *Women of Trachis* and *Ajax,* the presumed principal character disappears with a third of the play still to run; but even if Creon is not the hero, one is nonetheless sufficiently interested in his fortunes to feel a lively interest in the tensions of the plot right up to its conclusion.

Some of Sophocles's finest choral writing is to be found in this play. In particular there is the ode describing how the gods inflict on mortals a mental blindness that leads to destruction and is inherited from generation to generation–the last efflorescence of a theme dear to Aeschylus but couched in language distinctively Sophoclean; and the next ode, just two brief stanzas, which deals with another kind of mental blindness, the one called Love. There is a close connection between these two odes, closer than anything found in any other Greek tragedy, and their relevance to the plot is immediate and obvious. The same cannot be said for the rather better known choral song that precedes them both. It is on the lines of "what a piece of work is man" and is a celebration of human intelligence and its achievements in the field of civilization; all boundaries crumble before it: only death remains unconquered. It is a fine and memorable statement from the classic age of Greece of what humankind may stand for. The trouble is that even after reams of discussion there is no agreement on what the function of this particular ode is at this particular point in this particular play. It reads as though it had drifted in from some anthology.

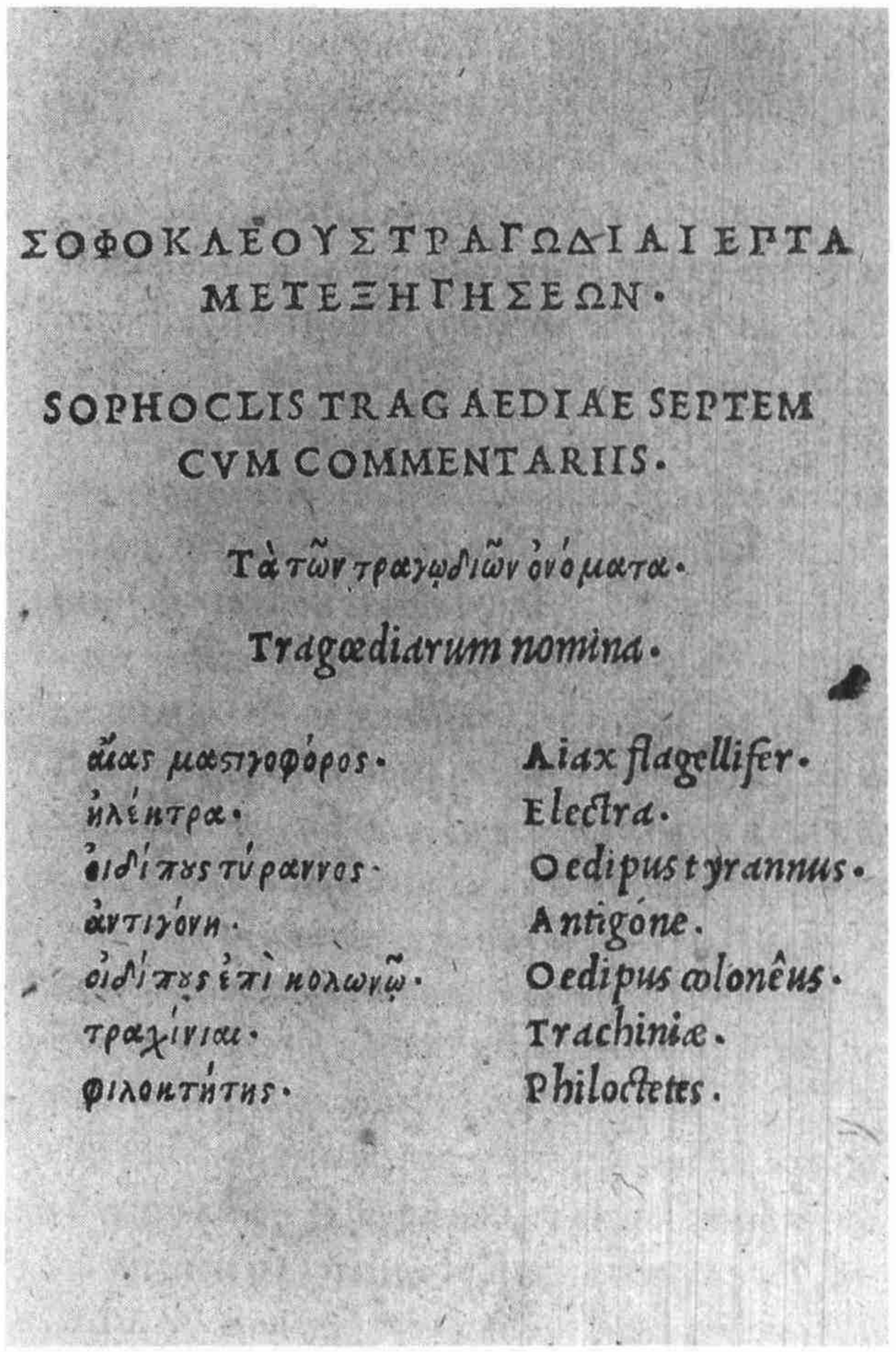
Antigone's role as a woman in a world of men, determined to stand up for what she conceives to be the right, was set against the moderating counsels of her well-meaning sister, Ismene. The same kind of pairing is found in *Electra,* in which the heroine of that name has a milder sister, Chrysothemis. On *Electra* opinions fluctuate widely. There are those who recognize Sophocles as being at or near the peak of his poetic form, while for others the basic plot, what Gilbert Murray so memorably describes as a combination of matricide with high spirits, is so morally revolting that no amount of skilled handling can overcome their revulsion at what they find. The plot is simple enough: Clytemnestra has killed her husband, Agamemnon, and now lives with Aegisthus. Orestes, the son of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, had been spirited away to a place of safety, but his sisters Electra and Chrysothemis remain at home. By the time the play opens Orestes is grown up and returns to take vengeance on his mother for his father's death, with the full blessing of Apollo. The plan is to lull the suspicions of the

guilty pair by having it reported to them that Orestes has died in an accident at the Delphic games.

As the play progresses Electra is seen from various angles: in conversation with the chorus, with Chrysothemis, and with Clytemnestra. She is drawn as a deeply embittered character, and even when the fictitious death of Orestes is announced, her emotions are first and foremost those of hatred for her mother and pity for herself. It is after that announcement that Chrysothemis reappears, full of joy, having found at Agamemnon's tomb an offering that only Orestes would have any motive for bringing. But Electra thinks she knows better and concocts an unrealistic plan of revenge from which Chrysothemis vainly attempts to dissuade her. The urn containing Orestes' putative ashes is now delivered by Orestes himself. Electra's emotional reaction leads to mutual recognition, and events now move rapidly. The guilty pair are slain, Clytemnestra first, then Aegisthus. It seems accepted by all concerned that matricide, under the circumstances obtaining in the play, is entirely justified. Some recent interpreters, however, have sought to bring Sophocles' view of the myth closer to that of Aeschylus and Euripides, both of whom decline to draw a line under the vengeance and look ahead to trouble yet to come.

One remarkable feature of Sophoclean dramatic technique is the way in which the playwright will concentrate on the immediate effect a scene may have on his audience, without troubling himself unduly over the relationship and compatibility of that scene with the overall structure of his play. *Electra* contains a notable example of that technique: the report of Orestes' death, an event that never took place, occupies more than eighty lines. W. S. Gilbert, also describing a death that never took place, once gave his character the words that he was providing "merely a corroborative detail intended to give artistic verisimilitude to an otherwise bald and unconvincing narrative." The *Electra* speech has many such details, but to the question *why* no answer wholly satisfactory to modern tastes has yet been found.

Of all Sophocles' plays, *Oedipus Rex,* a tragedy denied first prize either because it was ahead of its time or because of the vagaries of the Athenian voting system at the dramatic festival, is at once the least typical play and the one that has left the deepest imprint on posterity. In his *Poetics* (circa 335 B.C.) Aristotle, though his memory of the details of the play betrayed him on some points, plainly regarded it as the greatest masterpiece of the genre. It is full of comings and goings; it has scenes of contrasting emotional tensions. Politics and personal life are


ΣΟΦΟΚΛΕΟΥΣ ΤΡΑΓΩΔΙΑΙ ΕΠΤΑ
ΜΕΤΕΞΗΓΗΣΕΩΝ·

SOPHOCLIS TRAGAEDIAE SEPTEM
CVM COMMENTARIIS·

Τὰ τῶν τραγῳδιῶν ὀνόματα·

Tragœdiarum nomina·

αἴας μαστιγοφόρος·	Aiax flagellifer·
ἠλέκτρα·	Electra·
οἰδίπους τύραννος·	Oedipus tyrannus·
ἀντιγόνη·	Antigóne·
οἰδίπους ἐπὶ κολωνῷ·	Oedipus colonêus·
τραχίνιαι·	Trachiniæ·
φιλοκτήτης·	Philoctetes·

Title page for the editio princeps (1502) of Sophocles' tragedies (courtesy of the Lilly Library, Indiana University)

intermingled; delusory hope is followed by actual ruin; and all is seen against the background of man's powerlessness vis-à-vis the gods. Most Greek tragedies are unactable in the modern theater, but *Oedipus* seems in some way to anticipate the future and, imaginatively produced, has proved itself the most notable exception to that rule.

The tragedy is widely regarded as a masterpiece of construction. It is only when it is put under the microscope that one finds that in reality it is teeming with every kind of illogicality and inconsistency, some of which were mercilessly pointed out by Voltaire in the preface to his own *Oedipe* (1718). *Oedipus* begins with a city stricken by a plague. On King Oedipus's instructions the Delphic oracle is consulted. It tells the citizens they must expel the man who killed Laius, the king before Oedipus was crowned as a reward for overcoming the menace of the Sphinx. Oedipus's assumption of the kingship brought marriage with Laius's widow, Jocasta. Oedipus, who had been exposed to die on a mountain as

an infant, believes himself the son of Polybus, King of Corinth. In reality he is the son of Laius, whom he had killed in a dispute on the road, and the woman to whom he is now married is his own mother. He pursues the investigation into the homicide of Laius with a determination from which nothing will deflect him, not even Jocasta's urgent begging when she senses the truth. As the play progresses the plague is forgotten, and the emphasis shifts from the question Who killed Laius, King of Thebes? to the question Who is Oedipus and what is his relationship with the last royal house?

The man for whom he is hunting is himself. By the time the truth is fully disclosed, Jocasta has committed suicide. Oedipus isolates himself from the world by blinding himself and begs to go into exile, as the Delphic oracle had commanded, and as everything in the play so far has led one to expect he will. Unfortunately, at this point (v. 1423), with more than a hundred lines before the printed texts of the play end (v. 1530), genuine Sophocles is almost wholly replaced by the work of at least one interpolator. Creon reappears, now as regent, and refuses to let Oedipus go into exile until, wholly unnecessarily, the oracle should have been consulted once again; and Oedipus's children, Antigone and Ismene (unnamed in this play), are brought on for what was intended to be, but fails to be, a scene of farewell. It is almost certain that this refashioning of the genuine end was designed to remove any conflict between this play and the presuppositions of *Oedipus at Colonus* and took place at a time when the two plays were produced together in a revival, perhaps with *Antigone* as a third.

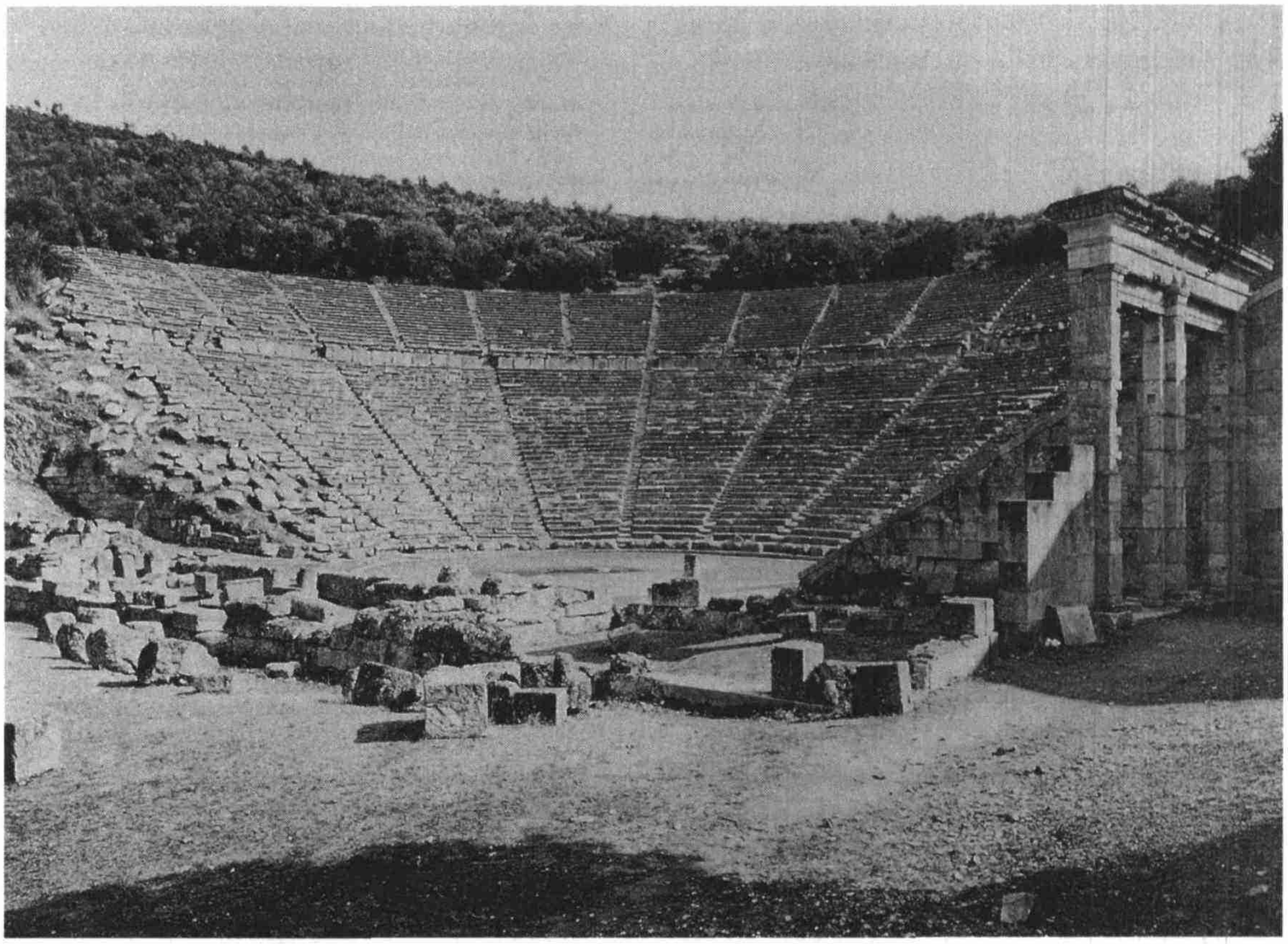
Since Laius had been the aggressor on the road and Oedipus had been greatly outnumbered and knew nothing of the identity of the man he killed, he is by all human standards guiltless. A good man, the father of his people, he exhibits all those qualities of intelligence that the renowned *Antigone* ode had celebrated; yet, he meets with the ruin that the gods had mapped out for him even before he was born. No wonder posterity has felt itself deeply stirred by this drama, even without the hidden horrors of incest and the heightened awareness of those forces at work within the family and within the subconscious mind that were disclosed by Sigmund Freud in what he christened "the Oedipus complex."

"Tragic irony," whereby a character's words carry a deeper and more sinister meaning for the audience than the character speaking them intends to impart, is all pervasive in this play. There is a different and larger-scale kind of irony, too, best exemplified by the messenger from Corinth who comes to bring the news that Polybus is dead and the vacant throne is to be offered to Oedipus. This news is first taken, erroneously, as falsifying the prediction that Oedipus was destined to kill his father; and one need go no further afield to find another piece of irony, this time resting upon the shameless but dramatically economical use of coincidence: this same messenger was once involved in the movements of the exposed infant Oedipus. But even if the plot owes its forward impetus to such adventitious devices, and even if its principal character is endowed with a strangely selective ignorance of certain vital facts, an ignorance without which the play could not begin to work, these are all matters that are only recognized once a spectator or reader is released from excitement and looks back over the play as a calm logician no longer caught up in the rapid development of the story. All in all, both in conception and execution, *Oedipus Rex* stands as a virtuoso display of taut dramatic writing that has never been excelled.

Philoctetes, like *Electra,* is a study in embittered isolation, this time not of a woman confined within a palace but of a hero of the Trojan War, abandoned on an island where he is free to roam but is denied human company. He has been marooned there since a snakebite left his foot festering, with a stench that made his company unendurable to his fellow soldiers. But now they have been told by an oracle that without Philoctetes and his bow, once the property of Heracles, Troy cannot be taken. It is characteristic of Sophocles that an oracular response should play a prominent part in the story and characteristic of him, too, that there should be some vagueness in terms of the plot, the vagueness on this occasion relating to the oracle itself. Did it say that Philoctetes and his bow were required at Troy–or only that his bow was?

The persons deputed by the Greek expeditionary force to take Philoctetes off the island of Lemnos are Odysseus and Neoptolemus, two contrasting figures: the one perfectly prepared to lie to secure his objective, the other the noble young son of Achilles, whom Odysseus hopes to manipulate as his agent, knowing that he himself is anathema to Philoctetes. It is the interplay of character between the members of this trio that lends the play its particular charm; that, and the exquisite choral passages in which the chorus expresses its insight into and sympathy for the hero–lonely, ragged, but still of undiminished greatness.

Each of the other six extant plays of Sophocles contains at least one death. *Philoctetes* does not, and what is at issue is, at any rate in the short term, who will win the contest of wills–the immovable Philoctetes or the scheming Odysseus? Mixed in with this is the question: Will Neoptolemus remain true to his own nature and side with Philoctetes, in whom he recognizes a kindred spirit, or will he follow orders and do whatever he is told to do by the experienced politician for the greater glory of Greece? Not a life-or-death dilemma, therefore,



Theater at Epidaurus (mid fourth century B.C.), the type of theater in which Sophocles' dramas were originally performed

but something different and in a way more intractable. Death may at least provide a clear-cut solution, but Sophocles' choice is between having his uncompromising hero compromise after all or rewriting mythology by having Troy fall without either Philoctetes or his bow.

The answer comes at the end of the play with a deus ex machina. The use of this Latin phrase has been much debased in common parlance: it is rare indeed in Greek tragedy for a god to appear for the purpose of resolving what had seemed irresolvable. But *Philoctetes* is the prime exception: Heracles appears and instructs Philoctetes to go to Troy, where he and Neoptolemus will win immortal glory. It is not an entirely satisfactory ending, but it preserves the data of mythology without bringing in its aftermath compromise from either side. In a way one may feel the truer ending has already been given: Neoptolemus has sided with Philoctetes. As with Antigone, the personal element has vanquished the political.

The last play, *Oedipus at Colonus,* is also the longest – 1,779 verses against an average for the other plays of 1,427 – and that length may possibly owe something to interpolation by those who wished to develop yet further the already ample political speechifying. In this drama the blind Oedipus, now in exile, arrives in his wanderings at the holy precinct of the Eumenides at Colonus, near Athens. He is accompanied by his daughter Antigone, and Ismene soon joins them with news that Oedipus's sons Polynices and Eteocles are at odds with each other as to who shall rule Thebes. Oedipus, now an old man, is soon to die. An oracle has predicted that possession of his tomb will ensure the safety of whatever country may have it within its borders. First Creon arrives from Thebes to solicit Oedipus's return. He is unsuccessful, and his attempt to apply pressure by kidnapping Antigone and Ismene is frustrated by Theseus, King of Athens, in whose domain Colonus lies. Then Polynices comes to appeal for help in his struggle against his brother. Oedipus curses him, for in this play, too, as in *Ajax*, *Electra,* and *Philoctetes,* the theme of the bitterness of a character betrayed by those close to him still has its role to play. But the end for Oedipus is to be something exceptional. In thunder and lightning he disappears; how, only Theseus, the only other person present at the time, knows. For Athens

the important thing is that Oedipus died, or was gathered to join the immortal gods, on Athenian territory.

Likely enough, *Oedipus at Colonus* reflects the political tensions current at the time it was written. Centuries later those tensions are not shared by modern readers or a modern audience; and for that reason, and also because of the disproportionate amount of hypocrisy, sheer bad temper, and other unlovely qualities that abound in it, the play is likely to remain low on the list of Sophoclean scholars' favorites. But in the actual manipulation of language there is no sign that the powers of the ninety-year-old author were failing; and the story that some of the choral passages were recited in court to prove that the poet was compos mentis when others were trying to hold otherwise, whether actually true or merely *ben trovato,* is from the standpoint of the literary critic entirely plausible.

It is extremely difficult to convey to the reader who is not proficient in Greek what the distinctive elements of Sophocles' style are. It lacks the massive rough-hewn quality of Aeschylus and equally the deliberate avoidance of grandeur often detectable in Euripides. However, two points may be singled out. The first is a purely technical one: Sophocles is fond of using nouns and verbs in juxtaposition in such a way that the noun discharges some of the expected function of the verb and vice versa. One example comes as early as the second line in what most editions print as their first play, *Ajax,* where the transmitted text reads: "hunting to pull off some attempt on your enemies." This line several scholars independently, and to all appearance more logically but still erroneously, have sought to emend to read: "attempting to pull off some hunt against your enemies." Another example, from the countless ones available, is the almost casual use of a two-word phrase, a "wound blinded," meaning a blinding wound. Any other poet would have thought himself adventurous if he had written "a blinding wounded," that is, inflicted as a wound; but Sophocles goes one step further, almost reversing the roles of noun and verb.

The second feature of style that should be noted is Sophocles' use of particles, that is to say small words that are often best rendered in English by a modification of word order or an altered inflexion in the voice. Sophocles is an absolute master in their deployment, and this helps to contribute to the unique effect of his diction, whereby a lofty and artificial manner of speaking somehow still lets one hear the words and accents that would be coming from the mouths of the characters if they were holding their conversations in one's presence, extempore, in real life. This characteristic of style ideally matches the use of traditional mythology to explore such common concerns of humanity as duty, free will, and destiny; and it is this blend of qualities that, for many, places Sophocles on the pinnacle of Greek dramatic art.

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Strabo

(64 or 63 B.C. – circa A.D. 25)

James Romm
Fordham University

MAJOR WORK – EXTANT: *Geography*

Standard editions: *The Geography of Strabo,* 3 volumes, edited by H. C. Hamilton and W. Falconer (London: Bohn's Classical Library, 1854–1857); *The Geography of Strabo,* 8 volumes, edited and translated by Horace Leonard Jones, Loeb Classical Library (London: Heinemann, 1917–1924).

