



LIVES OF THE EMINENT  
PHILOSOPHERS  
DIOGENES LAERTIUS

TRANSLATED BY PAMELA MENSCH  
EDITED BY JAMES MILLER



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EMINENT  
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DIOGENES LAERTIUS

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EDITED BY JAMES MILLER

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# INTRODUCTION

James Miller

**L**ives of the Eminent Philosophers of Diogenes Laertius is a crucial source for much of what we know about the origins of philosophy in Greece. The work covers a larger number of figures and a longer period of time than any other extant ancient source. Yet few classical texts of such significance have provoked such sharp disagreement, even contempt.

Modern scholars have generally dismissed Diogenes Laertius as a mediocre anthologist, if not an “ignoramus” (thus the great German classicist Werner Jaeger). Even when dealing with invaluable evidence of otherwise unknown philosophical doctrines, concluded one expert, “we may be said to have a museum of philosophical ideas which are pinned like beetles on pegs in glass cases to be looked at and admired, a compilation which is no more capable of furnishing an understanding of the history of these ideas than the mere examination of beetles under a glass will yield an understanding of the life of the beetle.”<sup>1</sup>

Renaissance readers, though not uncritical, by contrast tended to revel in the book’s abundance of biographical lore. In one of his *Essays*, Montaigne says he wished that instead of just one Diogenes Laertius there had been a dozen: “for I am equally curious to know the lives and fortunes of these great instructors of the world as to know the diversity of their doctrines and opinions.”<sup>2</sup>

Friedrich Nietzsche, who came to admire *Lives* after itemizing its manifold defects from the standpoint of modern scholarship, quipped that Diogenes Laertius is the porter who guards the gate leading to the Castle of Ancient Philosophy. Like Montaigne, Nietzsche savored the paradox that this gatekeeper was also a fabulist. But the biographies recounted by Diogenes became for him one touchstone of how properly to search for wisdom—through studying lives as well as doctrines. “I for one prefer reading Diogenes Laertius,” Nietzsche wrote in 1874, in the context of dismissing

1 Richard Hope, *The Book of Diogenes Laertius: Its Spirit and Its Method* (New York, 1930), 96, 201.

2 Montaigne, *Essays*, bk. II, ch. 10, “Of Books.”



Plate with relief decoration of two philosophers debating,  
eastern Mediterranean, AD 500–600.

From the J. Paul Getty Museum: “Two seated philosophers, labeled Ptolemy and Hermes, engage in a spirited discussion. The scene has been interpreted as an allegory of the debate between Myth and Science: Ptolemy, the founder of the Alexandrian school of scientific thought, debating Hermes Trismegistos, a deity supporting the side of myth. The woman on the left, gesturing and partaking in the exchange, is identified as Skepsis. Above the two seated men, an unidentified enthroned man is partially preserved.”

academic philosophy as arid and uninteresting: “The only critique of a philosophy that is possible and that proves anything, namely trying to see whether one can live in accordance with it, has never been taught at universities; all that has ever been taught is a critique of words by means of other words.”<sup>3</sup>

3 Nietzsche, *Untimely Meditations*, “Schopenhauer as Educator,” #8.

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As we understand the disciplines of philosophy and intellectual history today, Diogenes Laertius practiced neither, nor was he much of a literary stylist. But Diogenes *was* a man on a mission, and he had the ingenuity and diligence to carry it out.

The author compiled a variety of information about all the philosophers for whom he had material—eighty-two, as it happened. All the chosen were Greek or wrote their works in Greek, since Diogenes took it as axiomatic that not only all philosophy but “the human race itself” began with the Greeks and not the barbarians (be they Persian or Egyptian). In addition to summarizing key doctrines, Diogenes offers a sequence of short biographies—the most extensive set we possess.