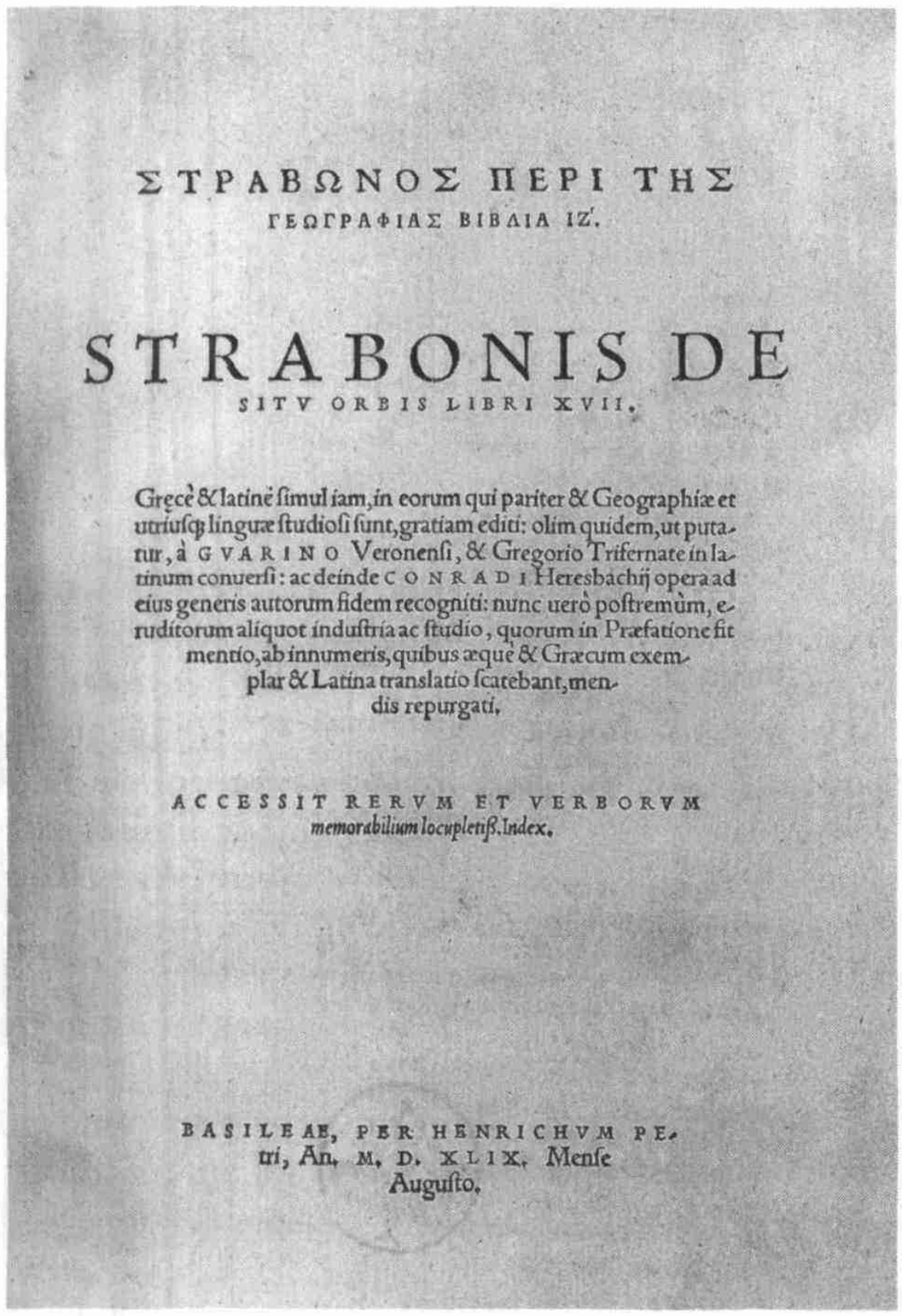
MAJOR WORK – NONEXTANT: *Historical Recollections*

Editio princeps: *Strabo de situ orbis,* edited by B. Tyrrhenus (Venice: Aldus Manutius et Andreas Asulanus, 1516).

Strabo was known in the Middle Ages as "the Geographer," just as William Shakespeare is now commonly referred to as "the Bard." That he should be so honored by the scribes of medieval times reveals both the strengths and the shortcomings of his one surviving work, the seventeen books of the *Geography*. Strabo's passion for encyclopedism – his desire to represent the entire earth, in all its facets, within the ambit of his text – endeared him to the medieval mind, whereas in the twentieth century he has been largely overlooked for the same reason. Strabo's *Geography* is the sort of work that is more often sampled or excerpted than read in its entirety; yet it was written to be a *kolossourgia,* or "monumental composition," distinguished by its scope and completeness rather than by the artistry or elaboration of its parts. The grandeur of his conception was unrivaled in antiquity, and in modern times only Alexander von Humboldt's immense *Cosmos* (1845–1862) has attempted to survey the earth on such a vast scale.

Strabo was in a unique position to undertake such a grand survey by virtue of the times in which he lived. The years of his birth and death can only be inferred from information given in the *Geography,* but the former has been reliably fixed at 64 or 63 B.C., and the latter must be placed shortly after the last event mentioned in the text, dated circa A.D. 25. His life span, then, saw the foundation and growth of the Roman Empire in the West, as well as the more limited expansion of a Parthian Empire in central Asia. The boundaries of the known world had expanded as never before, far surpassing those established by Alexander the Great and his armies three centuries earlier. Strabo shows an awareness of this unique circumstance when he opens his *Geography,* proudly boasting of his ability to increase the store of knowledge collected by earlier geographers – in particular by Eratosthenes, the Greek scientist who had recorded much of the world laid bare by Alexander's conquests. The movements of history in the first century B.C. had made Eratosthenes' work obsolete and had provided an opening for geography on an unprecedented scale.

Strabo was not the kind of person who might have been expected to seize that opportunity, however. Unlike Eratosthenes before him or Ptolemy after, he was no scientist; his interests and orientation were rather those of a "man of affairs," more concerned with commerce and politics than latitude and longitude. He was born into a family prominent in public life in the mixed Greek and Asiatic city of Amasia, near the Black Sea coast of eastern Turkey. His teachers were among the most noteworthy philosophers and rhetoricians of the day: the Stoic Athenodorus, who also tutored Augustus Caesar, and the well-known Aristotelians Tyrranion and Xenarchus. A single ancient source reports that Strabo was also instructed by Posidonius, the Greek scientist and historian whose life overlapped with Strabo's by some thirteen years; if there is any truth to this report, however, it appears that the master's lessons did not take hold. Strabo shows little specialized knowledge of earth science in the *Geography* and in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STRABONIS DE
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Græcè & latinè simul iam, in eorum qui pariter & Geographiæ et utriusq; linguæ studiosi sunt, gratiam editi: olim quidem, ut putatur, à GVARINO Veronensi, & Gregorio Trifernate in latinum conuersi: ac deinde CONRADI Heresbachij opera ad eius generis autorum fidem recogniti: nunc uerò postremùm, eruditorum aliquot industria ac studio, quorum in Præfatione fit mentio, ab innumeris, quibus æquè & Græcum exemplar & Latina translatio scatebant, mendis repurgati.

ACCESSIT RERVM ET VERBORVM memorabilium locupletiß. Index.

BASILEAE, PER HENRICHVM PEtri, An. M. D. XLIX. Mense Augusto.

Title page for the second edition in Greek (1549) of Strabo's Geography *(courtesy of the Lilly Library, Indiana University)*

fact commits errors and distortions when he discusses the works of earlier geographers – including those of Posidonius.

Though raised in the Hellenized East, Strabo traveled west to Rome on several occasions and may have lived there for some time. He also reports a sojourn in Egypt in the company of the Roman prefect of that province, Aelius Gallus, and other travels far and wide; but he seems to have visited foreign lands only as a tourist or businessman, not in pursuit of scientific research. Whereas his predecessor Herodotus went on exploratory journeys to collect data and verify reports, Strabo was more often content to borrow from published books than to make firsthand investigations. He quotes liberally from the works of Eratosthenes, Polybius, and Posidonius, sometimes copying extensive passages verbatim; Roman authors are cited only rarely, though there are references to Strabo's near contemporaries Cicero and Julius Caesar. It is a sign of Strabo's disinclination toward research that, in book 2, in the same passage in which he boasts of having crossed huge stretches of the earth, he also claims the right to base his writings on reports gathered by others, comparing himself to a general who amasses information by way of spies and subordinates. In defense of his armchair-travel method he goes so far as to assert that secondhand report is more valuable than eyewitnessing as a way of gathering data – exactly the reverse of what Herodotus, or any empirical-minded geographer, would maintain.

Why would a man with this cast of mind choose to undertake a project as onerous as the *Geography,* a work that was lengthy for its own day and now stands as one of the longest surviving prose texts from all of Greek antiquity? The answer is complex and partly depends on where and when Strabo composed the work, questions that are still in dispute among scholars. One thing is clear, however: Strabo intended the *Geography* to be a follow-up to an earlier work titled *Historical Recollections,* now lost, a history of the world focusing on the period from 146 to 33 B.C. Evidently he saw geography primarily as the stage on which the events of history were set, and indeed in the *Geography* he digresses often into historical footnotes and vignettes (some of which may have been borrowed from the *Historical Recollections*). Both areas of study, moreover, were conceived by Strabo as branches of "philosophy," conducing to the ethical improvement of the individual and the political progress of society. For this reason he addresses the *Geography* above all to readers whom he variously calls "those in power," "statesmen," and "movers and shakers" (*hoi pratontes*), who will be able to put its information into practice. By knowing the landscape of a country or the width of a strait, for example, an attacking general can better manage an invasion route and subdue an enemy.

Strabo's particular emphasis on the military utility of geography has led some scholars, including Germaine Aujac, to suppose that he wrote for the Roman strategists who were at that time planning the expansion and consolidation of the new empire. Such a view seems too limited, however, and in fact other clues suggest that the *Geography* was written for a primarily Greek audience, not for Greek-speaking Romans. The insistent appeals to "movers and shakers" may have been meant only as window dressing, flattering the audience in the same way a modern movie does when it portrays itself as "serious entertainment."

The intended readership of the *Geography* could be better determined if the time and place at which it was composed were certain, but neither can be established. As has been mentioned, the latest

event Strabo mentions in the text is the death of Juba in A.D. 21 or 23, a time when the author would have been more than eighty years old. This passage and others referring to events of the years A.D. 17–20, however, appear to have been added after the bulk of the work was already complete. Moreover, the text contains curiously few references to events between 9 B.C. and A.D. 17, a fact first noted by the Italian scholar Ettore Pais, while many events from the 30s and 20s B.C. are referred to by Strabo as recent, implying they occurred within a few years of his having written about them. The conclusion of Pais, supported by other scholars in the field, is that the work was first written shortly after 9 B.C. and then extensively expanded or revised after A.D. 18. If this theory is correct, then it is possible that the work was first composed at Rome, then revised and published in the East – perhaps in Alexandria, where Strabo would have had access to the resources of the great Alexandrian Library, or in the author's native city of Amasia. One further, indisputable fact argues strongly against the work's having circulated at Rome: no contemporary Roman author makes reference to it, including Pliny the Elder, who consulted more than two thousand other books (many of them Greek) in compiling his *Natural History* (late first century A.D.). If Strabo were seeking a Roman audience for his *Geography,* he seems not to have found one.

In his philosophic orientation Strabo was a confirmed Stoic, as he makes clear at several points in the *Geography*. He was perhaps initiated into this school by his teacher, Athenodorus, but his Stoicism seems not to have run wide or deep. In the *Geography* it mostly takes the form of recurring assertions that the study of the earth must have practical goals and that the geographer must limit himself to material that is both knowable and useful. For this reason Strabo curtails discussion of the mathematical or theoretical questions that had preoccupied his Hellenistic predecessors, confining these to the prelude formed by the first two books. He rules out speculation over such arcane topics as the existence of other worlds beyond the ocean – although he also occasionally indulges in such speculation and even at one point supposes that "there is room in the same temperate zone that we inhabit for two or more inhabited worlds," unknowingly anticipating the discovery of the Americas. Stoicism also dictated an avoidance of marvels, wonders, and fables, but here too Strabo's adherence to his professed school is only occasional. In his description of India, for example, Strabo claims to reject the exotic legends retailed by the Greeks who accompanied Alexander the Great but then repeats the legends anyway, often at such length that he effectively endorses rather than discredits them.

Strabo's allegiance to Stoicism also reveals itself in his reverential treatment of Homer, whose poems are mined for geographic data throughout the *Geography*. According to the Stoic school of interpretation, the chief goal of Homeric poetry, or of any great literary work, was instruction and edification, not mere entertainment; hence the *Odyssey* must have been written to convey truths about the shape and structure of the known world, relying on myth and poetry only as vehicles to deliver these truths to an audience. This rather tendentious approach to literature allows Strabo to invoke Homer repeatedly as a geographic authority – indeed as a master geographer whose information about the earth may have been incomplete but was never inaccurate. The first book of the *Geography* consists largely of a Stoic-style defense of the veracity of the *Odyssey* together with a refutation of those non-Stoics who had called that veracity into question. Eratosthenes, who had seen aesthetic pleasure and not instruction as the chief goal of Homeric poetry, inspires a deep-seated contempt in Strabo and is roundly rebuked throughout the first book of the *Geography*. Strabo's vehemence undoubtedly partly reflects the exalted position of Eratosthenes as leading geographer of the Hellenistic age and Strabo's own apparent feeling of being in such a man's shadow.

Following this first book, the plan of the *Geography* is simple and logical. Book 2 surveys the outline of the whole earth and pursues arguments (not all of them intelligible) over the size, shape, and organization of the landmass known as the *oikoumenê,* or "inhabited (earth)." Thereafter the text makes a circuit clockwise around the oikoumenê, moving eastward from Spain to Armenia (books 3–11), then south to central Asia and India (books 12–15), then west through Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Africa (books 16–17). The southerly lands of Asia and Africa are treated more scantily and hastily than northern and western Europe, reflecting the shift in the frontiers of exploration and expansion during the first century B.C. Much space is given to Greece (books 8–10), although Strabo himself was not a native of these parts and seems not to have spent much time there (never even visiting Athens). The work concludes with a catalogue of the provinces belonging to the Roman Empire, a political conspectus matching the physical one with which Strabo had opened in book 2. The *Geography* thus obviously maintains its conception as a kolossourgia, a

monumental portrait of the whole earth, rather than a collection of articles.

Within each of the chorographic books (3–17), Strabo proceeds linearly from one end of the country or region to the other, describing the physical features of the landscape and observing the way of life of the inhabitants. Where it can be checked Strabo's information usually proves accurate, but there are surprising errors, such as his assertion that the chain of the Pyrenees runs from north to south instead of east to west. Such carelessness shows, once again, that Strabo had no taste for original or scrupulous research. Descriptions of lands and peoples are often interrupted by digressions into history, both recent and ancient. Strabo notes frequently, and with some approbation, the spread of Roman rule throughout the world of the first century B.C.; he portrays the Romans as bringers of law and order to less civilized peoples and as guarantors of safe trade and prosperity. By contrast his accounts of Greek lands center around legends and mythological tales, most of which (with a few notable exceptions) he treats as historical fact. It is striking to compare Strabo with Herodotus in this regard and to see that the critical spirit with which Greek historians approached their myths had not evolved far in the intervening four centuries – or even declined.

Though his own degree of credulity is comparable to that of Herodotus, Strabo dismisses his great early predecessor on several occasions as a liar and a fabulist. He similarly denounces Pytheas of Massilia, a Greek explorer who had published an account of his explorations around Britain, even though there is nothing improbable in the surviving fragments of his log and modern scholars consider his voyage to be a great scientific achievement. These cases of curmudgeonly mistrust show the worst side of Strabo, who as a nonspecialist was out of his depth in dealing with the writings of experts and may have sought to boost his own credibility by attacking that of others. His emphasis on the wholeness and monumentality of his work can be seen as a concomitant to his lack to expertise, which produced errors and obscurities at a more detailed level. But Strabo's work also reveals a nonspecialist's gifts for storytelling, for vivid description, and for finding the "philosophy," the relevance to social and political life, of the material he presents. It is no accident that the *Geography* has survived intact into the age of print, while the works of Eratosthenes, Posidonius, and others have largely perished: Strabo impressed his portrait of the earth with the stamp of his own character, flawed but fundamentally human.

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Theocritus

(circa 300 B.C. – 260 B.C.)

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MAJOR WORKS: *Idylls* (circa 270 B.C.);
Epigrams (circa 270 B.C.).

Editio princeps: Edited by Bonaccorsio of Pisa (Milan, circa 1480).

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Theocritus's importance to literary history lies in his invention of the pastoral genre. Although other Hellenistic poets wrote on rustic themes, Virgil sealed Theocritus's claim to be the first pastoralist by modeling his *Eclogues* (37 B.C.) on his Greek predecessor's *Idylls* (circa 270 B.C.) about herdsmen. The Latin rhetorician Quintilian later remarked on Theocritus's distinction in this arena, asserting that his rustic Muse shuns not only public affairs but all aspects of urban existence. Yet Theocritus's pastoral poems, only seven in number, constitute but one part of his poetic production. Measured by the standards of his own lifetime, Theocritus can be judged the freshest and most charming among a group of Hellenistic poets who sought to renew the tradition of Greek poetry by turning to genres of small-scale and personal reference.

Little is known about his life. The few facts that are recorded in ancient and Byzantine biographies are almost exclusively drawn from his poetry and are sometimes clearly fanciful. It may be accepted with certainty that Theocritus's homeland was Syracuse, the largest of the Greek cities in Sicily, and that his parents were named Praxagoras and Philinna. At some point he spent time on the Aegean island of Cos, where he acquired patrons among the landed aristocracy; it was perhaps there that he struck up a friendship with Nicias, a physician who likely studied at the Coan school of medicine, sacred to Asclepius. By the late 270s B.C. Theocritus was writing poems in honor of the Ptolemaic monarchs in Egyptian Alexandria, the center of Hellenistic literary culture. As a poet known at the court of the Ptolemies, he must have been acquainted with Callimachus, whose erudite verse stands as a hallmark of Alexandrian literary practice, and with Apollonius of Rhodes, the composer of a third-century B.C. epic called the *Argonautica.*

In the seventh *Idyll* Theocritus reveals his admiration for two older Hellenistic poets as well, Philetas of Cos and Asclepiades of Samos. The latter was an erotic epigrammatist, while the former developed the slender but learned style that became characteristic of Callimachean poetics. As one biography translates this allusion to his literary precursors into the statement that Theocritus was the student of Philetas and Asclepiades, so other "biographical" facts can be shown to be mere interpretations based on Theocritus's own poetry. The first-person narrative in *Idyll* 7 about a day spent by a certain Simichidas (meaning "son of Simichus") in the Coan countryside led to the invention of a second father named Simichus and a second homeland on Cos. As with much of ancient biography, these statements clearly have no basis in fact.

The dates of Theocritus's birth and death are entirely speculative. The only firm chronological pegs in his biography are provided by *Idyll* 16, which must have

Theocritus; engraving of a bust published as the frontispiece for The Idylls and Epigrams of Theocritus, Bion, and Moscus *(1905)*

been written shortly after the tyrant Hiero II came to power in Syracuse (275–274 B.C.), and two poems, *Idylls* 15 and 17, composed sometime during the marriage of Ptolemy II Philadelphus to his sister Arsinoe II (278 or 274 B.C. to 268 B.C.). One ancient commentator states that Theocritus flourished in the 124th Olympiad (284–281 B.C.), perhaps a generalized reference to the years during which Ptolemy II Philadelphus ascended the throne of Egpyt. Though without evidentiary support, most scholars have supposed that Theocritus's period of poetic production was short and that publication of his oeuvre was posthumous.

The manuscript tradition for Theocritus's poetry is unusually complex and uncertain. In all likelihood the Theocritean corpus was collected and published within the third century B.C. in an edition titled *Eidullia* (Idylls). The association of the word *idyll* with pastoral poetry developed only much later; etymology suggests that the Greek plural *eidullia* initially meant "little types." Following early Hellenistic practice, the editor of Theocritus's poetry apparently gave the collection a title that emphasized diversity of generic type and slenderness of style. By the second century B.C., however, Theocritus had become known as a composer of *bukolika,* or pastoral poetry (*pastoralis* being the Latin equivalent of the Greek *bukolikos*); his *Idylls* about herdsmen were then separated and published in an edition or editions that included spurious bucolic poems as well (*Idylls* 8 and 9). Theocritus's pastorals thus became the model for a new genre of Greek bucolic poetry, though its only known practitioners, after Theocritus, are Moschus, who apparently lived in the second century B.C., and Bion, who has been dated about 100 B.C. Both Moschus and Bion preserve the generic identification of their verse with the bucolic genre by presenting the poet metaphorically as a cowherd ("the bucolic metaphor"). But while their bucolic poetry maintains a veneer of interest in country matters, they sentimentalize the genre by turning it toward lighthearted erotic topics and playful mythical themes.

In the first half of the first century B.C., the corpus of bucolic poetry was gathered by the scholar Artemidorus into an edition headed by the following epigram: "The bucolic Muses, once scattered, are now all gathered into one fold, into one flock." Virgil may have known Theocritus's poetry from the edition of Artemidorus of Tarsus (circa second to first century B.C.). Although the Byzantine families of manuscripts display no authoritative order for the *Idylls,* the pastoral poems stand first in all strands of the tradition, indicating the dominance of the generic conception of Theocritus as a pastoralist.

The manuscripts preserve thirty *Idylls* attributed to Theocritus, although only twenty-two (*Idylls* 1–7, 10–18, 22, 24, 26, 28–30) are commonly accepted as genuine. Most are in dactylic hexameter, the meter of Greek epic verse, although three poems (*Idylls* 28–30) are written in lyric meters such as those used by Sappho. In length the genuine *Idylls* vary from 25 to 223 lines. Named for their diversity, the *Idylls* share a refocusing of attention away from traditional poetic topics associated with the heroic or the aristocratic toward the humble, the personal, or the commonplace. Theocritus's herdsmen, who sing of their loves, country deities, and flocks, form a counterpart to his urban characters, ordinary men and women who in a similar manner are concerned with romantic relationships, religious festivals, and everyday occupations. His mythical characters are commonly presented as young, vulnerable, or erotically inclined. In poems as diverse as those praising Theocritus's patrons or those containing mono-

logues by frustrated lovers, the speakers express personal rather than communal concerns.

Ancient commentators found the charm of Theocritus's poetry in its variety, or *poikilia,* particularly in its mixture of dramatic and narrative styles. While the majority of the *Idylls* take the form of dramatic skits, several bracket their dialogue with narrative frames. In the frame of *Idyll* 11 Theocritus explains to his friend, the physician Nicias, how the song of the Cyclops demonstrates that no remedy for love exists other than poetry. Polyphemus's comical song to Galatea thus illustrates Theocritus's message to Nicias. In yet other *Idylls* a single voice speaks, either that of the poet or that of a dramatized character. The presence of the poet's persona both in the frame of certain poems and in others as the sole speaker contributes to a characteristic tension between the sophisticated author and the naive characters.

Theocritus produces this mixture of dramatic and narrative forms by drawing on several principal models. As is often the case in Hellenistic poetry, Homer provides a model for both construction of scenes and for diction, though Theocritus commonly subverts the epic precedent by changing its import. For instance, the elaborate universalizing scenes that decorate Achilles' shield in the *Iliad* stand behind the simpler figures – young lovers, an old fisherman, and a boy weaving a cricket cage – that adorn a herdsman's wooden bowl in the first *Idyll.* Archaic lyric was also an important model, though again Theocritus often changes the tone to reflect his commonplace subject matter. For instance, in the work of the fifth-century poet Pindar, Pindar's heroic description of the infant Heracles strangling a pair of snakes sent by Hera (*Nemean* 1) is converted by Theocritus into a much more domestic scene of parental concern in the *Heracliscus* (*Idyll* 24). According to the scholiasts, both the *Pharmaceutria* (*Idyll* 2), about a lovelorn young woman who practices magic, and the *Adoniazusae* (*Idyll* 15), a dialogue between two Alexandrian housewives, imitate dramatic skits by Sophron, a Sicilian writer of mime. Theocritus's dramatic technique and choice of nonheroic characters may owe much to this earlier writer, a compatriot of the late fifth century.

Many of the *Idylls* have embedded within them some form of poetry or song adapted from subliterary genres. Examples include incantations (*Idyll* 2), an erotic serenade (*Idyll* 3), a harvesting song (*Idyll* 10), a ritual lament (*Idyll* 15), a marriage song (*Idyll* 18), and a lullaby (*Idyll* 24). The songs sung by herdsmen, both those performed in competition and those sung by a single individual, are simply another instance of this embedding of oral song in epic-style verse. The label *bucolic* that Theocritus gave these herdsmen's songs was perhaps the term by which the rustic songs performed in the countryside of Sicily were popularly known; it was later transferred to the Theocritean poems themselves and provided the name for a new genre of poetry. Some of the most characteristic devices of Theocritean style, symmetry between clauses and symmetrical repetition of words, may be related to his fondness for mimicking popular song. A good example occurs in Alcmene's lullaby for the baby Heracles and his mortal twin (*Idyll* 24): "Sleep, my babies, a sweet and waking sleep; sleep safely, twin brothers, my children, my very soul; happily may you rest and happily come to dawn." This symmetry of phrase parallels the structural balance characteristic of his most complex poems.

Theocritus's *Idylls* display a considerable fluctuation in level of style and linguistic usage. Several of them were composed primarily in the Doric dialect that was spoken in many parts of the Greek world, including Syracuse and Cos. By the third century, however, when a standard dialect known as koine (common) Greek had spread throughout the Hellenistic world, Doric pronunciation and vocabulary suggested a degree of provincialism or even rusticity. Yet Theocritus's *Idylls* also commonly display the morphology and language found in the epics of Homer and Hesiod. The result is an unsettling mixture of the elevated and the colloquial built into the very fabric of the poetry. While the *Idylls* as a group are marked by such similarities, other characteristics can be observed when Theocritus's poetry is divided into categories: pastorals, urban mimes, mythical poems, court poetry, and erotic monologues. These divisions are modern and may not reflect at all the subgenres (or *eide*) into which Theocritus would have grouped his corpus.

As the first poem in all ancient and Byzantine editions of Theocritus, *Idyll* 1 became the source for many of the conventions associated with later pastoral poetry. Thyrsis the shepherd and an unnamed goatherd spend the hour of noon in a shady grove, exchanging conversation and song. The celebrated opening of the poem ("Sweetly sings the whispering of that pine by the spring, goatherd, and sweetly do you pipe") illustrates how Theocritus's use of verbal repetition and parallel structure contributes to the idealized pastoral vision of oneness between man and nature. While Thyrsis asks his companion to pipe, the goatherd induces Thyrsis to sing by offering a goat to milk and a carved cup. The

goatherd's loving description of the decorations on the cup – plant motifs surrounding three vignettes with human figures – functions as a verbal counterpart for the song Thyrsis performs. The shepherd's song, punctuated by a refrain calling upon the Muses to begin or end their "bucolic song," dramatizes the death of Daphnis, a mythical cowherd of the Sicilian countryside. The closeness of Daphnis to the land and its deities is revealed by the list of those who visit him in his dying hour: wild and domestic animals, Hermes, various herdsmen, Priapus, and finally Aphrodite herself. Although the precise reason for Daphnis's death remains unclear, his demise seems associated with resistance to love. In the end Aphrodite's presence provokes him to speak, vowing his defiance of the goddess even as he breathes his last. At the close of the poem the goatherd compliments Thyrsis on his song as he turns his attention back to his flock. The *Idyll* is remarkable for its air of dreamy unreality, enhanced by mellifluous assonance, abundant parallelism of phrase, and the balanced structure of cup versus song. Daphnis's death suggests the loss of a happier age, partially recoverable through the charming exchange between shepherd and goatherd.

The other pastoral *Idylls* range from the realistic and earthy to the mythical and idealizing. In *Idyll* 11 a youthful Cyclops sings a song to lessen the pain of his longing for Galatea, a milky-white nymph of the sea, while in *Idyll* 6 a romance between Galatea and her monstrous suitor becomes the subject of songs exchanged by two young cowherds named Daphnis and Damoetas, who show their affection for each other by a kiss and mutual gift giving. In *Idyll* 3 an absurdly sentimental goatherd threatens suicide as he sings before a cave in which his love Amaryllis resides. As in the first *Idyll,* these poems are set in a mythical terrain or an unspecified locale where past and present, human and divine, are scarcely to be distinguished. Two other *Idylls,* however, located specifically in southern Italy, portray contentious conversations between herdsmen and offer a more realistic portrait of rustic existence. In *Idyll* 4 Battus and Corydon spar about the detrimental effect that the absence of the cowherd, who has gone off to compete in athletic contests, is having upon his cattle. In *Idyll* 5 Comatas and Lacon rehearse many old grudges, including theft and a sexual encounter; their quarrel culminates in a singing contest, judged by a passing shepherd and won by the triumphant Comatas. Both ancient sources and modern parallels indicate that singing contests of this sort were a genuine feature of herding life in rural Greece.

The range of treatment Theocritus gives his herdsmen, from idealized to realistic, his incorporation of mythical and divine figures as well as ordinary herdsmen, and the repetition of certain names in more than one *Idyll* (such as Daphnis in 1, 5, 6, and 7, Amaryllis in 3 and 4, and Comatas in 5 and 7) have suggested to some that Theocritus sought to create in his herding *Idylls* a complex pastoral world. It is safer to assume that Theocritus was drawing upon the conventional activities and legendary tales of Greek herdsmen in order to compose a shortened form of epic that concentrates on the local and the marginal in preference to the heroic and Panhellenic. Confirmation for this reading of Theocritus's poetry is suggested by the presence of *Idyll* 10, which resembles the pastorals though it does not concern herdsmen. In it a conversation between two reapers culminates in an exchange of songs, one about Bucaeus's longing for Bombyca and the other a threshing song by Milon. This poem's liminal position on the borders of pastoral suggests that Theocritus's aim was more likely the subversion of traditional epic than the invention of a new genre of bucolic.

Of special importance to the later history of pastoral is the *Thalysia* (*Idyll* 7), which documents a noontime encounter between the urban poet Simichidas and the mysterious goatherd Lycidas in the Coan countryside. The fact that the poem is narrated by Simichidas himself and contains a clear allusion to the poetic investiture of Hesiod by the Muses in the *Theogony* (eighth century B.C.) has suggested to some that Theocritus is here dramatizing his own induction into bucolic poetry. Another reading finds in the poem an exploration of the complex interrelationship between sophisticated poet and rustic singer, perhaps both versions of Theocritus himself. Simichidas narrates the events that took place as he journeyed through the countryside to a harvest festival, the Thalysia, held on the estate of two members of the Coan aristocracy. Traveling along the road, he falls in with a wayfarer whom he recognizes as Lycidas, a famed singer of bucolic song.

While some scholars have interpreted Lycidas as a disguised deity, perhaps Apollo himself, Simichidas states overtly that he was a goatherd and realistically describes his smelly attire. After some verbal sparring, the two agree to exchange songs, and Lycidas offers a statement of his poetic creed, couched in the concrete imagery of the rustic but reminiscent of the refined aesthetics associated with

Callimachus: "I hate greatly the builder who seeks to raise his house as high as the peak of Mt. Oromedon and I hate those cocks of the Muses who toil in vain by crowing against the bard of Chios (Homer)." Theocritus here places in the mouth of Lycidas a recommendation for his own shortened form of epic.

The significance of the songs sung by the two travelers remains uncertain, though they are balanced by parallelism of structure and offer a contrast between Lycidas's depiction of rustic romance and Simichidas's vision of urban love affairs. When the songs are finished, Lycidas laughs and signals his approval by giving Simichidas a staff as a guest gift from the Muses. The poem ends with a description of the sensual delights that Simichidas experiences after he arrives at the Thalysia, including the smiling approval of the goddess Demeter.

From as early as the Hellenistic period Theocritus's pastoral *Idylls* have been interpreted either mimetically, as direct representations of rustic reality, or in a symbolic or allegorical manner, as statements about the poet's own world disguised under the veil of rustic manners ("the bucolic masquerade"). The Greek poets who imitated Theocritus signified their adherence to the bucolic genre by the metaphorical identification of the poet with a cowherd and of his poetry with herd animals. But after Virgil turned the pastoral genre in the direction of political allegory in his *Eclogues,* ancient commentators began to view Theocritus's *Idylls* as a simpler progenitor, as mere mimetic descriptions of rustic life. The pastoral characteristic of encapsulating the complex in the simple, of maintaining a double focus on both the rustic and the urban, thus develops directly from Theocritus. While the herding *Idylls* display many similarities of structure and style with the other *Idylls,* their mysteriously suggestive quality, the appearance they can give of referring to something beyond their own limited world, led historically to their conceptualization as pastoral.

The urban mimes are in many ways counterparts of the pastoral *Idylls.* Not only does the setting shift from the country to the city, but the voices of men heard in the rustic poems are now balanced by the voices of women. In the *Pharmaceutria* (*Idyll* 2) a young woman named Simaetha, who lives independently with an old servant, practices magic in an attempt to win back the handsome Delphis, who has seduced and abandoned her. Her internal turmoil is revealed first by the dramatization of her magic spells and then by a monologue in which she recalls the details of her brief love affair. Much of the appeal of the poem lies in the tension Theocritus creates between Simaetha's turbulent emotional state and the still nocturnal setting bristling with the possibility of black magic, creating an uncertain balance between helplessness and power. Erotic disappointment suffered by a male character is the subject of *Idyll* 14, in which Aeschinas explains to his friend Thyonichus how he was abandoned by his girlfriend at a dinner party. The poem concludes with Thyonichus advising his friend to overcome his sorrow by joining the army of Ptolemy II Philadelphus. Both *Idylls* 2 and 14 display a structural pattern found also in the pastorals (*Idylls* 3, 11), a dramatized narrative of a failed love affair concluding with a suggestion that the lover will find a remedy, or *pharmakon,* for the pain of love.

Praise of a Ptolemaic monarch suggests that, like *Idyll* 14, the *Adoniazusae* (*Idyll* 15) was written in Alexandria. In that poem two Alexandrian housewives, natives of Syracuse, attend, with servants in tow, a festival of Adonis lavishly celebrated in the palace of Arsinoe II. The charmingly realistic skit offers a mirror on several facets of middle-class Egyptian society: friendships among women, relationships between masters and slaves, tensions between Greeks of various origins, the aesthetic appreciation of art by ordinary individuals, and the influence of court propaganda on the citizenry. Artistically the poem is unified by the contrast between the stressful, sometimes contentious marriages of Gorgo and Praxinoa and the romantic vision of love offered by Arsinoe's depiction of Aphrodite and her young lover Adonis.

Theocritus's *Idylls* on mythical topics were also influenced by Ptolemaic ideology. Heracles, who is the subject of two of these, was claimed as the ancestor of Alexander the Great and his Ptolemaic successors in Egypt; in *Idyll* 17 Ptolemy Soter, the father of Philadelphus, is depicted enthroned on Olympus beside his reputed forebears, Alexander and Heracles. But the mythical *Idylls,* whatever their propagandistic purposes may have been, are marked by the humanization of their deified heroes. In *Idyll* 13 Heracles' love for the boy Hylas, who was stolen by water nymphs as the pair traveled with the Argonauts, illustrates for Nicias the ubiquity of erotic passion among both mortals and immortals. *Idyll* 24 celebrates Heracles' youthful life by focusing largely on the role played by his mother Alcmene: her nurturing of her infant sons, her reaction to the threat posed by the serpents who attempt to strangle the baby Heracles, her consultation of the seer Tiresias, and her devotion to the young hero's education.

THE
IDYLLIUMS
OF
THEOCRITUS
WITH
RAPIN's Diſcourſe
OF
PASTORALS
Done into Engliſh.

Hic igitur verſus, & cætera ludicra pono:
Quod verbum atq; bonum eſt inquiro, & totus in
hoc ſum.

OXFORD:
Printed for *Anthony Stephens*, Bookſeller near the Theatre, and are to be ſold in *London* by *Abel Swalle* at the Unicorn at the Weſt end of S. *Pauls*, 1684.

Frontispiece and title page for the first English edition of Theocritus's Idylls *(courtesy of the Lilly Library, Indiana University)*

Idyll 22 is a hymn to Castor and Polydeuces, the Dioscuri, who, like Ptolemy II Philadelphus and Arsinoe II, were heralded as the "saviors" of sailors. In typical Theocritean fashion the poem contains two main episodes that balance each other by contrast. In one Polydeuces bests the brutish Amycus in a boxing match, and in the other Castor slays his cousin Lynceus, who, with his brother, is contesting the theft of their promised brides by the Dioscuri. While the first episode seems to celebrate the civilizing influence of the deified brothers, the second more bluntly suggests the power of gods who walk in mortal guise. Written under the influence of the Ptolemies, who, like the Dioscuri, anticipate deification after death, the poem is decidedly ambivalent in tone. *Idyll* 26, about the dismemberment of Pentheus by the daughters of Cadmus at the instigation of Dionysus, even more disturbingly reveals the gods' awesome power to destroy those who offend them. All these poems, whether charming or unsettling in their effect, are characterized by subversion of earlier heroic ideals.

Idylls 16 and 17 illustrate the changed relationships between poets and patrons in the Hellenistic era. In *Charites,* or *Hiero* (*Idyll* 16), Theocritus personifies his poems as the Charites (Graces), cleverly signifying both the poetic charm of his verse and the reciprocity of favor between poet and patron; when the Charites return to the poet's house after an unsuccessful journey in search of patronage, they reprove him and bow on cold knees in an empty coffer. The remarkable symbolism of this image introduces Theocritus's complaint that men of power and wealth no longer care to support the poets who will bring them undying fame, as did Simonides for the monarchs of old. Theocritus himself pins his hope for patronage on Hiero of Syracuse, and he provides the tyrant a foretaste of the praise that could be lavished upon his upcoming expedition against the Carthaginians. But Theocritus's idyllic picture of the effect peace will have upon the Sicilian landscape and its rustic inhabitants suggests that he hopes Hiero will choose to support the poetry on rural topics that the poet prefers to

compose, in place of more traditional epic descriptions of military exploits. Although *Idyll* 16 recalls throughout the conventions used in the victory odes of Pindar and Simonides, the tone of praise found in earlier poetry is here replaced by the concerns of the poet himself, who feels socially and culturally estranged from those in positions of power.

In the *Encomium to Ptolemy* (*Idyll* 17), however, Theocritus demonstrates that he was capable of successfully negotiating the difficulties of constructing praise in this new age when monarchs anticipated their imminent deification. In an introductory comparison between Zeus and Ptolemy II Philadelphus, Theocritus maintains the distinction between the king of the gods and the mortal king at the same time that he subtly suggests the parallel between them. After a celebration of Ptolemy's deified parents (his father is enshrined with Alexander and Heracles while his mother has been assimilated to Aphrodite), Theocritus compares Ptolemy's birth on Cos to Apollo's birth on Delos. Here the personal voice of the poet is largely absent, though praise of the monarch's generosity concludes with a mention of his benefactions to poets. The *Idyll* is a valuable historical resource for Ptolemaic ideology as well as an excellent illustration of the innovative praise-poetry composed in the Hellenistic age.

Of a small group of pederastic poems, one is written in hexameters (*Idylls* 12) and two in lyric meters and Aeolic dialect (*Idylls* 29 and 30). Each consists of a monologue by a lover who analyzes the circumstance of his desire for a boy. In two (*Idyll* 12 and 29) the speaker has successfully won the lad, while in the other (*Idyll 30*) an aging lover laments his continuing desire. The poems display various similarities to Hellenistic erotic epigram and may be imitative of lost erotic lyrics composed by Asclepiades. They also anticipate the genre of love elegy later developed by Roman poets such as Catullus, Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid. One other Aeolic poem, *Idyll* 28, was composed to accompany the gift of a distaff to Nicias's wife, Theugenis, upon the occasion of Theocritus's visit to their home in Miletus. The poem offers striking confirmation that in this age of civic rootlessness and social mobility one of the strongest bonds of affection was that among friends.

In addition to the *Idylls,* the bucolic manuscripts preserve twenty-two epigrams (mostly in elegiac couplets) ascribed to Theocritus (*Epigrams* 1–22), and the manuscripts of the *Greek Anthology* offer two others (*Epigrams* 23–24). Several of these poems are almost certainly spurious. But literary epigrams were one of the most successful of the new Hellenistic genres, and it is entirely likely that Theocritus contributed to this popular literary form. The epigrams transmitted by the bucolic manuscripts form the only complete Greek epigram book known from antiquity and are important for that reason alone. The collection is divided into a section of six bucolic epigrams, a mixed section of epitaphs and dedications, and a third section of six poems in various meters, primarily on literary greats. The bucolic epigrams are most likely to be spurious because of the tendency to attribute poems on pastoral topics to the founder of the genre. Among those most probably genuine are a dedication by Nicias to a god of healing (8), a dedication to Aphrodite Ourania (a favorite of Queen Arsinoe) made by a chaste wife (13), and an inscription for a bronze statue of Epicharmus, a Syracusan comic poet of the fifth century (18). While dedications and epitaphs were staple epigrammatic forms for Hellenistic poets, Theocritus's epigrams on literary figures suggest a special interest in the Greek poetic tradition.

Theocritus's *Idylls* appeal to readers because of their dramatic power, their suggestive combination of fantasy and realism, their humanization of heroic and divine figures, and their sympathetic portraits of commonplace characters. Human emotion, most particularly erotic longing, lies at the center of his poetry. In his most complex *Idylls* a tension set up by parallels and contrasts between the frame and insets suggestively entices the reader to seek universal implications in the apparently simple portraits he presents. For reasons that may have to do with the traditional meaning of the herding figure in Greek culture and with Theocritus's closeness to local Sicilian culture, the *Idylls* about herdsmen most effectively create this impression of universal meaningfulness. As a result these poems were generically distinguished from the others and set at the head of a long tradition of pastoral poetry that thrived until the age of romanticism and lives on, as William Empson has shown in *Some Versions of Pastoral* (1935), in many transmuted modes. The experience of the urban sophisticate who feels superior to those living a simpler life in a natural world while yet appreciating the wisdom derived from that existence has become associated with a poetic genre of which Theocritus is rightly considered the founder.

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Theophrastus

(circa 371 B.C. – 287 B.C.)

Paul T. Keyser
Cornell University

MAJOR WORKS – EXTANT: *Metaphysics* (circa 335 B.C.);
Meteorologica IV [possibly by Theophrastus] (circa 330–270 B.C.);
Characters (319 B.C.);
On Stones (315–314 B.C.);
On Fire (after 310 B.C.);
On Winds (after 310 B.C.);
Plant Etiology (circa 297 B.C.);
Plant Researches (circa 297 B.C.);
On the Senses;
On Wine and Olive Oil.

MAJOR WORKS – NONEXTANT or FRAGMENTARY: *Laws* (circa 317 B.C.);
Meteorology (after 310 B.C.);
On Waters (after 310 B.C.);
On Metals;
Tenets of Natural Philosophy.

Editiones principes: *Theophrasti De historia plantarum; eiusdem De causis plantarum,* edited by Aldus Manutius (Venice: Aldus Manutius, 1497); *Theophrasti characteres,* edited by Isaac Causabon (Leiden, 1593).

Standard editions: *Theophrastus: Enquiry into Plants,* 2 volumes, translated by Arthur Hort, Loeb Classical Library (London & New York: Harvard University Press, 1916, 1949); *Theophrastus: "De Causis Plantarum,"* 3 volumes, edited by Benedict Einarson and translated by Einarson and George K. K. Link, Loeb Classical Library (London & Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976, 1990); *Théophraste: Recherches sur les Plantes,* 2 volumes, edited by S. Amigues (Paris, 1988–1989); *Theophrastus: Characters;* edited and translated by Jeffrey Rusten, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993).