The author’s voice is direct, generally plain, even impassive—though a dry sense of humor is also at play. He appears as a stockpiling magpie, leaving little out if it fits with his own apparent fascination with whether, and how, the lives of philosophers squared with the doctrines they espoused.<sup>4</sup> Evidently interested in odd and amusing anecdotes, the more controversial the better, Diogenes sometimes notes the bias of his sources, but only rarely does he make an effort to evaluate their plausibility or the authenticity of the letters and other documents he reproduces. Although he obliquely comments on his *Lives* through a series of epigrams by others and poems of his own, filled frequently with puns and wordplay meant to amuse, he almost never praises or criticizes directly the characters he describes, nor does he venture any unambiguous opinion of his own about how one might best undertake philosophy as a way of life. His philosophical views (if he had any) are obscure.

The treatment of individual philosophers is uneven, ranging from an interminable list of categorical distinctions in the chapter on Plato to the verbatim citation of several works by Epicurus in his chapter on that philosopher. Some chapters are barely one paragraph long; others go on for pages. Sometimes a reader feels as if the author had simply dumped his notes on a table.<sup>5</sup> Recent research suggests Diogenes may have died before he was able to organize a definitive version of his text, which would explain some of the

4 It is telling that perhaps his most extensive and explicitly critical treatment of a philosopher occurs in the case of Bion of Borysthenes, whose superstitious piety at the end of his life flagrantly contradicted the outspoken atheism he had espoused previously: see the poem at 4:55–57.

5 Diogenes’ presentation recalls other published notes (*hypomnemata*) from the same period, as described by Pierre Hadot, *The Inner Citadel: The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*, trans. Michael Chase (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998), 32.

lacunae and inconsistencies careful readers will notice.<sup>6</sup> Yet even if the overall order of the books and some of the biographies was still unsettled at the time of his death, the text as we have it is never haphazard, since the material on individual philosophers is sorted more or less carefully into sections on genealogy, anecdotes, apothegms, doctrines, key works, and (almost always) a necrology, just as each of the work's ten books is more or less plausibly organized by schools and lines of putative succession.

As a result of this encyclopedic format, it has long been the habit of most scholars and ordinary readers to dip into *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers* as needed, treating it like a reference work (however strange and unreliable).

But if instead one reads the entire text straight through (as there is some evidence the author intended), a not unwelcome bewilderment descends.

Despite some rough parts and missing passages, we behold a meticulously codified panorama of the ancient philosophers. Through the eyes of Diogenes, we watch them as a group living lives of sometimes extraordinary oddity while ardently advancing sometimes incredible, occasionally cogent, often contradictory views that (to borrow a phrase from Borges) “constantly threaten to transmogrify into others, so that they affirm all things, deny all things, and confound and confuse all things”—as if this parade of pagan philosophers could only testify to the existence of “some mad and hallucinating deity.”<sup>7</sup>

\*\*\*

It has proven impossible to determine the exact dates of Diogenes Laertius. Since the author makes no mention of Neoplatonism, which began to flourish in the latter half of the third century AD, and since he discusses nobody born after the second century AD, experts have tentatively concluded that he lived in the first half of the third century AD.

Equally uncertain is the reason for the text's survival: if Diogenes Laertius had readers in his own lifetime, we don't know who they were. The manuscript may well have been published only posthumously, prepared by a scribe forced to work with unfinished material. No one knows how many copies were initially made. Unlike the corpus of Plato, which was carefully preserved by his school, or the treatises of Aristotle, which came to be

<sup>6</sup> This research is summarized by Tiziano Dorandi in his essay on the manuscript tradition—see page 577.

<sup>7</sup> Jorge Luis Borges, “The Library of Babel,” in *Collected Fictions*, trans. Andrew Hurley (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), 117.

widely read, studied, and copied in antiquity, it's as if the manuscript had been preserved by a quirk of fate, just like the wall paintings in Pompeii (or the papyrus rolls of the Epicurean philosopher Philodemus in nearby Herculaneum).

Modern philologists have spent careers examining the scant evidence for more clues about Diogenes and the provenance of his text. Some of this research has focused on an effort to reconstruct a Greek text as close as possible to the (lost) original manuscript. Other research has examined the sources Diogenes consulted. As one scholar dryly remarked, "The relation of all this work to the Laertius problem as a whole has been strikingly expressed in a statement of Richards: 'I have confined myself mainly to minutiae, with which it seems comparatively safe to deal.'"<sup>8</sup> (In his doctoral work on the text as a young philologist, Nietzsche focused on just such minutiae.)