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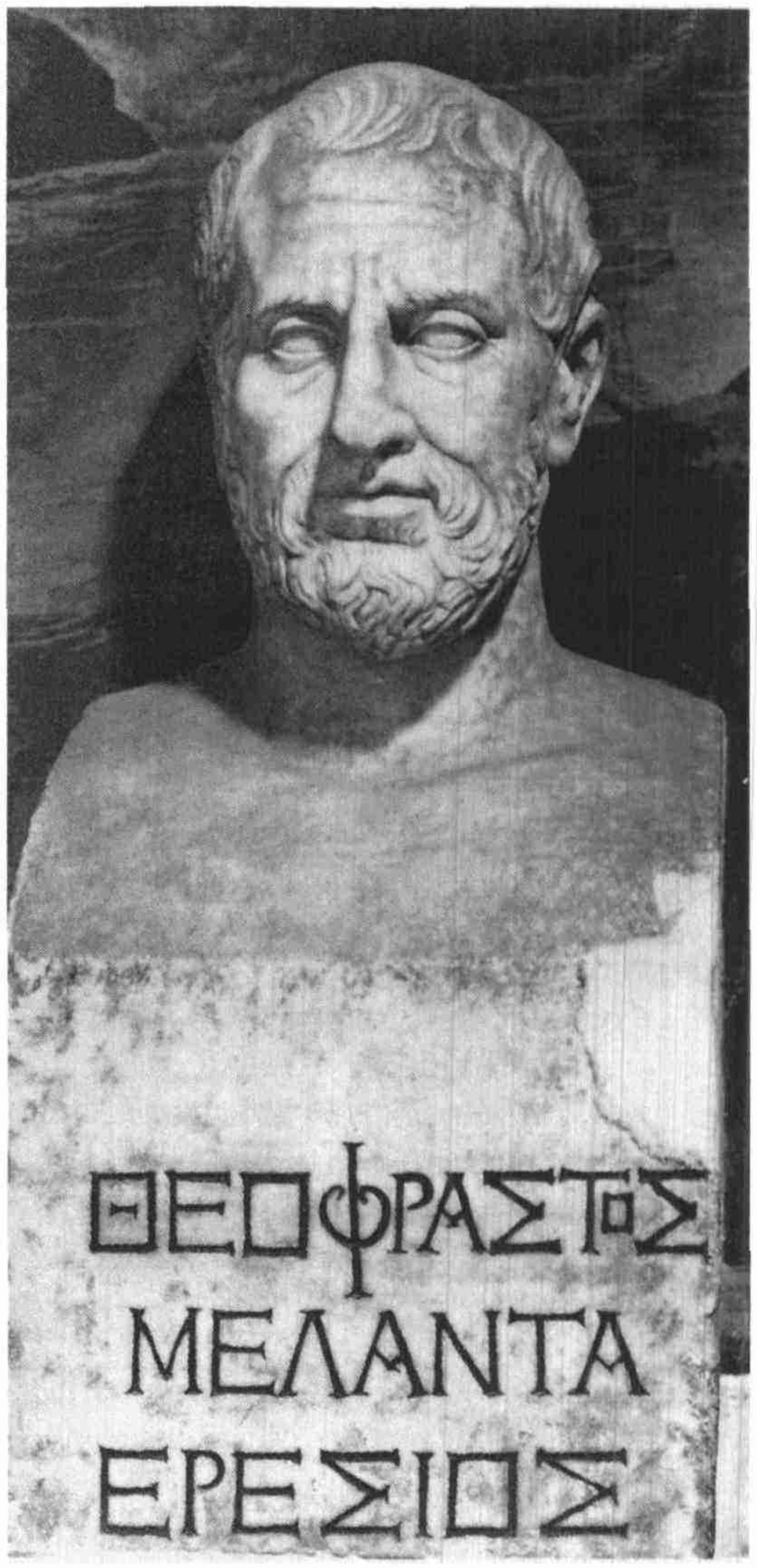


Theophrastus; bust found near Tivoli (Villa Albani, no. 1034)

Although Theophrastus was a prolific author, little of his work has survived to modern times, and he is too often remembered only for

his treatises on botany or for his brief work *Characters* (circa 319 B.C.). In fact he also wrote on logic, rhetoric, ethics, metaphysics, politics, theology, natural philosophy, and the history of philosophy. His most influential works, apart from those on botany, were the now mostly lost works on the history of philosophy (lost because absorbed and superseded in the works of his successors). Throughout his writings he seems to have been employing his critical mind to question the prevailing theories of his tradition (a tradition deriving from Aristotle) by gathering data that reveal problems and difficulties with those theories. Theophrastus wrote monographs on special topics, and several of these survive (*On Winds, On Fire,* and others) to reveal him as a wide-ranging thinker and an insightful observer.

Born about 371 B.C. to Melantes, a fuller of Eresus on the island of Lesbos, Theophrastus was originally named Tyrtamus by his parents. He was given the name Theophrastus by his teacher Aristotle, just as Aristocles had been renamed Plato years before. Nothing is known of Theophrastus's youth, but in the fourth century B.C. Lesbos was an island culture past its prime. In the fifth century Lesbos had been allied alternately with Athens and Sparta; in 369 B.C., when Theophrastus was an infant, Lesbos broke with Sparta and joined the second Athenian confederacy. As an adolescent Theophrastus saw Lesbos in 357 B.C. forced to submit to Persia and an oligarchy; the domination by Persia lasted until Alexander the Great invaded Asia in 332 B.C.

The only connected account of Theophrastus's life is provided by Diogenes Laertius in his *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers,* 5.36–57 (circa A.D. 200); occasional tidbits are preserved elsewhere. *Lives* records that Theophrastus was first a student of philosophy in Eresus under Alcippus and then a student of Plato; if this is accurate, he must have left Eresus for Athens as a youth, since Plato died in 347 B.C. when Theophrastus was about twenty-four. Because he grew up, from about age two to age fourteen, when Lesbos was an Athenian ally, there is nothing unlikely in that. Most scholars now believe that his association with philosophers began with Aristotle, perhaps when Aristotle came to Lesbos in about 344–342. If in fact Theophrastus had been in Athens sometime during the years 355 to 347 as an exile and student of Plato, he would have met Aristotle, also a resident alien and member of the Academy. On Plato's death Theophrastus might have returned home and renewed his fellowship with Aristotle when the latter arrived in Lesbos a few years later. In any case it is agreed that he became Aristotle's student in Athens from about the year 335 (and possibly from 342, when Aristotle went to Macedonia).

Theophrastus was the most distinguished of Aristotle's students and was apparently notable for his "divine" style of speech: hence his cognomen from the Greek words *Theo* (divine) and *phras* (explainer). Athenaeus records in his third century A.D. *Deipnosophistai* (Sophists at Dinner) that Theophrastus was a natty dresser and a brilliant mimic. He almost certainly never married – and in fact wrote a book against marriage – and never had children, and his only recorded erotic involvement was with Aristotle's son, Nicomachus. When Aristotle withdrew from Athens in 322, he chose Theophrastus, then about age fifty, to succeed him as head of the school. He was a popular teacher, attracting some two thousand students in his thirty-five years as dean of the Lyceum (more than one new student per week). Because he was also popular with the public, the Athenians for his sake repealed a law (probably of 307) banning philosophers after it had been in force only a year.

In a letter to his fellow philosopher Phanias of Eresus he remarks that he was driven to revision by his students; presumably since Aristotle had already renamed him on the basis of his eloquence, he was led to revise his work by his own nature as well. Not only did he teach many students, but some became renowned, such as Demetrius of Phaleron, tyrant of Athens; the physician Erasistratus of Keos; and the comic dramatist Menander of Athens. Theophrastus's successor, Straton of Lampsakos, was celebrated for his productive theory of disseminated void (built on Theophrastus's theory of pores) and for his denial that *aither* was the element of the heavens, as Aristotle had hypothesized. Theophrastus's written output was prodigious, roughly half as large as Aristotle's. Despite thirty-five years as dean, more than two hundred titles, and two thousand students, he reproached nature on his deathbed, as Ludwig van Beethoven did much later, for not giving him enough time, protesting that he was dying just as he was beginning to understand. Theophrastus's will, preserved by Diogenes Laertius in the fifth book of his *Lives,* leaves his property to his nephews and provides that statues of his teacher and his lover be erected; it also directs funds for the restoration of the school that is left to ten colleagues in common and makes provision for the care of his slaves.

Theophrastus's writings covered the wide, almost universal range of topics expected of a philosopher in his era. Most of his books are lost, and from

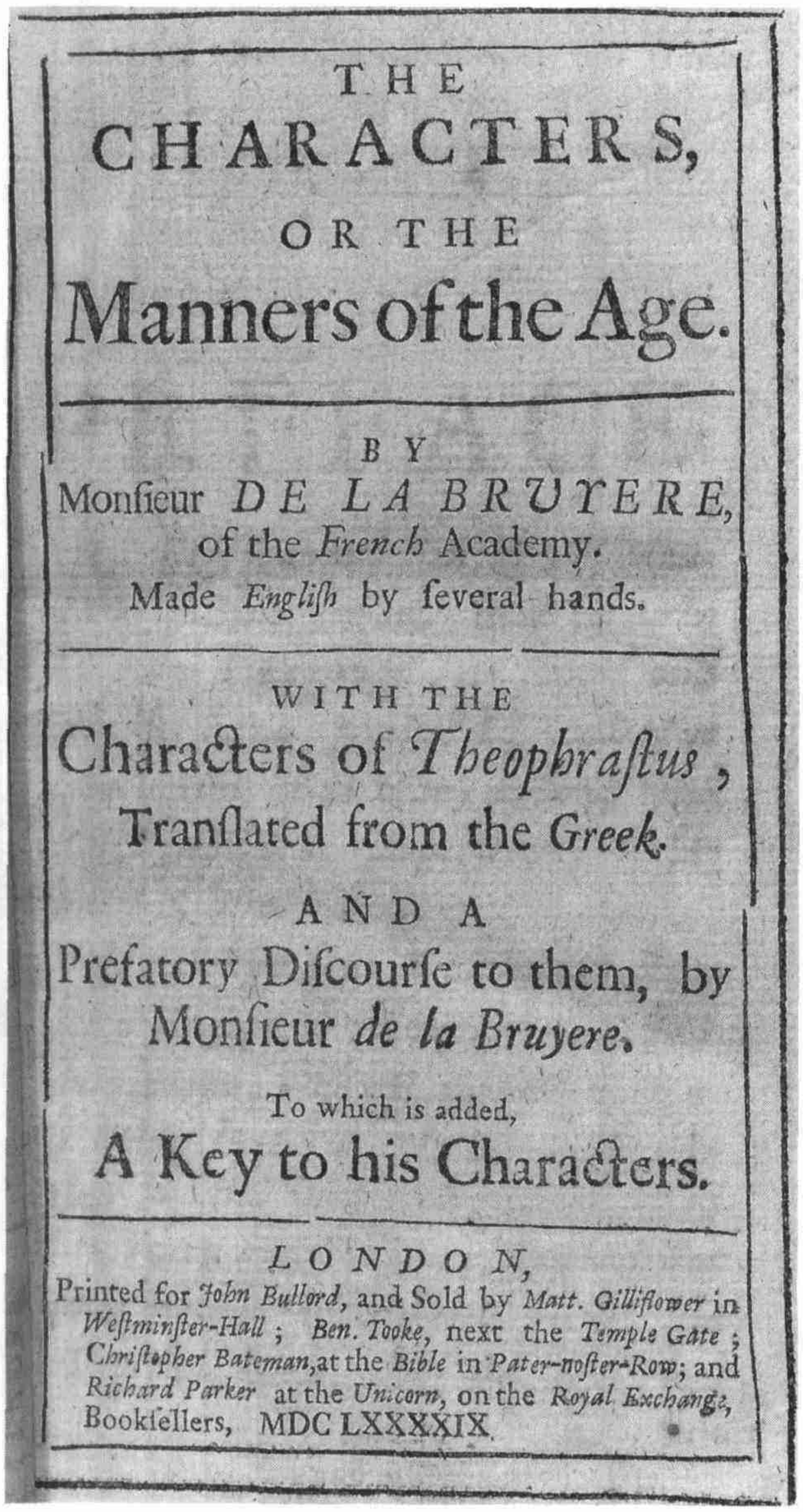
those only isolated quotations and paraphrases survive. On the other hand, several works in the Aristotelian corpus have sometimes been assigned to Theophrastus, notably the *Meteorologica* (330–270 B.C.), book 4. An appreciation of his literary output is best gained from his most influential works and from his extant works (omitting a few of the shorter monographs). Such evidence as exists suggests that the *Characters* was written probably about 319; the lost *Laws* perhaps around 317; the book *On Stones* in 315 or 314; the physical monographs *On Waters* (lost), *Meteorology* (extant only in Syriac and Arabic translations), *On Winds,* and *On Fire* probably in that order after 310; and the botany by about 297. The date of the *Metaphysics* is disputed, but most put it as early as about 335 – that is, within Aristotle's lifetime.

The work called in Greek *Physikai Doxai* (Tenets of Natural Philosophy) seems to have been a collection of materials for use in dialectic or scientific discussion, similar to Aristotle's doxographies in works like his *Metaphysics* (circa 335 B.C.) or *Physics* (circa 335 B.C.). Aristotle held that such collections are the proper point of departure in addressing the problems treated in philosophy. This indeed seems to have been the approach generally taken by others before and long after Aristotle. Theophrastus in other works also introduces his topics as a problem (for example in *On Winds* and in *Metaphysics),* and the one explicit fragment of the *Physikai Doxai* is consistent with such a procedure.

There is a lengthy passage of Theophrastus, usually called *On the Senses,* in which the same method is in use; it is likely a separate treatise but may be an extract from his *Tenets of Natural Philosophy.* In *On the Senses* Theophrastus lists the theories regarding perception and thought and maintains that they fall into two groups – those that claim perception occurs by recognizing similarities in phenomena and those that claim it occurs by the mutual interaction of opposites. He devotes a paragraph each to Parmenides and Plato and a long section to Empedocles; he then turns to those who make no use of similarity in their theory: Alcmaeon, Anaxagoras, Cleidemus, Diogenes of Apollonia, and Democritus. He then turns to the objects of sense and, after noting that the only prior thinkers to go deeply into the subject were Democritus and Plato, he describes Democritus's theory and Plato's theory in detail.

Aristotle's doxographies are ad hoc and teleological: only points relevant to his view are discussed, and history suffers Procrustean distortion so that all earlier thought is seen as groping toward his own work. Different is the approach of Theophrastus, who notes differences and deficiencies but seems to be trying to appreciate each thinker systematically for his own sake: as he says, "Where the truth lies is not our discourse" (*Senses,* section 60). For example, in discussing Diogenes of Apollonia, Theophrastus first describes how Diogenes explained perception to be effected in the various sense organs by air, both in general and with respect to specific differences, maintaining for instance that sharper hearing arises from small or delicate ducts. Theophrastus also describes how Diogenes of Apollonia argued that thought itself was the result of pure dry air. Only then does Theophrastus dispute this theory, arguing that if perception is indeed a product of air, then animals that do not breathe – insects, for instance – could not perceive; and that if thought is moreover a product of pure dry air, then birds would be brilliant and mountain dwellers more intelligent than coast dwellers. Where Theophrastus can be checked – for example, in his account of Plato, which is clearly derived from the latter's *Timaeus* (circa 350 B.C.) – he seems compressed but generally accurate. Hearing and sight are first treated separately, and then all the mechanisms of sensation: temperature and touch; pleasure and pain; taste, smell, and sound; and sight and colors. His presentation often preserves Platonic vocabulary and mostly follows Plato's order of presentation.

The evaluation of Theophrastus's lost *Tenets of Natural Philosophy* varies in proportion with one's confidence in the principles and practice of *Quellenforschung,* the search for (always lost) sources of extant or even lost works. The *Tenets* may have been a well-researched collection of quotations and explanations, or it may simply have followed Aristotle's lead in being a historically naive and anachronistic account in which history could not be distinguished from interpretation. Deciding which it is will affect one's view of the reliability of all later doxographers, who depended (it is agreed and clear) ultimately on Theophrastus; and in turn the decision will affect one's view of the worth of the book's reconstruction of pre–Socratic thought. At a minimum Theophrastus took Aristotle's accounts (in *Metaphysics,* book 1, for the most part) and supplied them with quotations from the pre-Socratics. But his presentation was dialectical, and he had a critical eye for unsolved puzzles and latent problems. Certainly both the types of problems that were found in Theophrastus's *Tenets* and also their order of presentation were consistent with Aristotle's method and system. For example, in the work by Aëtios, a


THE
CHARACTERS,
OR THE
Manners of the Age.

BY
Monſieur *DE LA BRUYERE*,
of the *French* Academy.
Made *Engliſh* by ſeveral hands.

WITH THE
Characters of *Theophraſtus*,
Tranſlated from the *Greek*.
AND A
Prefatory Diſcourſe to them, by
Monſieur *de la Bruyere*.

To which is added,
A Key to his Characters.

LONDON,
Printed for *John Bullord*, and Sold by *Matt. Gilliflower* in *Weſtminſter-Hall*; *Ben. Tooke*, next the *Temple Gate*; *Chriſtopher Bateman*, at the *Bible* in *Pater-noſter-Row*; and *Richard Parker* at the *Unicorn*, on the *Royal Exchange*, Bookſellers, MDC LXXXXIX.

Title page for a seventeenth-century English translation of Theophrastus's best-known work (courtesy of the Lilly Library, Indiana University)

"third edition" of Theophrastus from the first or second century A.D. the discussion about the sun proceeds as follows: "What is it? (2.20), "What size is it?" (2.21), "What shape is it?" (2.22), "How does it change or move?" (2.23–24). The succeeding chapters on the moon and on the earth proceed in the same manner. This approach corresponds exactly to Aristotle's categories and method in *Prior Analytics* (circa 335 B.C.), *Topics* (circa 335 B.C.), and even *Rhetoric* (circa 335 B.C.). There is actually little that can be traced to Theophrastus that is not already in Aristotle, including the method of counterarguments and quotations, both of course fitted to the Aristotelian frame. Theophrastus's *Tenets,* and the doxographical tradition descending from it, both doubtless contain valuable information on the pre-Socratics; but the *Tenets* must be accepted on its own terms and not as a history of philosophy.

In the *Metaphysics* (in antiquity probably called "On the First Things"), three general trends of Theophrastus's thought are apparent. Aristotle was, like his teacher Plato, a thorough teleologist: for him the final cause, the goal or purpose of any causal chain, was the essential and real cause. But Theophrastus points out several difficulties with this outlook; unfortunately, except in the case of Straton and some Epicureans, this insight bore no fruit before the nineteenth century. Second, although Theophrastus for the most part does not deviate from Aristotle's assumptions and models, he does identify many difficulties in their application. In modern terms it could be said that he was collecting data to test the "standard model." But he never suggests any alternative overall theory and only occasionally builds up an alternate partial theory: his work is aporetic.

Theophrastus begins the *Metaphysics* with a quick précis of Aristotle's arguments for a celestial "prime mover," but then notes several difficulties in these arguments, such as the following: that, despite a single prime mover, the planets are plural and their motions not similar; that if the tendency in living beings to act and move "for the best" requires a soul (*psyche*) as is claimed by Aristotle, then perhaps the planets must have soul and be self-moved as well, and the prime mover is not really prime; and that, despite the power of the prime mover to impart rotation, the Earth and all that is on it fails to rotate. Theophrastus questions whether it is really accurate to say that the universe is made up of contraries, thus undermining one of Aristotle's key presumptions. He accepts the idea that nature does everything for the best purpose but questions its applicability to all instances and gives several well-known examples of natural phenomena that do not have apparent purpose, including tides or sea-level shifts, climatic changes, alterations to the surface of the earth, breasts in males, patchy hair growth in humans (and the even positively harmful enormous antlers of deer), and finally the varieties of methods by which animals reproduce, which, if for the best, should be uniform. In the third place Theophrastus emphasizes that there must be different methods of study for the different entities studied: objects of reason and primary and secondary

natural objects. According to Theophrastus, sense perception essentially observes differences in the natural world, and the cosmos is a unity of different parts. His emphasis on the varieties of knowable phenomena and the ways of knowing them – and of the need to start from observation – while hardly anti-Aristotelian, is distinctively Theophrastean.

The work by Theophrastus that is most popular in the present era is the *Characters,* which is also the earliest of his dated works and the most securely dated. The recorded title varies: sometimes, for example, it is called *Ethical Characters.* The book contains thirty-two traits described in short, distinctive, circumstantial vignettes (the "characters" labeled by numbers 5 and 19 in fact contain two separate traits each); it is written in a singular style and set in the city of Athens. Allusions in numbers 8, 23, and 26 refer to situations that can be dated in the years 322 to 319; the only year in which all allusions could simultaneously have been made is 319. All the traits described are in fact examples of vices (many are already in a list Aristotle made in *Nicomachean Ethics*), or rather each is an example of a person who is characterized by such a trait.

Theophrastus's purpose in writing this book, which has such an odd, even unique, literary style, has been greatly debated. The types delineated clearly have some sort of ethical basis, though no complete catalogue could have been intended, because there are no examples of extravagance in any form or of anger in the form of bad temper or argumentativeness; furthermore, the presentation is unsystematic. An old suggestion, partly inspired by the record that Menander was one of Theophrastus's students, is that all thirty-two traits are the sort to be found in comedy (though why Theophrastus would write such a handbook is not clear). Some have suggested that the work was intended to be a rhetorical handbook to be used by orators in sketching the character of their opponents, and the work was indeed put to that use later. But, although Theophrastus certainly had an interest in rhetoric, there is no further evidence that he was interested in characterization in this context. Alternatively, it has been suggested that the book may have been intended more as entertainment.

Perhaps Theophrastus's intention in writing *Characters* can be seen by contrasting the work with Aristotle's ethical system, in which morality depends on choice and in which one ought to choose the mean – not the defect, as, for example, the self-depreciation sketched in number 1; nor the corresponding excess, boasting, portrayed in number 23. The traits that Theophrastus vividly describes are all vices – that is, they are not illustrations of the virtuous mean; but precisely because these traits are patterned ways or habits, superficial regularities of behavior, they are not the result of choice. Aristotle would argue, of course, that even the pattern must be the result of some set of prior choices. But Theophrastus presents his reader with a collection of unchosen vices that have been "imprinted" (the root meaning of the title, *charactêr* in Greek) on people. The implicit metaphor here is almost botanical: people's vices are like the habits of plants. As has been noted, none of the particular activities that are described along with the thirty-two traits is in itself unusual for late fourth-century Athens; Theophrastus no doubt wrote from observation. But he does not deny that virtue was a mean; and it was characteristically Greek to think that virtue lay in the golden mean of "nothing in excess" (*mêden agan*). Although Theophrastus does not explicitly state that the traits he describes are unchosen, his presentation leads the reader to see them in that way.

It seems that here as elsewhere Theophrastus was questioning the standard model; but because he does not present an alternate theory, his work appears unsystematic. In any case he evidently observed closely and well, because his *Characters* has struck twenty-three centuries of readers as true to life. The rumormonger in number 8, the superstitious person in number 16, and the cheapskate in number 30 may still be recognized as types – and objects of fun; and even seekers after virtue often find themselves ensnared in the toils of their own unchosen patterns of behavior.

Possibly around 317 Theophrastus published his legal researches in the work *Laws,* as Plato and Aristotle had earlier published their works on law. The date 317 is a guess based on the idea that the work was used by Demetrius of Phaleron in 317 when he legislated new laws; it is not universally accepted and is unprovable. Theophrastus began the project as Aristotle's student (perhaps about the year 335), and their work formed the basis of Aristotle's collection of constitutions (of which the only survivor is the *Athenian Constitution* [circa 334 B.C.]) and of Aristotle's *Politics* (circa 335 B.C.), books 4–6. Fewer fragments survive than the original number of books (twenty-four), so Theophrastus's outlook is hard to divine, but he seems to have discussed fundamentals of the constitution and then the details of the civil law, perhaps for the use of legislators. The importance of this work in the appreciation of Theophrastus is that one can

see here the practical philosopher at work, involved in matters of history and politics.

On Stones seems to be the earliest of Theophrastus's extant scientific (natural-philosophic) treatises; at any rate it has the earliest secure date: 315–314 (Theophrastus dates a discovery to about ninety years before 315–314, the archonship of Praxiboulos; had he been writing in any later year he would have had no reason to refer to the year 315–314). This, like the works *On Winds* and *On Fire,* is often called a fragment; more likely, it is simply a monograph, like the *Characters* and other such works from this period (Autolycus's astronomy and various Hippocratic treatises come to mind, as well as the shorter works of Aristotle). As was often the case, Theophrastus's point of departure was a passage in Aristotle, in this case *Meteorologica* 3.6, where Aristotle describes the effects of two "exhalations" (the conventional translation of *anathumiasis*) when trapped inside the earth. These ill-defined vapors arise from the earth (as can be learned in the first book of *Meteorologica,* where Aristotle introduces them), and Aristotle uses them to explain a wide range of observations, including comets, the salt of the sea, and earthquakes. Aristotle, building on a hypothesis of Plato in the *Timaeus*, describes stones as objects that have been produced by the dry exhalation and metals by the wet; Theophrastus accordingly wrote two treatises, *On Stones* and the lost *On Metals*. Here again he begins with an implicit acceptance of Aristotle's theories but collects data about divergences and difficulties.

On Stones is a systematic discussion of stones and mineral earths from all over the Mediterranean world and Alexander's empire. Its list is not exhaustive (even Pliny's is ten times longer) but focuses on materials that provide problems worthy of discussion. For example, according to the theory, metals should be liquefied by heat, as ice is, while stones and earthy material such as clay should be hardened by heat; but in fact many stones melt with heat, and others demonstrate other unexpected effects, such as becoming porous or burning. Similarly, Theophrastus includes a section on the production, by fire and out of various precursors, of "artificial" stones. Most important from this point of view is that metals can be transformed into stones (for example, copper into Egyptian blue pigment), and stones into metals (for example, cinnabar into mercury). But Theophrastus is reluctant to make generalizations, let alone provide an alternate theory. Theophrastus's work is important because it was the earliest extant Greek scientific work devoted to minerals (despite the occasional lapse in which he included the transparent pearl or the "lynx-urine" stone) and was not surpassed until the work of Georgius Agricola in the sixteenth century. Again its fate was unfortunate: within two generations Stoic paradoxography and Epicurean agnosticism prevailed, and such collections of facts and rumors became a kind of ancient "Believe It or Not" genre. By about 200 mineralogy was the province of the early alchemists, such as the writer Bolos (also known as pseudo-Democritus).

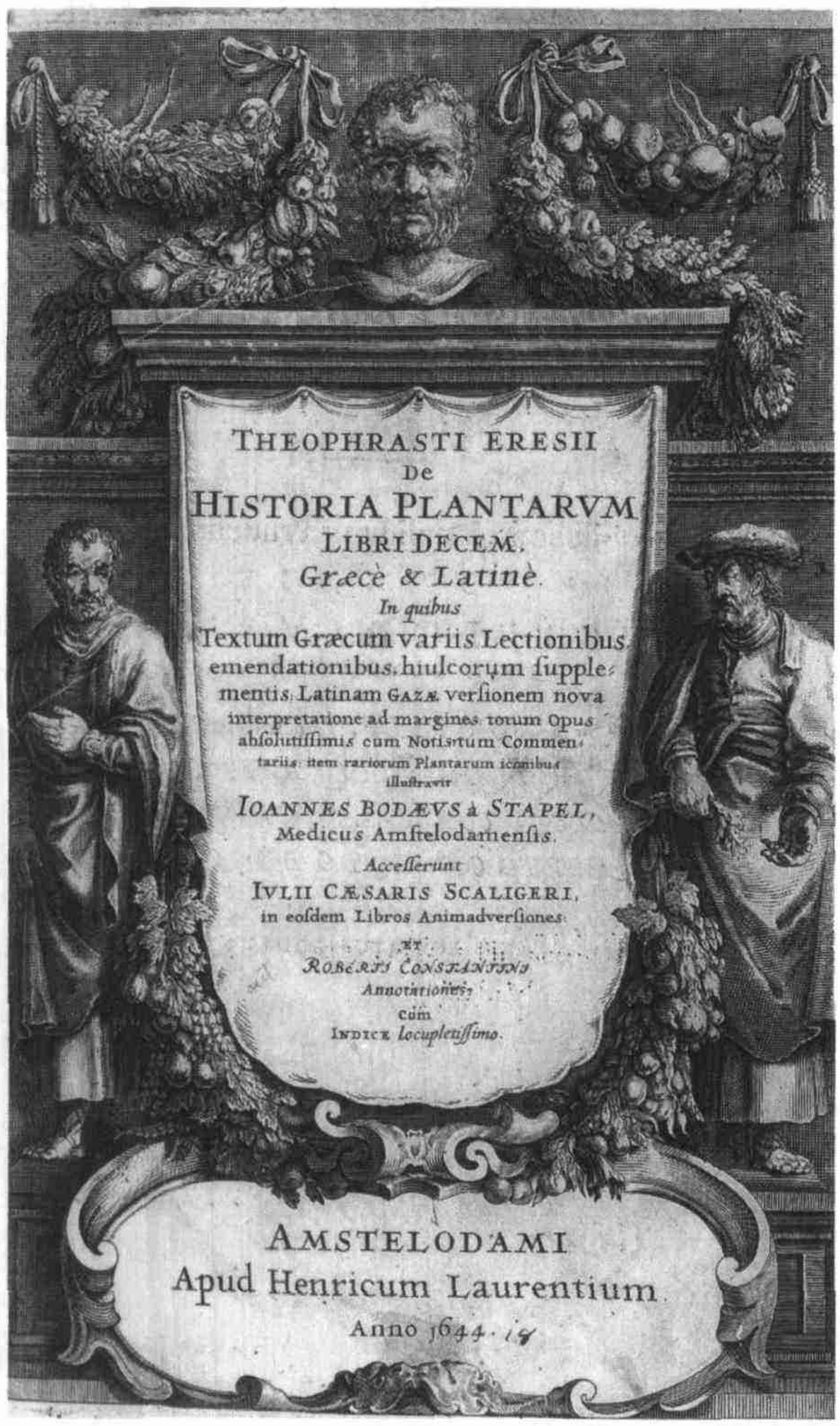
At some point after 310 Theophrastus wrote a work *On Waters;* the work is lost but can be dated by its reference to a blockade in that year of the Gauls on Mount Haimon by Cassander, noted in Seneca's *Natural Questions* (circa A.D. 63). Much of the material may be preserved by Vitruvius and Pliny. If so it was again a collection of data with no explicit superincumbent theory. In any case it is cited by Theophrastus in *On Winds,* section 5 (the rains have been treated before), while *On Winds* 1 indicates that he has also already covered the origin and causes of the winds. That discussion is in fact found in Theophrastus's *Meteorology* 13, which as well lacks more than a sentence on rain itself, implying that *On Waters* preceded. Finally *On Fire* 1 presupposes the existence of a discussion of lightning and thunderbolts, in fact found in the *Meteorology* 2 and 6. Thus the chronological sequence is 310, *On Waters, Meteorology,* then *On Fire* and *On Winds* (whose relative order is uncertain).

Theophrastus's *Meteorology* was fertile ground for guesswork until the rediscovery in 1971 of the Syriac and Arabic translations (already partially recovered in 1918). Based on Hans Daiber's 1992 English translation, one can now say that, like the *Characters* and *On Stones, Meteorology* is a collection of observations intended for use in, or derived from, the lecture hall. Here, however, Theophrastus is more willing to reproduce or mention theories – but he still does not advocate any single theory. He begins by listing seven theories for thunder (all invoking wind and clouds) and defends that set of theories; he then lists four causes of lightning itself and several explanations each for the relation between thunder and lightning. Often he validates an explanation or theory by reference to an allegedly similar phenomenon from common observation (for instance, sponges, when split or squeezed, give out water without loud noise, just as lightning can be expelled silently from clouds that contain hidden fire). He also treats thunderbolts (almost one quarter of the treatise), clouds, various forms of precipitation, causes of winds, the halo around the moon, and finally, earthquakes. Contrary to Aristotle, who

regarded thunder, lightning, and thunderbolts as products of the dry exhalation, with lightning always following thunder, Theophrastus makes these phenomena the products of the movement and collision of wind and clouds and fire (a simpler, more mechanical view) and makes lightning precede thunder or be simultaneous. Again differing from Aristotle, Theophrastus argues that the moon halo is caused by a light-induced wavelike motion of thick air. (Aristotle more correctly refers to optical effects.) And Theophrastus is content to list four theories of quakes that all involve hollows in the earth, either collapsing or full of water, air, or fire, while Aristotle favors a theory according to which the dry exhalation is trapped.

In his work titled *On Fire,* Theophrastus also theorizes, but again only about the particular issue at hand, the nature of fire. Most of the short treatise (again a monograph or lecture notes) is taken up with examples of the peculiar properties of fire vis-à-vis the other three Aristotelian elements of earth, air, and water. The others naturally change into one another but cannot generate themselves, while fire both generates and destroys itself (he is thinking of firebreaks) and is generated in many ways, mostly unnaturally. Moreover, the other elements are self-sufficient, but fire requires fuel and is destroyed when that fuel is exhausted. Theophrastus considers several ways out of this difficulty and seems inclined toward the notion that heat is more elemental than fire; yet he comes to no conclusion, rather noting several further difficulties. In the bulk of the book he lists and tries to explain various examples of the peculiar behavior of fire; here he makes use of two Aristotelian concepts, the interaction of opposites and *antiperistasis* (the concentration of one thing by its opposite). For example, fire is fanned by moist fuel but extinguished by an excess of cold or wet. Similarly (in terms of *antiperistasis*), winter air makes heat stronger in baths. One amusing example is the "melting" of tin in extreme cold, allegedly by the concentration of heat (in fact tin crumbles in extreme cold because of an atomic rearrangement of the crystals, referred to as "tin pest"). Suntans are explained as resulting from gradual, mild heating, while reddened burns supposedly result from rapid heating. The belly "melts" coins while boiling water does not, because the belly's heat is drier (moisture being removed by the bladder). Burning glasses and mirrors ignite hard-to-light substances because the rays of the sun are composed of finer particles and a more continuous flow of them than ordinary fire. Once again the work focuses on correct observations and the difficulty of explaining them on any simple theory (as in the *Meteorology*). Theophrastus has not arrived at a new theory of fire; rather he has shown that ordinary fire is different from the elemental fire or heat, and that the disparate phenomena associated with ordinary fire do not allow a single or simple explanation.

The last of the short monographs to be considered is the work *On Winds* (in fact it may precede *On Fire*). Like the earlier works, this one may be seen as a collection of data about the peculiarities of earthly manifestations of the four primary elements. Water, earth, and fire have been investigated; in this work Theophrastus examines the element of air. On the other hand Theophrastus himself relates the work to his earlier *Meteorology:* in *On Winds* 1 he indicates that the causes of winds have been established there, while here he wishes to discuss the individual or particular aspects of each type of wind. His observations are regarded as generally accurate and precise when concerned with Greece and the Aegean, considerably less so everywhere else, as is only to be expected. As with *On Stones* and *On Fire,* Theophrastus's point of departure is a set of remarks by Aristotle in *Meteorologica* 2.4–6. There Aristotle explains that the winds result from the motion of the dry and wet exhalations in the air (the condensation of the wet exhalation produces rain; the dry exhalation is the substance of the winds). Aristotle is at pains to deny that wind is simply air in motion, a theory as old as Anaximander and the Hippocratic writings and common in various thinkers before Socrates. Theophrastus departs from Aristotle here quite decisively and develops his insight, from *Meteorology* 13, that winds are driven by compression of the air at their destination, which thus draws them in by suction (he explicitly uses the analogy of a straw sucking water). But in the work *On Winds* he goes further, and dispensing with (or at least neglecting) Aristotle's dry exhalation, he repeatedly asserts that winds are in fact air in motion. He also makes use of a hydrologic analogy, that winds flow as rivers do, an analogy mentioned but rejected by Aristotle. Theophrastus has noted the rain-shadow effect, the lee of the mountains effect, the effect of slow climatic change (a cooling trend supported by modern paleoclimatalogical studies), wind shear, and the important role of solar heating in driving winds. The treatise, like *On Stones,* is in two parts: first Theophrastus considers general factors affecting winds, and then specific or local winds, making use of the factors enumerated in the first part. It shares with *On Fire* and *Meteorology* the characteristic of seeking to question the standard model.



Title page for a Greek and Latin edition of Theophrastus's treatise on botany (courtesy of the Lilly Library, Indiana University)

The various investigations by Theophrastus, from *Metaphysics* to *Winds,* can be seen, again, as criticisms, perhaps implicit, of the standard model constructed by Aristotle. It is also possible to see them as criticisms of the growing influence of the unrestrained transcendentalism of Plato's *Timaeus.* It is perhaps not so much that Theophrastus doubted Aristotle's synthesis or method as that he wished to emphasize the role of observation in the "lower" sciences, those that deal with terrestrial phenomena so varied they cannot be explained by logic alone. That there was not always a clear distinction between Theophrastus's works and those of Aristotle is revealed by Theophrastus's will and by the story of the library of Aristotle's school, the Lyceum, told by Strabo in his first century A.D. *Geography.* According to that tale, after the death of Theophrastus there were no copies available either of his works or those of Aristotle. But around 85 B.C., Andronicus of Rhodes obtained long-hidden copies and republished both Aristotle and Theophrastus. (Probably, however, their works were in fact available, and Andronicus only published a new edition.) Theophrastus himself evidently believed that he and Aristotle were engaged in a joint enterprise in philosophy.

One consequence of the unity of the corpus (or better, cycle) of Peripatetic writings is that the distinctions made later in antiquity between the books of Aristotle and those of Theophrastus are not always certain. There are, of course, many post-Aristotelian works in the Aristotelian corpus, such as the *Problemata* of about 300 B.C. The line between Aristotle and Theophrastus becomes especially blurred with the Aristotelian work called "Meteorologica 4." It is clearly *not* book 4 of Aristotle's work, which is complete in three books, and "Meteorologica 4" ought better to be called "On Mixtures" or "On the Powers and Products of the Elements." Some scholars have argued that this work was either written or edited by Theophrastus, and there seems certainly to be a Theophrastean influence. This is particularly clear in the theory of "pores" (essentially microchannels permeating all or nearly all solids and liquids), which is used throughout the work. The theory of pores is not an Aristotelian idea at all (in fact it was roundly rejected by him); but it is found in Theophrastus, especially in the works *On Fire* and *On Odors.* The overall style of the treatise is Theophrastean as well; especially in its later sections, the work is given to listing peculiar or special properties of substances in light of (and apparently partly in response to) a four-element theory of matter. Still, there is no proof of Theophrastus's authorship.

The largest bulk among the surviving works of Theophrastus is made up of his two great botanical works, *Plant Researches* – usually called by its Latin title *Historia Plantarum* – in nine books; and *Plant Etiology* – usually called *De Causis Plantarum* – in six books, with an appendix, *On Odors.* Various chronological indications in *Plant Researches* suggest that Theophrastus was still actively working on it about 297. Other references seem to indicate that he began parts by 320 or 321 (in the archonship of Archippus) or 310–309 (Theophrastus dates the foundation of the city of Cyrene to "about three hundred years" before the archonship of Semonides which was in 310–309). The order of the two works is Aristotelian: *Researches,* then *Etiology* (*Etiology* 1.1.1 refers to the *Researches*); Aristotle's *Historia Animalium* (circa 340 B.C.) preceded *Parts of Animals* (circa 330 B.C.), *Generation of Animals* (circa 326 B.C.), and *Motion of Animals* (circa 325 B.C.). But in his *Meteorol-*

ogy Theophrastus wrote on the causes of winds first, then in *On Winds* he wrote about specific winds and his observations of them. *Etiology* and *Researches* may have been being written at the same time; the only chronological reference in *Etiology* indicates that the period 314–313 (archonship of Nicodorus) was "recent," but it does not indicate how recent.

In *Researches* Theophrastus covers general matters, first taking the tree as a standard, then focusing on domesticated trees, wild trees, trees and plants peculiar to certain regions, various woods and their uses, "undershrubs" such as marjoram and thistle, herbaceous plants, and finally plant juices and medicinal herbs. In the *Etiology* Theophrastus treats generation, propagation, and fruiting; effects of environment or ecology and effects and processes of cultivation; alteration or the "unnatural"; degeneration and death; and natural flavors and odors. The lost *On Wine and Olive Oil* was almost certainly book 7, and the extant *On Odors* is really book 8. Discussing more than five hundred species found around the Mediterranean and in Alexander's empire, Theophrastus relies on personal observation, oral reports by various people (farmers, doctors, herbalists, and the like), and some written records by earlier botanists and by writers who refer incidentally to plants. His diaeretic method here (as well as in the monographs) is fully Aristotelian (even Platonic), dividing categories of plants by various hierarchically ordered differentiae. He focuses on the plants and does not further systematize; he also eschews inappropriate analogy.

According to Theophrastus, plants, like rocks, fires, and winds, are diverse, and generalization is difficult; the instrument of knowledge is observation, not reason, since the object of inquiry is particular and not universal, and the unknown is to be sought by way of what is manifest to the senses. So far, following his own program as laid out in the *Metaphysics,* he does so as well with respect to teleology – the pericarp is to be explained as being both for human nourishment (as in Plato's *Timaeus*) and also for the plant seed. In general the nature of cultivable plants is best brought out in cultivation. But Theophrastus is aware that art (*technê*), in this case cultivation, does not always improve the nature of a plant, even from the point of view of the cultivator, and he cites the example of silphium, which only grew wild (it is now extinct): many plants regulate themselves better without human effort. And his hesitant attitude to theory is again evident: in *On Flavors,* book 6 of *Etiology,* he reviews Plato and Democritus unfavorably and then briefly proposes a simple theory – the four elements have no flavor but acquire it by admixture – before he moves directly into a typically Theophrastean annotated list of cases and problems.

Theophrastus is moderately skeptical about the spontaneous generation of plants, granting that it may seem to happen when conditions change and dormant seeds sprout. He adopts a Herodotean attitude toward marvels: "fabulous tales are not composed without reason" (*Researches,* 9.18.2.) As the earliest scientific writer on botany he is credited with being the first to observe many features precisely; for example, the distinction between mono- and dicotyledons. He provides eminently practical and specific advice on arboriculture, integrating his various theories, and on viticulture and field crops as well. Similarly pragmatic is *On Odors* (book 8 of *Researches*), in which he describes the manufacture of perfumes and the like; here is the earliest record of the *bain-marie,* a device perfected by the early alchemist Maria the Jewess.

Theophrastus's botanical work, like his works on stones, fire, winds, and other subjects, was remarkable for its achievement, but in many ways its impact was limited in his era. Just as mineralogy became part of early alchemy, so too did botany become magical – or else merely pragmatic (as in agricultural handbooks and herbals). Theophrastus was aware that what he wrote was partial and initial: "but this must be investigated further" is nearly a refrain in his works; but history falsified hope. Later authors added to the encyclopedia of knowledge, but in most fields of natural history (in contrast to mathematics, astronomy, and other similarly theoretical sciences) progress ceased, as the supernatural or marvelous encroached on what had been rational observation, until the time of the Renaissance. Theophrastus was an observational scientist; close attention to fact and detail falls from favor in a theoretical age, and, in the several such ages that have intervened, little effort has been made to preserve the works in which Theophrastus recorded his careful investigations.

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Thucydides

(circa 455 B.C. – circa 395 B.C.)

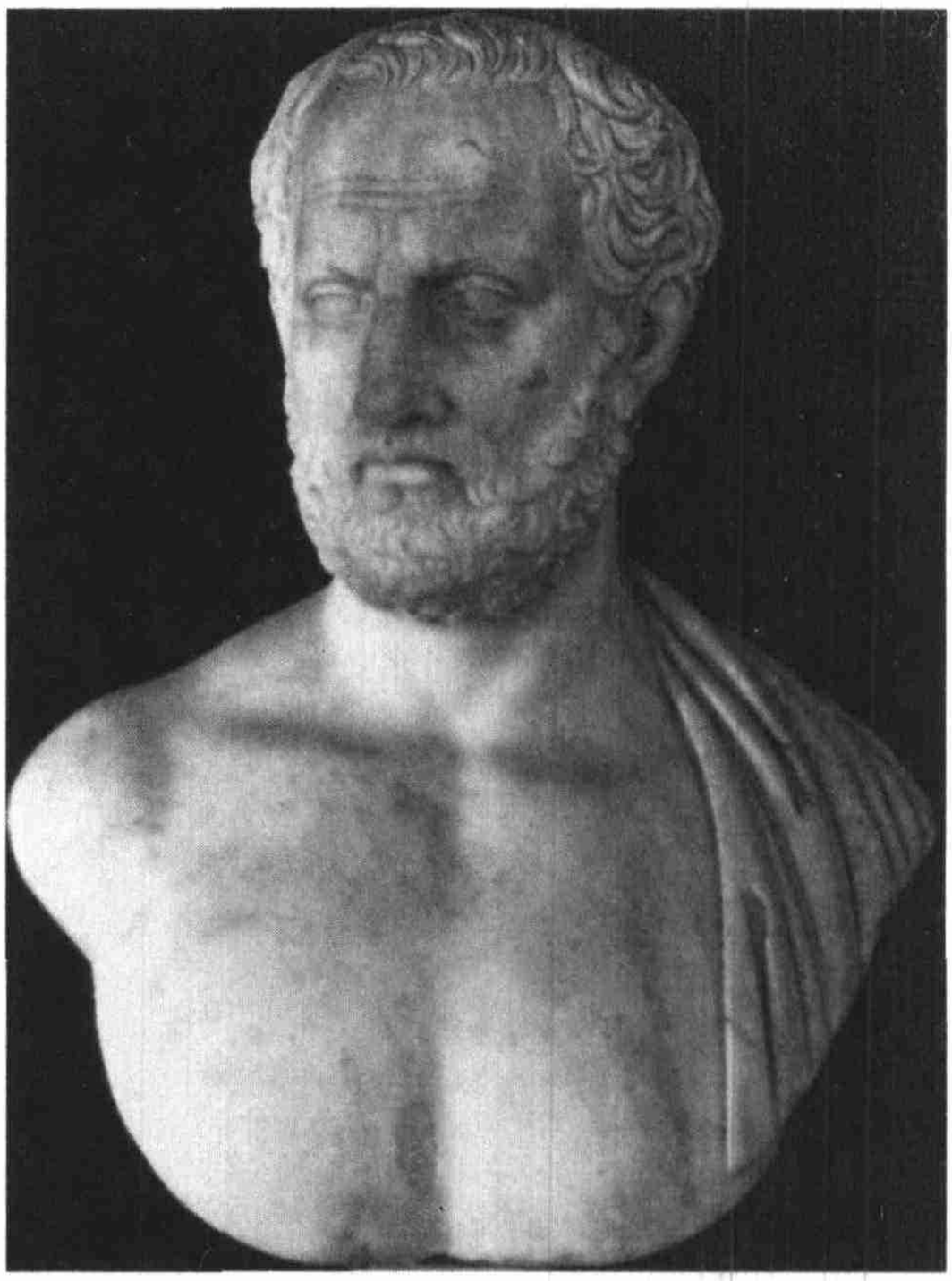
Mortimer Chambers
University of California, Los Angeles

MAJOR WORK: *History of the Peloponnesian War*

Editio princeps: *Thucydides,* edited by Aldus Manutius (Venice: Aldus Manutius, 1502).

Standard editions: *The Peloponnesian War,* 4 volumes, edited and translated by Charles Forster Smith, Loeb Classical Library (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1919, revised, 1928); *Thucydides Historiae,* 2 volumes, edited by H. Stuart Jones and J. Enoch Powell (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1942).

Translations in English: *The Peloponnesian War,* translated by Rex Warner (Harmondsworth, U.K.: Penguin, 1954; revised, 1972); *The Landmark Thucydides,* translated by Richard Crawley, edited by Robert B. Strassler (New York & London: Free Press, 1996).



Bust of Thucydides in Holkham Hall (Norfolk, England)

The historian Thucydides was a citizen of Athens and lived during the most fertile period of Greek culture. His only preserved writing is his history of the Peloponnesian War, fought between Athens and Sparta and their respective allies (431–404 B.C.). This war is the decisive one in Greek history, for it sealed the doom of the independent city-states, which declined fatally in strength and importance during the following century.

For biographical details there are two kinds of sources: the evidence within Thucydides' work, by far the most reliable information, and traditions about his life and family connections that descend from research done in the Hellenistic period (323–30 B.C.), when scholars sought to reconstruct the lives of the great literary models of the classical age. This latter material exists in a life of Thucydides by Marcellinus and one shorter, anonymous biography. These works appear to be summaries of lectures given to boys in Byzantine schools and may date in their final form from the sixth century A.D., but they draw on sources from earlier times.

Thucydides was born between 460 and 454 B.C., as two passages in his work show. In book 5 he states that he lived through the whole war, "being of an age to understand events," words that suggest he was a young adult when the war broke out in 431. Moreover, he relates in book 4 that in 424 he held the position of one of the ten generals who were elected year by year to command Athenian forces. It is fairly certain that thirty was the minimum age for generals, so Thucydides cannot have been born after 454. If his birth is dated at 460 or earlier, it becomes hard to see why he wanted to assure the reader that in 431, at age thirty or more, he was really old enough to understand political-military affairs. Thus, if he was born between 456 and 454, he was between twenty-three and twenty-five when the war started, which suits perfectly his slightly defen-

sive statement in book 5. (The birthdate of 471, occasionally still seen in minor encyclopedias, comes from Pamphilus, a scholar under the early Roman Empire, but is no more than a mechanical calculation based on the assumption that the age of forty marked the most important event of a man's life – in Thucydides' case the opening of the Peloponnesian War in 431.)

His family background is important and brings him into relationship with other prominent Athenians. Only once, in book 4, does he mention his father's name, Oloros, to identify himself officially as Thucydides, son of Oloros, the general in command on the island of Thasos in 424. Oloros is not a Greek name, and it entered Greek history in an interesting way. The Athenian statesman Miltiades became ruler, or "tyrant," of the Gallipoli peninsula (the ancient Chersonese) in about 516. According to Herodotus's *History of the Persian Wars* (late fifth century B.C.), around 513 Miltiades withdrew from the region into the territory of Thrace (roughly within modern Bulgaria) owing to an attack by Scythian tribes; apparently he met a Thracian "king," or chieftain, named Oloros, and in about 510 he married the king's daughter, Hegesipyle. They had a son, Cimon, who became the leading Athenian general in the period 479–461 and a rival of the well-known leader Pericles.

The name Oloros reappears only once, as the name of the father of Thucydides. Scholars may infer that the historian was related to the family of Cimon and Miltiades, since it is hard to suppose that any Athenian outside this family would have named his son for the Thracian king. Marcellinus says as much in his *Life of Thucydides* (sixth century A.D.), stating that Thucydides' grave was among the tombs of Cimon and his family near the gates to the quarter of Athens (the quarters were called demes) known as Melite, in the western part of the city. Marcellinus quotes Polemon, a scholar of the third or second century B.C., for the information that a tombstone stood there with the inscription "Thucydides, son of Oloros, of the deme Halimous." This information appears to be reliable, based on documents.

Scholars therefore assume that Miltiades and Hegesipyle had a daughter (name unknown) who married a man (name unknown) of the deme Halimous; their son, Oloros (named in honor of his grandfather, as was common), was also from Halimous. In this stemma Thucydides is the great-grandson of Miltiades and the great-great-grandson of the remote Oloros, king of the Thracians.

Another version of Thucydides' ancestry (put forth by E. Cavaignac) accepts the foregoing stemma but postulates still another daughter of Miltiades and Hegesipyle; this daughter would have married an aristocratic statesman and rival of Pericles, namely Thucydides, son of Melesias. Cavaignac accepted Marcellinus's statement that the mother of the historian was named Hegesipyle; he also supposed that this putative Hegesipyle married Oloros the Athenian, and that her father was Thucydides, son of Melesias, who therefore will have been the maternal grandfather of the historian. Cavaignac's stemma won the support notably of H. T. Wade-Gery, in a classic study of Thucydides, son of Melesias. It depends, however, on accepting Marcellinus's declaration that the mother of Thucydides the historian was named Hegesipyle; but this identification may be no more than an inference based on the known Hegesipyle, daughter of Oloros of Thrace. It is unlikely, though of course possible, that oral tradition or documents preserved her name into the Hellenistic age; one might imagine that a gravestone in the family plot did so.

In any case, to have established a connection between Thucydides and the family of Cimon and Miltiades can be important, for Cimon was a rival of Pericles in fifth-century politics, and yet Thucydides awards the highest praise to Pericles as a statesman. Not that their confrontation was that of a rock-hard conservative against a liberal, for such terms are inappropriate to Athenian politics and both men were wealthy aristocrats. Still, much of Pericles' support seems to have come from the lower classes and those who served in the fleet, and Thucydides was not ordinarily sympathetic to these elements. He makes it clear that he admired Pericles because he could control the masses rather than let them control him.

Marcellinus also cites Polemon for the statement that Thucydides had a son named Timotheos; since Polemon evidently did documentary research and there is no obvious reason why this name would be invented, one might well believe in this son. Fortunately, Marcellinus does not commit himself to accepting the story that Thucydides' daughter wrote book 8, and there is no reason to assign him a daughter at all.

Nothing is known about Thucydides' father, Oloros, and his activities, but Thucydides says of himself in book 4 that he had the right to work one or more gold mines in Thrace; it is not clear whether these were in the possession of Athens or whether, as seems more probable, they belonged to local Thracian dynasts. His distant descent from a

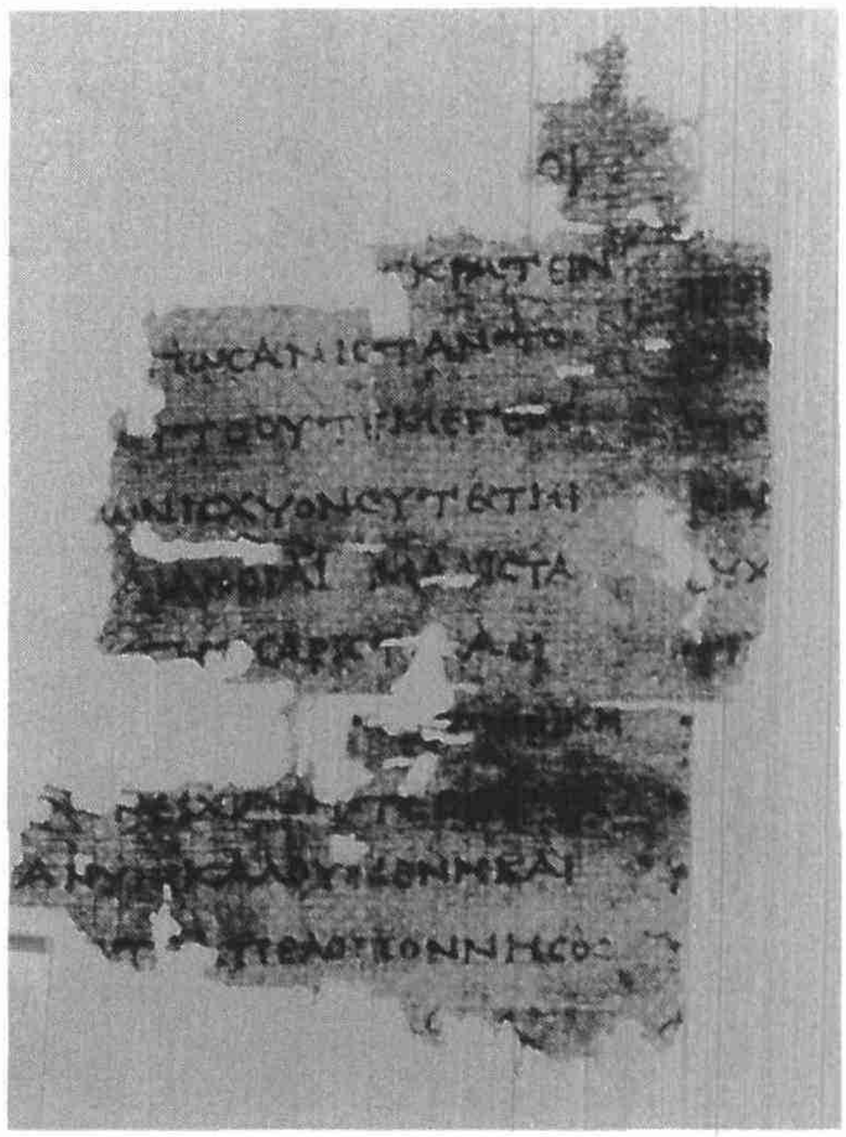
Thracian king and the role that his great-grandfather Miltiades had played in this area may have given him entry to the circle of those controlling the mines. He also says that from working the mines he had considerable influence in that region.

In 430 Thucydides was evidently in Athens, for he describes from autopsy the plague that struck the city in that year and tells us that he contracted the disease but survived. In 424 he held his only known public position, when the Athenians elected him one of the ten generals for the year 424–423 (the official Athenian year began in midsummer). During that winter he received the command of a naval squadron based on the island of Thásos, the northernmost island of the Aegean Sea, opposite the coast of Thrace; his familiarity with and influence in the region were surely factors in his appointment.

This posting led to the crucial event in his life. The daring, brilliant Spartan commander Brasidas decided to break out of the unproductive Spartan strategy of brief annual invasions of Attica and march straight up through Greece and arouse revolt among Athenian allies in the north. Thasos itself was of minor strategic importance, for the Spartans scarcely threatened it by sea. The Athenian planners would therefore have done better to station Thucydides, with his influence in the region, on the mainland. Already by summer 424 Brasidas was in Thrace and was bringing some Athenian allies over to his side. Eucles, another Athenian general, was stationed on the mainland to safeguard the valuable city of Amphipolis, at the mouth of the Strymon River.

In November or December Brasidas reached the neighborhood of Amphipolis. What followed is an excellent case study of military intelligence and the lack of it. According to the historian's own narrative, Brasidas knew that Thucydides was on Thasos and that the Athenian forces were divided; moreover, he knew that the historian had considerable influence in the region because of his mining interests. He therefore moved quickly against Amphipolis, an important town on the mainland, before Thucydides should arrive, but many of the population remained loyal and managed to keep the gates barred against him.

Eucles then sent a message from the mainland over to Thasos, calling on Thucydides to reinforce him. Thucydides set out at once from Thasos with the seven ships he had available. On the same day Brasidas offered lenient terms to the citizens of Amphipolis and converted public opinion toward a surrender (Thucydides asserts that he was "not a bad speaker for a Spartan"). Thucydides sailed into



Fragment of a third-century-B.C. papyrus with the text of book 1 of Thucydides' history (Hamburger Staats-und Universitätsbibliothek)

the neighboring town of Eion, just east of Amphipolis, that evening but found Amphipolis already in Spartan hands. He did, however, secure Eion, which Brasidas might well have captured the next day. Athens had permanently lost Amphipolis, and the defeat aroused great consternation among the Athenians, who foresaw that others of their allies might go over to the Spartan side, as indeed took place.

In evaluating this episode historians have first of all asked why Thucydides was on Thasos, rather than near Amphipolis, at the critical moment. He does not explain whether Athenian intelligence or his own judgment was at fault. He says only that he raced over to the mainland at top speed when he received the call for help. In the end Brasidas strengthened the Spartan position in northern Greece through other diplomatic successes but fell in battle at Amphipolis in 422.

It would appear that Thucydides was at least partly responsible for the serious mistake of not confronting Brasidas with maximum force. Perhaps he did not think it right to defend himself in a historical narrative or was too proud to do so; or perhaps, as H. D. Westlake suggests, any explanation of his presence on Thasos at the fatal moment might have weakened his own repute even further.

Only later, in book 5, when setting forth his credentials to be the historian of the war, does

Thucydides mention the sequel: "It befell me to live apart from my country for twenty years after my command at Amphipolis and to be present with each side to observe the events; and, since I actually spent more time with the Peloponnesians because of my exile, I could perceive many events better in my free time." Whether this exile arose from a disciplinary proceeding, such as a trial, or whether Thucydides simply decided to leave Athenian territory is not known. Marcellinus reports that the Athenian demagogue Cleon slandered him and brought about his exile. Two considerations make this far from impossible: Cleon's interest in regaining Amphipolis, which led to both his and Brasidas's death in 422, and Thucydides' obvious detestation of Cleon as an unscrupulous rabble-rouser.

Marcellinus says that Thucydides retired to Thrace and wrote his work there, an obvious inference from his known mining interests, but hardly credible in light of the historian's statement that he spent more time with the Peloponnesian than with the Athenian side and observed events for himself. It is likely that he spent a large part of his exile in Corinth, for he is unusually well informed about persons and events there. Thus, his unfortunate exile was the making of Thucydides the historian.

If Thucydides was strictly accurate about his twenty-year exile, he probably went into exile about January 423 and thus did not return until spring 403, at about the moment when Athens rid itself of the Thirty Tyrants (as Aristotle reports in the *Constitution of Athens,* circa 335 B.C.). There is a late scrap of evidence (Pausanias's *Description of Greece,* circa A.D. 150) stating that one Oenobius (several men of this name are known, including a general in the Peloponnesian War) moved a decree recalling Thucydides from exile.

Thucydides lived until at least 399 B.C., as is clear from his reference to King Archelaus of Macedonia in book 2. He reviews the accomplishments of this king, who died in 399, in language clearly implying that he was dead and could thus be evaluated historically. How much longer the historian lived is uncertain. The fact that he shows no awareness of Athens's revived sea power in 394 may not be significant but suggests that he may have died about 395. At the time of his death his work was unfinished and breaks off in the eighth book within 411 B.C. Someone received his manuscript in its unfinished state and added to it a note that is in all the major manuscripts saying that the narrative had reached the twenty-first year of the war.

Thucydides grew up during the time that many traditional beliefs in Greek thought were going through a withering critique in a spirit of emancipated realism. The main driving force in this critique was the Sophists ("learned," or "wise" men), who believed that rigorous logic could solve virtually any problem and that cool analysis of a situation could lead to success in any sphere, including politics. One of them was Protagoras, author of the epigram that writers seldom quote in full, "Man is the measure of everything: he is the measure of what exists and the measure of what does not exist": that is, only what human reason can perceive has reality. Protagoras also stated that he could teach *arête,* the all-embracing Greek term meaning excellence, strength, and ability; he probably meant efficient success in the conduct of affairs. Again, the Sophist Gorgias taught the art of rhetoric and the lawyer's craft, making the weaker case the stronger.

These and other like-minded thinkers of the fifth century had little use for moral suasion or for homilies prescribing good conduct. Their influence on Thucydides leaps out of every page, as his subjects base every calculation on self-interest alone. Marcellinus also preserves traditions that made him a pupil of Anaxagoras, clearly an inference from the fact that the Athenians prosecuted him for impiety and from Thucydides' reserved attitude toward supposed divine influence on human affairs. Marcellinus also says that Thucydides was a pupil of Antiphon in rhetoric – an obvious deduction derived from the historian's praise of Antiphon, the prime mover of an oligarchic revolution in Athens in 411 and a man of high ability.

Thucydides' stylistic debt to the Sophists, at least to Gorgias, is the subject of a seminal paper by J. H. Finley Jr. In particular, Gorgias was addicted to antitheses, especially to the contrast between word (*logos*) and fact (*ergon*): that is, what is only said to be true compared to what is true in hard fact, which alone has meaning to the Sophist. Thucydides uses this rhetorical device repeatedly, almost to the point of a mannerism. Of Pericles' domination of Athenian politics, for example, he says, "more and more there was a democracy in name but in fact a rule by the leading man."

Another strong influence on Thucydides came from the medical writings of the late fifth century that comprise the Hippocratic corpus, though none of them can be shown to have been written by the famous physician from the island of Cos. Several times Thucydides uses medical metaphors, and his chilling description in book 2 of the plague that afflicted Athens in 430 and later draws on medical

ΑΦΘΟΝΙΟΥ ΣΟΦΙΣΤΟΥ ΕΓΚΩΜΙΟΝΕΙΣ ΘΟΥΚΥΔΙΔΗΝ, ΕΚ ΤΩΝ ΕΙΣ ΤΗΝ ΡΗΤΟΡΙΚΗΝ ΠΡΟΓΥΜΝΑΣΜΑΤΩΝ ΑΥΤΟΥ.

Ι μᾶν ἄξιον δὴ διέντας τὰ χρήσιμα, οἷς ἐπορίζοντο ἡ ἅλλισα. καὶ τὰ παρ' ἐκείνων φασκόμενα, ἐπαινεῖσθαι δικαίως τοῖς δείξασιν. οὐκοῦν Θουκυδίδην ἐπαινέσω τοῖς λόγοις, αὐτὸν τοῖς αὐτοῦ τιμᾶν προελόμενος. ἅπαντας μὲν οὖν φεύγω διαβάλλειν· σοφώτερον δὲ Θουκυδίδην τῶν ἄλλων, ὅσῳ τῶν ἁπάντων διαφέρειν ἡγάλλισον. οὔτε γὰρ λόγων οἷς οὐσι κρεῖττον ὑπάρχει λαβεῖν, οὔτε Θουκυδίδου περὶ τοὺς λόγους σοφώτερόν ἐστιν εὑρεῖν· προῆλθε τοίνυν Θουκυδίδης ἐκ γῆς, ἣ καὶ βίον αὐτῷ παρέχει, καὶ τέχνῃ· οὐ γὰρ ἐτέρωθεν γέγονεν, ἀλλ' ὅθεν οἱ λόγοι· καὶ μητέρα βίου τὰς Ἀθήνας εὗρεν, προπόνοις μὲν βασιλεῦσιν ἐχρήσατο· ἦ τὸ τῆς τύχης αὐτῷ δυνατώτερον, ἐκ τοῦ προτέρου προελήλυθε γένους· καὶ προσλαβὼν ἄμφω, γένους ἰσχύν, καὶ πολιτείαν δημοτικήν, εἰς ἑπανόρθωσιν ἑκατέρου τὸ παρ' ἑκατέρου φθόνημα κρίνει, τὸ μὲν πλουτεῖν ἀδήλως, τῆς ἰσηγορείας ἐπανορθούμενος, καὶ πολιτικὴν ἐνδεᾶ, τῇ παρὰ τοῦ γένους εὐδαιμονίᾳ συμπίπτων· καὶ τοιοῦτος φανεὶς, δέφεται μὲν πολιτείᾳ, καὶ νόμοις, ἃ τ' ἄλλων ἀμείνω πεφύκασι· καὶ πρὸς ὅπλα καὶ νόμους ἅμα ξὴν ἐγνωκὼς, φιλοσοφεῖν ὁ αὐτὸς καὶ στρατηγεῖν ἐβουλεύσατο, οὔτε τοὺς λόγους ὅπλων ἀποστερῶν, οὔτε τὰ ὅπλα ἐν μοίρᾳ τινὶ τῆς φρονήσεως· καὶ μίαν ποιεῖται μελέτην, ὧν μίαν οὐκ εἰκῇ τέχνῃ, εἰς ἓν συνάπτων, ἃ τῇ φύσει διέσηκεν. ὥστε εἰς ἄσφαλες ἀφίκετο, ζητεῖ καιρὸν εἰς ἐπίδειξιν, ὧν ἡκιστα προσηκάσατο· καὶ ταχὺ παρέχων ἡ τύχη τὸν πόλεμον. ἦ τὰ πεπραγμένα πᾶσι τοῖς Ἕλλησιν, οἰκείαν αὐτὸς ἐποιήσατο τέχνῃ· καὶ φυλακὴν γέγονεν, ὧν ὁ πόλεμος ἤγαγεν· ἃ γὰρ ἐκρίνων ὡς ἕκαστοι, ταῦτα συμπίπτειν οὐκ ἀφῆκε τὸν χρόνον. ἐξ ὧν, ἁλισκομένη μὲν ἐγνώσθη Πλάταια, δηούμενα δὲ τὰ τῆς Ἀττικῆς ἐγνωρίζετο, καὶ περισταλεομένη παρὰ τῶν Ἀθηναίων ἐδήλου τὸ Γελοῶον νῆσος· ναυμαχίας εἶδεν ἡ Ναύπακτος· λαθεῖν οὐκ ἀφῆκε ταῦτα Θουκυδίδης συγγράφων· λέσβος ἑάλω, καὶ μέχρι νῦν δὲ κηρύττεται· πρὸς δὲ Ἀμπρακιώτας ἠθίσατο μάχη, κἠ τὸ γεγονὸς, οὐκ ἀφεῖλον ὁ χρόνος· δίκη Λακεδαιμονίων ἐκ ἀγνοεῖται παράνομος. Σφακτηρία, καὶ Πύλος, τὸ μέγα τῶν Ἀθηναίων ὄργανον, ἐκ ἔλαθεν· ὅθεν Κερκυραῖοι μὲν, παρὰ τὰς Ἀθήνας ἐκκλησάζουσι. Κορίνθιοι δὲ, πρὸς αὐτοὺς αὐτιφθέγγονται· Αἰτωλοὶ κατηγοροῦντες, εἰς Λακεδαίμονα ὄρχονται· καὶ σωφρονοῦν μὲν ἐπ' ἐκκλησίας Ἀρχίδαμος, Σθενελαΐδας δ', ὑβρίζειν μάχην κινοῦν· καὶ πρὸς τούτοις, ὁ Πυθικὸς πρεσβείαν ἀτιμάζων Λακωνικὴν, καὶ χαλεπαίνειν οὐ συγχωρῶν Ἀθηναίοις ἐσόλλυτο. ταῦτα καθάπαξ παρὰ τῆς Θουκυδίδου συγγραφῆς, πρὸς ἅπαντα τηρεῖται τὸν βίον. εἶτα τὶς αὐτῷ παραβαλεῖ τὸν Ἡρόδοτον; ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνος μὲν, διηγεῖται πρὸς ἡδονὴν, ὁ δ', πρὸς ἀλήθειαν ἅπαντα φθέγγεται. ὅσον δὴ τὸ πρὸς χάριν τοῦ πρὸς ἀλήθειαν ἔλαττον, τοσοῦτον Ἡροδότου τῶν Θουκυδίδου ἁλίσκεται· πολλὰ δ' ἕτερα περὶ Θουκυδίδου διεξελθεῖν, εἰ μὴ τὸ πάντα ἐρεῖν, τὸ τ' ἐπαίνων παρεῖλεν ὄλεθρος.

Βίος Θουκυδίδου.

Θουκυδίδης Ἀθηναῖος, ὁ Ὄλορου ἦν υἱός. θρᾴκιον δὲ αὐτῷ τὸ γένος· καὶ γὰρ ὁ πατὴρ αὐτῷ Ὄλορος, ἐκ Θρᾴκης εἶχε γένωμα· γέγονε δὲ τῶν Μιλτιάδου συγγενής· αὐτίκα γοῦν ἔνθα Μιλτιάδης περὶ Κοίλην τέθαπται, ἐνταῦθα καὶ Θουκυδίδης τέθαπται. ὁ δὲ Μιλτιάδης ἔγημε τὴν Θρᾳκῶν βασιλέως θυγατέρα Ἡγησιπύλην· γέγονε δὲ Ἀντίφωνος τοῦ ῥαμνουσίου μαθητὴς, δεινοῦ λέγειν, καὶ ὑπόπτου γενομένου τοῖς δικαστηρίοις· καὶ διατοῦτα λέγοντος μὴ, ὅκ ἀνέχοντο αὐτοῦ· γράφην δ' ἐπεχείρησε τοὺς λόγους, κἠ ὑξέδωκε τοῖς δεομένοις· ἐμαρτύρησε δὲ αὐτῷ καὶ Θουκυδίδης ὁ μαθητὴς, ὅτι ὢν δίκην σύμβουλος γένοιτο, αἱρῆται ἐκεῖνος ἀπὸ Μαντινείας εἰς τὰς Ἀθήνας· ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν, ἔδοξε πονηρὸς Ἀντίφων εἶναι. καὶ περὶ τὸν πόλεμον τὸν Πελοποννησιακὸν πολέμιος κριθεὶς προδοσίας, ὡς Λακεδαιμονίοις μὲν, τὰ ἄρι-

First page of the editio princeps (1502) of Thucydides' major work (courtesy of the Lilly Library, Indiana University)

writings. Beyond this an analytical method is present that resembles the physician's way of thought, in which diagnosis of a disease can lead to prognosis about future developments. In book 1 Thucydides expresses the hope that attentive readers of his work, through their grasp of political facts and movements, will be able to understand events in the future, which must resemble those of the past, in accordance with human nature; he probably also meant that readers could peer into their own future and foresee events on the basis of the models bequeathed them by the historian: a sentence that could have been written by the author of the Hippocratic *Prognostics*.

He also praises Themistocles for his ability to see far into the future and records that, after Pericles died, the Athenians recognized his ability to divine the future more clearly than they had done during his life. The intellectual power of the doctors probably impressed Thucydides during the plague in Athens: they could not cure the disease, but they probably used diagnosis of the plague and its symptoms to gain prognosis over the patient's future. He wanted to use this method for the first time on historical events.

The Peloponnesian War lasted twenty-seven years; Thucydides relates that he lived through the whole of it and refers to its end, and he says he began writing his work at the opening of the war. The question immediately arises: did he compose his work in stages over the years, and are traces of these stages extant? This "Thucydidean question" resembles, though it does not equal, the "Homeric question" in the scholarly debate it has generated.

It is a likely hypothesis that he was writing throughout the conflict, well before it ended in 404 B.C. In 421 the two sides signed a peace treaty, the Peace of Nicias, as modern writers call it from the Athenian general and statesman who negotiated it. Unless Thucydides possessed extraordinary clairvoyance and knew or expected that the conflict would resume, as it did in 415 when the Athenians led a force against the Sicilian city of Syracuse (books 6–7), he must have thought that the war was over. Aristophanes apparently thought so, for in 421 he produced his comedy *Peace*. After ten years of note taking and research, would not Thucydides wish to offer his history to the world and publish book 1 through book 5, chapter 24, covering the war and the peace that had apparently ended it?

That he did so seems clear from his words in book 5: "The same Thucydides of Athens wrote what follows, following the order of events by summers and winters" – surely an announcement to the reader that the historian who had already published a narrative of the war from 431 to 421 was now offering his second installment. Obvious though this may seem, some scholars have denied it and have supposed that he began to write his work only after the war ended in 404. There is some evidence in favor of this theory: the judgment on Pericles in book 2 expressly refers to the end of the war, and the reference to King Archelaus of Macedonia in book 2 was not written before 399.

To counter the assertion that the whole work is later than 404, one might look for passages that must have been written earlier. For example, book 2 refers to Oropos, a town within northern Attica, as a place "subject to the Athenians," but Oropos fell to a Boeotian force in spring 411; thus, the statement about it in book 2 must have been written before then. Book 1 warns the reader not to estimate the power of ancient Mycenae from its dilapidated fifth-century appearance, citing Sparta as an example of a powerful yet architecturally unimpressive state: "she dominates two-fifths of the Peloponnese and leads the whole of it and many allies outside it." This too must date from early in the war, for after the Spartans won the war in 404 it would have been unnecessary, if not ridiculous, to assure the reader that Sparta was not so feeble as her lack of imposing buildings might suggest. One might seek to dismiss such isolated "early" remarks as mere notes that found their way into the manuscript and remained unrevised after 404. Some scholars have sought to raise the debate to a higher level. A. Andrewes suggests that the Persians play a lesser role in the narrative in books 1–4 than they would have if Thucydides had known how important they would become in the period from 413 to 404, when both Athens and Sparta sought to bring the Persians in on their side.

If Andrewes' perception is right, something is gained beyond "early" and "late" sentences, namely evidence about Thucydides' mind and the possible development of his thought. Only if debate about the Thucydidean question leads in this direction is it more than philological detective work. Further research of this kind may strike gold, but to date attempts to write an intellectual biography of Thucydides, to trace changes in his thought over the years, have not been terribly fruitful.

Even if books 1–4, written during the war especially after Thucydides' exile, were published about 420–415, there are still clear signs of revision written after 404, such as the judgment on Pericles in book 2. Thucydides gives his opinion that Pericles' successors had declined from his high

level; the noble funeral oration of Pericles may also date from this late period and could have been added as a valedictory for imperial Athens, but it is not clear that these revised passages demonstrate a dramatic shift in Thucydides' thought over the years.

Thucydides' history consists of a detailed but selective narrative, organized by natural summers and winters rather than by the term of office of any magistrates. Thucydides' predecessor, Hellanicus of Lesbos, had written a history of Athens from early times but had ordered it, logically enough, by the succession of Athenian archons, magistrates who gave their names to each year in turn. To Thucydides, this method was not exact, since it broke up a campaign season in midsummer, when the archons gave up office. Summer ran roughly from April to October and thus comprised the campaign season in most years. Thucydides' method enables the reader to follow the organic course of events through the season and is more suited to a narrative of war.

Thucydides also broke with his predecessors by writing contemporary history. Perhaps the Sophists, who concentrated on the immediate situation and how to master it, influenced him in this respect as in others. He went back to revise and expand his narrative, but basically he did something totally new: writing an account of events as seen by a contemporary. His concentration on unfolding political events brings his work, at times, into the sphere of political science and makes it a handbook for statesmen.

Book 1, the longest of the eight books (the book and chapter divisions are a device of medieval editors – Thucydides probably thought of no divisions for his work), is an astonishingly detailed essay on the causes of the war in four parts: a survey of earlier Greek history (chapters 1–23); the immediate causes of the war (24–88); the background causes, including the growth of the Athenian empire after the Persian Wars (89–118); and the last-minute diplomatic negotiations that might have prevented the war (119–146).

In book 1 Thucydides carries historical analysis to a plateau never before approached and constructs a model that historians of any time can use to explain the origins of a war (comparison with the events leading to World War I is inevitable). He concludes that the immediate causes alone could not have brought about a general war in the absence of a growing fear in Sparta over the constant aggrandizement of Athens. Thus, for the first time a historian probed for long-term causation; the account of the war itself does not begin until book 2.

Two special features enhance the narrative. One is the presence of selected episodes treated in detail and with special literary polish. For example, there is one example of siege warfare (the siege of Plataea in book 2), one account of the devastating plague (book 2), one example of ruthless civil war (in Corcyra, book 3), and one of an attack in the enemy's territory (the Pylos episode, book 4). The selection resembles the organization of a doctor's casebook, in which separate diseases are treated in order, for Thucydides thought of his work as providing paradigms of behavior from which his readers could learn to understand recurring political events.

The other outstanding feature is a series of speeches delivered by leaders at critical times. They are written in highly rhetorical, complex Greek and lay bare the motivations of the actors in a dramatic way that ordinary narrative could not approach. Thucydides learned this device from Herodotus but again carried it to inimitable heights. It is impossible to say how closely the speeches preserve what the speakers said on each occasion. Even Thucydides' statement of his method is baffling, for he says that he will preserve the general sense of what was said while making the speakers express "that which was necessary" (*ta deonta*); this latter probably means that which was appropriate to each speaker according to his character and policy.

Some speeches are predictable harangues that generals address to their troops, while others are the subtlest analyses of character and strategy (for example, Alcibiades' justification of his defection to Sparta, in book 6). Thucydides had an amazing ability to tell his story so that it includes the most profound and universal moral issues, as in two examples from book 3: the debate on the death penalty voted against certain rebels from the Athenian confederacy and the corruption of political vocabulary under the pressure of civil war and revolution. Within all the speeches there is surely a mixture of the thoughts of the speaker and those of Thucydides.

The most extraordinary of these discourses is the "Melian Dialogue" from book 5, a negotiation held in secret between unnamed Athenian envoys and leaders of the small island of Melos in 416. The Athenians order Melos to join their system, not because they are any kind of threat but precisely because their weakness will make the Athenians in turn seem weak if they cannot compel obeisance from a state of such trifling potency. The debate is

Title page, engraved by Thomas Cecil, for Thomas Hobbes's translation of Thucydides' work

ruthlessly sophistic in tone. Arguments about justice are brutally dismissed: justice, the Athenians say, comes into discussion only when both parties are equal in power; otherwise, the strong do what they like and the weak suffer what they must. This is simply a law of nature (to some Sophists, that which was natural, *physis,* was preferable to that which was man-made, *nomos*). The Athenians, they say, did not invent this law, and they will leave it to exist forever. It is difficult to imagine that Thucydides had a detailed report of what the envoys said in these secret negotiations, and here above all the reader may believe he was inventing language to describe this cold-blooded crime of war, perhaps as a proof of his earlier statement in book 3 that "war is a teacher of violence."

Sometimes Thucydides appears to dispose his material to make a point by juxtaposition. The Melian Dialogue, pointing to the climax of Athenian arrogance, immediately precedes the disastrous decision to invade Sicily in 415. Thucydides could not change the chronology of events and therefore did not place the Sicilian expedition after the Melian Dialogue; all the same, he selected the Melos affair for extended treatment, and the confrontation between the two episodes is surely deliberate. The Funeral Oration of Pericles, celebrating the glory and dignity of Athens, immediately precedes the chilling description of the great plague, as if to say, in the manner of a tragedian, that human prosperity is uncertain and may come to a crashing collapse.

The main duty of a historian is to organize and record the past. Thucydides' narrative is an unchallenged model among ancient historians in its apparent mastery of detail, overall accuracy, and intellectual penetration. The text is sometimes in error, but apparent mistakes may be because of faulty transmission of his text in medieval manuscripts, and Thucydides might well have corrected some omissions and contradictions if he had lived to revise the work completely.

Despite Thucydides' general credibility, the reader must distinguish between two kinds of statements. To say, "The Athenians under Tolmides sailed around the Peloponnese and burned the Spartan dockyards" (book 1) is different in principle from saying, "Phrynichus thought, quite rightly, that Alcibiades cared no more for oligarchy than for democracy" (book 8). In sentences such as the latter, Thucydides makes assertions about the thoughts of another mind, and at least some degree of reserve is appropriate.

Nowhere does Thucydides present an essay giving his verdict on history, life, and morals. He notices certain religious practices but expressly turns his back on *to mythodes,* "the domain of fable" (book 1), in a clear rebuke to Herodotus. To reconstruct his ideas, the reader must put scattered remarks together and also look for deeper trends and assumptions. On this problem there is a large literature, especially in German.

It is clear that in politics Thucydides was a man of what would today be considered the political Right. Several times he speaks disparagingly of the "people," the "masses," and their immature ways. He praises Pericles in book 2 for his ability to dominate and control the people even within a constitution "democratic in name." Yet he was not a convinced oligarch, as is apparent in his praise in book 8 of the political arrangement immediately following the fall of the oligarchic junta of 411: this new system was "the best Athens ever had in my lifetime, because it had a moderate mixture of the few and the many" – that is, the upper and lower classes shared power.

Going beyond political comment, Thucydides assures his readers in book 1 that historical events are likely to repeat themselves, in accordance with human nature. This human nature, which he evidently thought unchangeable, is fragile. In peace, both states and people can follow high standards of conduct, because they do not fall victim to compulsion, but war teaches them violence. The speeches include many gnomic reflections, but the reader must be cautious in deducing Thucydides' views from remarks made in speeches, as when his actors declare that nature has ordained that the strong shall rule the weak. That they often often do so is undeniable, but there is no evidence that Thucydides approved of this state of affairs or of this law of nature. He records scenes of horror objectively but surely in pain (demoralization during the plague, book 2; betrayal and assassination in revolution, book 3; the pathetic discovery by a herald that a force of his countrymen has been wiped out, book 3; the slaughter by Thracian raiders of all the boys in a school, book 7). His grave words in book 7 on the death of Nicias, who "least of all deserved such a miserable end" because of his constant attention to moral conduct, could hardly have come from a might-makes-right Sophist.

Yet there is not a great body of Thucydidean doctrine or philosophy of history on which all readers agree. Intelligence and foresight could, he thought, control affairs, but only in part; for as Ronald Syme points out in a 1962 essay on Thucydides, events can, like the plans of men, often proceed in ways "not susceptible of instruction." Despite the uncertainties of the world, analysis and the study of history may help the human being to master the whirl of events; therefore, as Wade-Gery states in his entry on Thucydides for the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (1995), "the physician studied his clinical, Thucydides his political, behaviour." Regarding his own work, Thucydides says in book 1 that, if he could teach readers how to foresee and thus control part of that behavior, "I shall be content."

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Xenophon

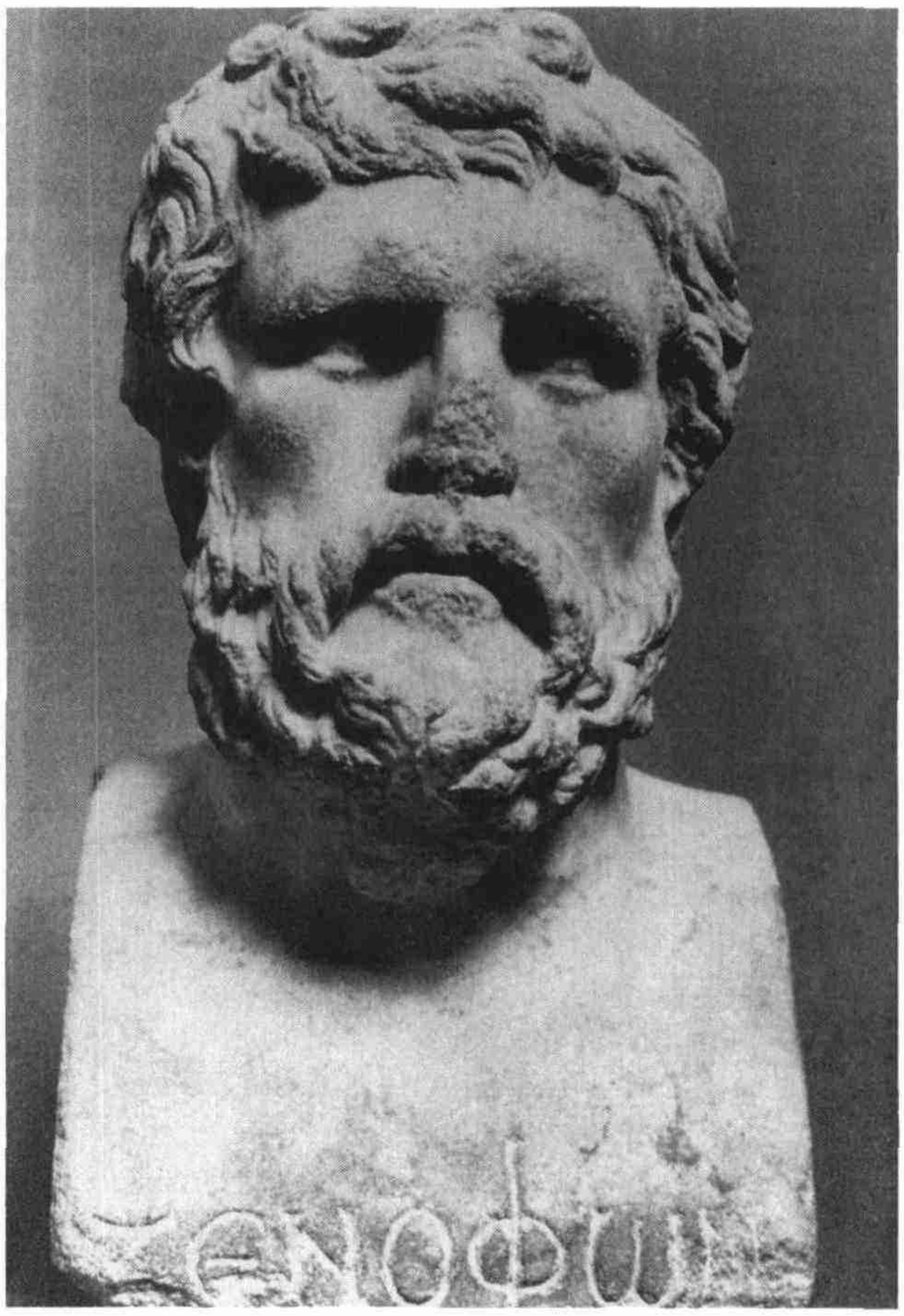
(circa 430 B.C. – circa 356 B.C.)

Richard L. S. Evans
La Grange, Georgia

MAJOR WORKS:
Agesilaus;
Anabasis (7 books);
Apology;
Constitution of the Lacedaemonians;
Cyropaedia (8 books);
Economics;
Hellenica;
Hieron;
On the Art of Horsemanship;
On the Cavalry Commander;
On Hunting;
Memorabilia;
Symposium;
Ways and Means.

Editiones principes: *Hellenica: Xenophon omissa, quae et Graeca appelantur* (Venice: Aldus Manutius, 1503); *Opera,* edited by E. Boninus (Florence: Junta, 1516); *Apology of Socrates: Socratica defensio ad judices,* edited by J. Secerius (Reuchlin, 1520).

Standard editions: *Oxford Classical Texts,* five volumes, edited by E. C. Marchant (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900–1920); *Xenophon,* seven volumes, edited and translated by G. W. Bowersock, Carleton L. Brownson, Marchant, W. Miller and O. J. Todd, Loeb Classical Library (London & Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1923–1968).



Bust of Xenophon discovered in 1940 in Cairo (Museum of Alexandria)

The reputation of Xenophon the Athenian is higher in the present era than it was at the beginning of the nineteenth century, but whatever the fluctuation in the literary assessments of this versatile writer, his books have traveled through the centuries, all of them surviving, from papyrus roll to codex to contemporary cyberspace. Clearly he has been an enduring literary presence in the Western tradition. He enjoyed a high standing among the Romans and was a standard curricular author. Quintilian, in his *Institutio Oratoria* (late first century A.D.), quotes Cicero's remark about Xenophon, "that the Muses spoke with his mouth," a fair summation of Roman opinion. Lost to the medieval West, Xenophon continued to be read in the Greek East until his rediscovery during the Renaissance, when his *Cyropaedia* particularly enjoyed wide popularity in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

Xenophon's work continued to be staple reading for the educated, if not in Greek, at least in translation, through the eighteenth century; but by the beginning of the nineteenth century he was be-

coming the property of the professional classicist. Under the influence of rising Germanic classical scholarship, Xenophon's reputation slipped downward as he was compared unfavorably to Thucydides in the field of history and Plato in philosophy. In the twentieth century, especially since the 1960s, Xenophon's battered reputation has been rising among professional scholars, especially those who have been inclined to view him less in comparison to Thucydides or Plato and more in terms of his own internal themes and his powerful influence among Roman and Renaissance humanists.

Xenophon was born in Attica (the deme of Erchia) around 430 B.C., the son of Gryllus and Diodora. He grew to manhood in Athens during the Peloponnesian War, as recounted by Thucydides and also by himself in his *Hellenica.* Few details about Xenophon's life are known beyond the sketchy outline of his career as a soldier that is provided in some of his own works, especially the *Anabasis.* His biography by Diogenes Laertius in *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* (circa A.D. 200) survives, generated often from information that was gathered from Xenophon's writings. That Xenophon knew Socrates and associated with him to some extent is clear from his four Socratic works, the *Apology, Symposium, Memorabilia,* and *Economics.* In 401 B.C. he joined a mercenary army of Greeks that was recruited by Cyrus the Younger in Asia Minor. Near Cunaxa, Cyrus's attempt to capture the throne of his brother Artaxerxes ended in Cyrus's defeat and death. Xenophon, elected one of the generals, helped to save the celebrated Ten Thousand as the Greek soldiers marched to the Black Sea and on to Thrace, where they finally passed back into Asia Minor and into the service of the Spartan leader Thimbron for another campaign against Persia. This is the story told in the *Anabasis.*

From his *Hellenica* and *Agesilaus* it may be inferred that Xenophon continued with the army, now in service to Sparta, and returned to Greece with the Spartan king Agesilaus in 394. Because of his friendship with the king, Xenophon received an estate in Scillus near Olympia, where, because he was under a decree of exile from Athens, he passed the years from 393 to 371. At Scillus, Xenophon reared his sons, Gryllus and Diodorus, the former of whom died in the battle of Mantinea in 362. Xenophon's domestic life at Scillus was marred when he was driven from his estate by the Eleans, who attacked after the Spartan defeat at the battle of Leuctra in 371. Xenophon migrated to Corinth and perhaps returned to Athens when his decree of exile was rescinded in 365. That he lived at least until the Third Sacred War in 356 is known by the reference he makes to this war in *Ways and Means.*

The rather thin information of Xenophon's biography provides little help in understanding the order or dates of the composition of his works. To these traditional problems of scholarship there can be few empirical answers, although they have generated much speculation. The various roles that the writer played in his life, however, relate strongly to his works and greatly enhance the biographical picture. That Xenophon was a soldier and traveler to exotic places can be seen from his *Anabasis, Hellenica,* and *On the Cavalry Commander;* moreover, that he knew and associated with Socrates is clear from his *Memorabilia, Apology,* and *Symposium.* His *Economics, Ways and Means, On Hunting,* and *On the Art of Horsemanship* reveal that he was an estate manager and sportsman; and *Agesilaus, Cyropaedia, Constitution of the Lacedaemonians,* and *Hieron* illustrate that he was also a man of political affairs.

Xenophon's tour de force, his longest work, in which he brings together his knowledge of politics, military strategy, domestic economy, Socratic philosophy, and travel and adventure, is the *Cyropaedia.* After a century and a half in which the *Hellenica,* the *Anabasis,* and the Socratic works have been the main focus of scholarly investigation, there has been a resurgence of interest recently in Xenophon's once most popular work, leading to three recent studies: Bodil Due's *The Cyropaedia: Xenophon's Aims and Methods* (1989); James Tatum's *Xenophon's Imperial Fiction: On the Education of Cyrus* (1989); and Deborah Levine Gera's *Xenophon's* Cyropaedia, *Style, Genre and Literary Technique* (1993).

Composed in eight books, the *Cyropaedia* (Education of Cyrus) is a pseudohistorical biography of Cyrus the Great of Persia (559–529 B.C.). Formally it falls into five parts: a brief orientation by the narrator, the early education of Cyrus at the courts of Persia and Media, Cyrus's military expeditions and rise to imperial power, Cyrus's reorganization of his newly won empire, and, finally, a brief report on the history of Persian decline after the death of Cyrus. Excepting the narrator's introduction and the epilogue on Persian decline, the *Cyropaedia* is basically a fictionalization of a historical person. Every Greek reader of Xenophon's time would clearly have seen the stark difference between Xenophon's Cyrus and

the Cyrus portrayed by Herodotus. Xenophon creates his own "philosopher-king," although whether he did so in reference to Plato's *Republic* (circa 370 B.C.) or prior to that work cannot be determined conclusively.

Xenophon's Cyrus shares the magnanimity and courage attributed to Xenophon's contemporary, the Spartan Agesilaus. Cyrus debates and argues with his grandfather and others after the manner of Socrates, but the education of Cyrus is far more than a Socratic education. When Cyrus left the court of his father, Cambyses, in Persia to stay with his Median grandfather, Astyages, he left a rigorous, Spartan-like training for a life of luxury at the court of the Medes. This clash of cultures, an awareness of which Cyrus immediately demonstrates by commenting on his grandfather's opulent attire, is central to the ideal of the imperial unification of diverse cultures, peoples, and linguistic groups that was attained in Cyrus's organization of his empire. Cyrus is the controlling agent in a vast, multiethnic, polyglot world, precisely because he has learned how to use cultural difference to his own advantage; he rises above linguistic and cultural barriers to command the loyalty of all and does so, as Xenophon constructs it, less by coercion than by persuasion. Xenophon's "philosopher-king" is not a master of the world of Plato's abstract forms but of the fluid world of human nature. He is the ideal leader who can satisfy and unify diverse human resources, molding them into a workable unity.

But every ideal must confront reality, and the conversation on Plato's ideal city at the end of book 9 of the *Republic* reminds the reader that the Platonic city "is nowhere on earth." Xenophon's concept of ideal leader, too, must face historical reality immediately after Cyrus dies a peaceful death in bed. According to the epilogue of the *Cyropaedia,* the sons of Cyrus fell to quarreling among themselves, thus unraveling the ideal unity constructed by their fictional father. This epilogue, with its negativism toward the final disposition of Cyrus's ideal project, has been the subject of much critical controversy, even expurgated as an un-Xenophontine interpolation. But its appropriateness rings clear upon careful reflection. Cyrus could not educate his sons to follow in his ideal footsteps because he was not a real ruler all along. Xenophon is simply reminding his readers that they have been touring a fictional world where affairs are arranged according to the plan of the author, not the necessities of history, which offers no perfect leaders.

The attraction for past readers of this interesting fiction must have been its political insights, presented in an adventure form. The *Cyropaedia* is, in the contemporary idiom, a "good read whose hero cannot lose," and that the ancients loved heroes is well known from their epics. In fact, the *Cyropaedia* has been called a prose epic, so forceful is the heroizing of the central character. For modern readers the *Cyropaedia* is probably best categorized as a novel, specifically a bildungsroman, or novel of education, of a rather ideal sort; this argument has been made by M. M. Bakhtin in *The* Bildungsroman *and Its Significance in the History of Realism (Toward a Historical Typology of the Novel)* (1986). Literary historians have given the *Cyropaedia* nearly every label: protoromance, romance, fictionalized biography, political philosophy, protonovel, and pseudohistory. The ancients do not seem to have had a clear generic label for such a work as Xenophon's; later romances, to which the *Cyropaedia* clearly points the way, were classified as histories.

Two other works, *Agesilaus* and the *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians,* classified as minor texts, reflect Xenophon's interest in political issues and also his relationship to the Spartans, whom he observed in action during the march of the Ten Thousand and also later, as is generally agreed, when he was with the Spartan king Agesilaus II (444–360 B.C.). The encomium to Agesilaus follows the traditional generic character of this form, first praising the lineage of the *laudandum* (the one deserving praise), next reflecting on the great deeds of the figure, here interspersed with anecdotes, and finally summarizing the outstanding features of the figure's character. Agesilaus is praised as the traditional "noble" Spartan who puts the laws ahead of personal ambition, who is steady in the face of danger, and who is an incorruptible administrator, the best of what Spartan discipline had to offer.

In the *Constitution of the Lacedaemonians,* generically a *politeia,* a constitutional description, Xenophon reflects on the characteristics that made the Spartan state powerful. He focuses particularly on the strict educational routine enforced on Spartan males, constantly pointing out how it contrasted with that of the other Greeks. Here one can see again Xenophon's interest in cultural differences, no doubt provoked by his own travels and observations of diverse peoples beyond the Greek world. Toward the end of this short work he comments on the decline of the Spartan ideals of resistance to the accumulation of money and to the idea of exercising power abroad. This short section is the only negative part of the whole and perhaps reflects Xeno-

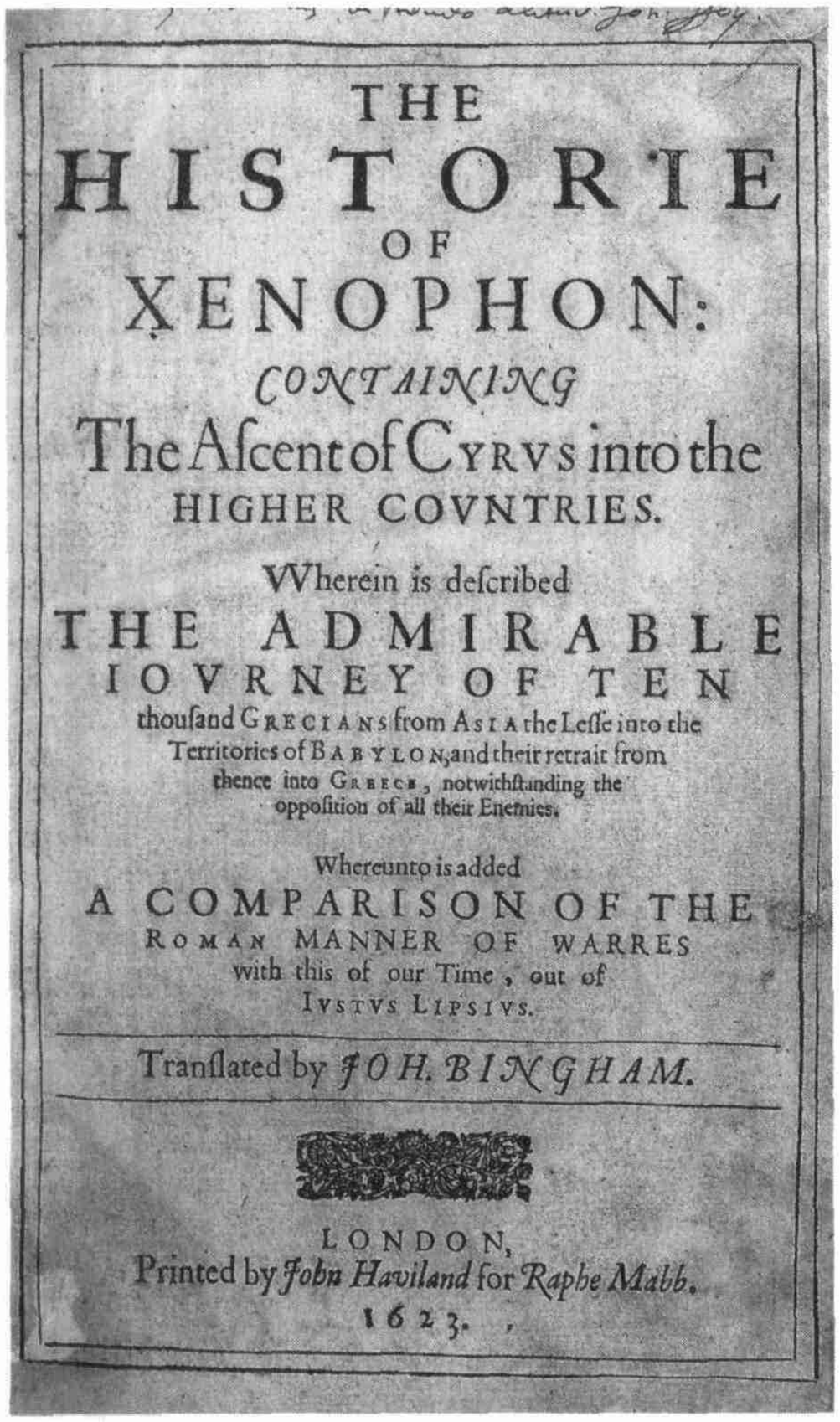
phon's genuine concern about changes in Spartan policy, which he believed would erode a powerful system; it is likely that these concerns are not intended as anti-Spartan propaganda but rather as an expression of honest concern.

Another short text is *Hieron,* which uses the dialogue form that was fondly employed by other Socratics, Plato and Antisthenes, and further displays Xenophon's interest in political life and governmental form. In this dialogue the poet Simonides of Ceos talks with Hieron, tyrant of Syracuse, about his position as dictator. He reflects on the good life that must be enjoyed by those holding absolute power. Hieron is quick to correct Simonides, pointing out how a tyrant must always be on his guard, concerned about assassination, plots to overthrow his rule, and the general dislike incurred by one in his position. In Simonides' final remarks to Hieron, where the poet instructs the tyrant in the arts of winning popularity as a despotic ruler, the poet points out that the tyrant can confer the privilege of association with power on the private citizen. He can confer rewards, sponsor contests, use his private property for the public good, and bring honor to his city by promoting winning race-horse teams in international competition, thereby bringing recognition to his city. These instructions of Simonides to the tyrant Hieron are reminiscent of the liberality shown by Cyrus to his subjects as he unites his empire in the *Cyropaedia.* The ideal monarch rules by manipulation and persuasion more than by force, whenever possible. The *Hieron* is interesting because it shows the freedom of the philosophical dialogue from the personality of Socrates and because the dramatic date here (before the mid fifth century B.C.) is set much earlier than dialogues typically featuring the presence of Socrates. In addition to his political interests, which continue in the *Anabasis* and *Hellenica,* Xenophon employs his personal knowledge of military tactics both in these works and also in a short, technical treatise aimed at an Athenian audience, *On the Cavalry Commander.*

The *Anabasis,* or "Inland March," is significant in the Xenophontine canon, both as a representative work by a major curricular author in the current study of ancient Greek (where it has been a fixture since at least the nineteenth century, as it had been in antiquity) and as a literary model of significant political importance. The *Anabasis* was edited into seven books, of which only book 1 reports the actual inland march in 401 B.C. of the Ten Thousand mercenaries. These Greek soldiers, attached to a force of Cyrus the Younger, who was attempting to take the throne of Persia from his brother Ataxerxes, marched inland from Sardis to the region of Babylon. Cyrus himself was killed in the first battle at Cunaxa, but the Greek force remained undefeated in the face of overwhelming odds. Books 2–7 report the harrowing but successful retreat of the Ten Thousand through present-day Turkey to the Black Sea, then into European Thrace, and finally back into Asia Minor. The narrator, Xenophon himself, reveals his own role as one of the commanders of the retreat, narrating events in the third person, maintaining thereby a formal, if not real, objectivity.

What seems to have impressed the Greeks most about the retreat of these Hellenic mercenaries out of "barbarian" territory was the fact that a fairly small army of disciplined Greeks escaped out of the heartland of the Great King, survived to tell their story, and lived to fight the same Persian enemy again. This impressive event seems to have pointed up to the Greeks of Xenophon's time the weakness of the Persian Empire. The historian Arrian, by giving the title *Anabasis* to his second-century-A.D. history of Alexander the Great's conquests in Asia, revealed his belief in a direct connection between Xenophon's *Anabasis* and the victories of Alexander in the Orient. If Arrian's idea can be taken seriously, the import of Xenophon's text was to be profound in the course of the history of the ancient world.

But apart from any larger political or cultural significance it may have, Xenophon's *Anabasis* is a compelling adventure story set in the exotic and – to the Greeks of Xenophon's own time – relatively unknown reaches of the Persian Empire. A Greek force, surrounded and outnumbered in enemy territory, forges itself into an effective machine after the treacherous murder of its commanders at a truce parley. New commanders are elected, of whom Xenophon is one. Overcoming demoralization and internal bickering, escaping from the Persian army, and facing the constant threat of hostile tribes, the Greeks march to safety. With poignancy and precision Xenophon reports on the battle tactics, the strange food, non-Greek customs, and the internal and external political obstacles encountered by this marching Greek city. The drama of the collective determination of the army, as well as personal acts of heroism, are all seen through the eyes of a witness whose personal involvement in the events described lends vividness and specificity to the narrative. It may also be noted in passing that in his


THE
HISTORIE
OF
XENOPHON:
CONTAINING
The Aſcent of CYRVS into the
HIGHER COVNTRIES.
Wherein is deſcribed
THE ADMIRABLE
IOVRNEY OF TEN
thouſand GRECIANS from ASIA the Leſſe into the
Territories of BABYLON, and their retrait from
thence into GREECE, notwithſtanding the
oppoſition of all their Enemies.
Whereunto is added
A COMPARISON OF THE
ROMAN MANNER OF WARRES
with this of our Time, out of
IVSTVS LIPSIVS.
Tranſlated by IOH. BINGHAM.
LONDON,
Printed by John Haviland for Raphe Mabb.
1623.

Title page for the first edition in English of Xenophon's longest work, the Cyropaedia *(courtesy of the Lilly Library, Indiana University)*

short martial essay *On the Cavalry Commander,* Xenophon further demonstrates his military knowledge by providing advice on the development of superior mounted forces, covering matters from how to harden horses' hooves with small stones, to special cavalry formations, to the psychology of command.

More comparable to the *Anabasis* in length, and one of the most important texts of the Xenophontine corpus for ancient historians, is the *Hellenica,* a somewhat unbalanced history of Greek affairs that starts in 411, at the point where Thucydides breaks off his unfinished *History of the Peloponnesian War* (431–circa 404). Beginning without an introduction, Xenophon narrates the events that followed the end of Thucydides' history; the *Hellenica* narrative splits into two broad sections, distributed over seven books. Books 1 and 2 deal with the final phase of the Peloponnesian War – from 411 B.C. onward – and describe the succeeding political turmoil in Athens. The remaining narrative, from book 3 through book 7, moves from the Spartan campaigns in Asia Minor to the battle of Coronea, and from there to the battles of Leuctra in 371 and finally the battle of Mantinea in 362; this part of the book is constructed with seemingly little or no use of Athenian sources.

Historians have long noted and complained that Xenophon egregiously fails in his *Hellenica* to record many significant events and trends in Greece in the years that followed the Peloponnesian War. Working without the same philosophy of history as Thucydides, Xenophon does not, for example, remark on the second Athenian naval alliance, the trial and death of Socrates, the establishment of Megalopolis, or the importance of Epaminondas as a military leader. Nonetheless, the *Hellenica* is the sole surviving account of this period of Greek history written by a contemporary. Further, Xenophon has been censured as an unworthy heir to Thucydides, not fit to complete the latter's celebrated history of the Peloponnesian War. But Xenophon presents the war's end at Athens and the terrors of postwar politics with the vividness of an eyewitness; his story is well told, conveying high drama and precise characterizations; and his strengths as a writer are vivid, for example, in his long account in book 2 of the trial and execution of Theramenes.

Xenophon emblematically ends his history at the battle of Mantinea, a battle in which both sides claimed victory but whose outcome left Greece without clear direction or clear leadership. The choice of this ending of his history undoubtedly reflects the frustration that Xenophon felt after years of observing and experiencing the internecine warfare among Greek states; his abrupt ending in medias res stops the narrative amid the general state of political affairs with which the *Hellenica* had begun. Xenophon has left an often colorful account of this period, but one that is clearly not a history based on the weighing and sifting of a wide variety of sources. Xenophon's interest seems turned more toward the moral lessons that can be drawn from individual or collective actions than toward the construction of a scientifically comprehensive and balanced history.

His writings about Socrates, as noted earlier, include the *Apology, Symposium, Memorabilia,* and *Economics.* These works have traditionally interested scholars not so much for whatever philosophical positions they might present as for the contrast that they provide to Plato's portrayal of Socrates. In

"Plato and the Socratic Work of Xenophon," the article by F. H. Sandbach in volume one of *The Cambridge History of Classical Literature* (1985), only three of the twenty-one pages are devoted to Xenophon as a philosopher; the rest are devoted to Plato. Clearly Xenophon has no major philosophical system to build that can employ Socrates as a mouthpiece. For the most part his Socratic dialogues tend to be a defense of Socrates' life and character against the charges that brought about his trial and execution. They present a lively, personal Socrates who is concerned with the business of living a just and ethical life and helping his fellow citizens do the same.

Xenophon's *Apology,* unlike Plato's work of the same name, is not a full record of Socrates' speech at his trial, but rather a short report by Hermogenes, son of Hipponicus, of certain remarks that Socrates made before, during, and after the judicial process. Xenophon specifically argues that other presentations of Socrates did not show clearly that the philosopher had determined to let this false charge be the concluding event of his life of justice. Another Socratic work by Xenophon is the *Symposium,* which takes place in the house of the wealthy Callias, who is throwing a party in celebration of his beloved Autolycus's victory in an athletic contest. Socrates and friends are invited, and after much banter and lighthearted jesting, Socrates presents a speech on the superiority of spiritual to physical love. Readers can readily see here a defense against implications that Socrates' eroticism was a dominant, driving force in his personal relationships with his associates. Plato, in his *Symposium* (circa 370 B.C.), also develops a similar theme in which love becomes a force for philosophical growth rather than physical obsession.

Xenophon's longest Socratic work, a self-stated defense of Socrates' just life, is the *Memorabilia,* or "Recollections," four books of dialogues on a variety of subjects. Book 1 focuses on a defense of Socrates against the charge that he encouraged Critias and Alcibiades in their excesses or was in any way responsible for their behavior. Book 2 shows Socrates intervening in family strife to reconcile hostile parties and bring about family unity. Book 3 presents Socrates as a helper to his associates in the pursuit of legitimate aims and distinctions. In this book Socrates is seen counseling Plato's brother Glaucon on the best ways to become a good adviser to the state. Finally Socrates is shown in Book 4 in a dialogue with Euthydemus as a searcher for self-knowledge and justice. The vignettes of Socrates in the *Memorabilia* picture a practical, ethical philosopher, not the metaphysician later portrayed by Plato. Xenophon's Socrates, although clearly interested in logical definitions, has no Doctrine of Forms such as is found in the Platonic dialogues. Nor is Xenophon's Socrates the cosmologist mocked in Aristophanes' *Clouds* (423 B.C.). Socrates must have been admired by Xenophon for his desire to live sincerely and effectively and justly in the ordinary world of human affairs.

The *Economics* is a narratologically intriguing work that contains a dialogue within the dialogue. Socrates starts to investigate the nature of estate management with Critobolus, and after they have arrived at a suitable definition of the entity, Socrates reports a dialogue in which he receives a lesson on this very subject from Isomachus. The end of this dialogue stresses the ability of the manager to command respect and have his orders carried out willingly by his subordinates, a theme stressed in the *Cyropaedia* as one of the enviable characteristics of the ideal leader, Cyrus. Traditionally seen as a minor work, the *Economics* has received recent attention as an important document in Greek social history because of the extensive role played by Isomachus's wife on his estate (Pomeroy).

Another short work showing Xenophon's interest in management is the *Ways and Means.* The text is an exhortation to the Athenians to find ways to exploit their own territory for income, rather than having to exact their needs from other states. Advice is offered on how to raise revenue, exploit mineral resources, increase agricultural production, and effectively employ public slaves. In addition to his interest in practical philosophy and management, Xenophon was a sportsman. He composed two technical treatises on sporting, *On the Art of Horsemanship* and *On Hunting.* Both treatises have much to say about the animals involved with the respective sports. In *On Hunting* Xenophon writes at length on the qualities of good dogs as well as techniques for the capture of hares, deer, and wild pigs. Charmingly, he lists possible names for hunting dogs, a veritable register of canine names for the ancient Greeks. Also in *On the Art of Horsemanship,* which will be best understood by those familiar with equitation, Xenophon discusses how to choose a good horse and the best methods of training and riding.

Soldier, exile, estate manager, observer, and speculator on political affairs, Xenophon was also an associate of Socrates, and, by agreement of the ancients, a philosopher; he was also surely a literary artist, the master of a pleasant and vivid Greek style that was colored and enriched by the various roles

he assumed in his life. Modern scholarship and criticism has focused on him in three aspects, with each aspect being pursued more or less independently of the others: Xenophon as a historian and a historical source, Xenophon as an associate and portrayer of Socrates, and, more recently, Xenophon as novelist. Scholarly controversies abound: the order in which the works were composed and their relation to the author's life, the sources of Xenophon, Socrates' relationship to Xenophon, the connection of his Socratic works to Plato's, Xenophon's relationship to Thucydides, and Xenophon's reliability as a source for Persian history are all subjects for debate. But while the debates on these traditional controversies will no doubt continue, there is a relatively new direction in Xenophontine studies, exemplified by Tatum's *Xenophon's Imperial Fiction: On the Education of Cyrus,* that seeks to place Xenophon at the beginning of the history of the novel. This line of criticism, if properly developed, could reconnect Xenophon to the wider readership that he enjoyed before he became the almost exclusive preserve of the professional scholar.

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ISBN 0-8103-9939-3

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