The earliest surviving references to Diogenes appear in works by Sopater of Apamea (fourth century) and Stephanus of Byzantium (sixth century). But it was only centuries later that the text became better known in the West, at first through a Latin translation by the Christian monk Ambrogio Traversari (1386–1439), and then through the first print editions of the Greek text.

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Despite their obvious import, the biographies in Diogenes have long chagrined modern scholars, not because they are unsourced but because of their sheer number—and their sometimes amazing contents.

For example, his life of Pythagoras gives four different versions of how that philosopher died, citing three sources: he died fleeing a fire; he died in combat; he starved to death; and then this:

When he arrived in Italy, he built an underground chamber and instructed his mother to commit to writing everything that occurred, and at what time, and then to send her notes down to him until he came back up. This his mother did. And after a time Pythagoras emerged, withered and skeletal; entering the assembly, he said that he had come from Hades; he even read aloud what he had experienced there. Shaken by what he said, the people wept and wailed and were so convinced Pythagoras was a god that they sent their wives to him in the hope they might learn some of his doctrines. These were called the Pythagorizusae (Women Who Followed Pythagoras). So says Hermippus.

8 Hope, *The Book of Diogenes Laertius*, quoting Herbert Richards, "Laertiana," *Classical Review* 18 (1904): 340–46.



A group of men pushing philosophers toward a fire fueled by burning books.  
Engraving attributed to Marco Dente, c. 1515–1527.

*Lives* glories in the deadpan reproduction of this kind of lore, some of it slyly deflationary, all of it offered in disorienting abundance.

A general picture of the philosopher as a social type nevertheless starts to emerge. He (with one or two exceptions, the philosopher is a man) is an imposing figure, often adept at argument, and generally interested in questions about the order of the world, the best way to live, or both. Absentmindedness is frequently noted, starting with Thales, along with an indifference to hygiene—body lice are a common malady; he is often a stranger to conventional behavior and customary beliefs, and his utterances are sometimes inscrutable.

A representative sample of anecdotes and odd apothegms: When asked what knowledge is the most necessary, Antisthenes said, “How to rid oneself of the need to unlearn anything”; when masturbating in the marketplace, a shameless act that made him a cynosure, Diogenes the Cynic said, “If only one could relieve hunger by rubbing one’s belly”; Carneades let his hair and fingernails grow, so single-minded was his devotion to philosophy; Pyrrho took as an example of perfect tranquillity a pig in a ship eating calmly in the midst of a raging storm; Xenocrates was so infallibly honest that he was allowed to give unsworn evidence in courts; Chrysippus, a Stoic of unrivaled industriousness and quickness of wit, was renowned for his copious use of citation, “with the result that in one of his books he copied out nearly the whole of Euripides’

*Medea*; and when someone holding the book was asked what he was reading, he replied, ‘Chrysippus’ *Medea*.’”

The cumulative effect of such details is to underline the eccentricity of the philosopher as a social type and of philosophy as a way of life. But whereas Plato’s enchanting dramatizations of the transcendental moral perfection of Socrates still lead otherwise skeptical readers to suspend disbelief, the accounts in Diogenes, often allegorical in nature, occupy a playful twilight zone between fact and fiction: they seem designed both to fascinate and to provoke incredulity.

Then again, perhaps the real reason for the promiscuous citation of strange stories and conflicting authorities is to confirm the fame of the figure in question. After all, the work’s objects of interest are not just any old philosophers, but only those who are *eminent*. And what makes someone famous is, in part, the number of legends that surround him. Those prove eminence.

Diogenes thus starts his biography of Plato with a genealogy linking him to an Olympian deity and the legendary lawgiver Solon, followed immediately by an account of his virgin birth:

Plato, son of Ariston and Perictione—or Potone—was an Athenian, his mother tracing her descent back to Solon. For Solon’s brother was Dropides, and Dropides was the father of Callaeschrus, who was the father of Critias (one of the Thirty) and of Glaucon, who was the father of Charmides and Perictione, by whom Ariston fathered Plato. Thus Plato was in the sixth generation from Solon. Solon himself traced his descent to Neleus and Poseidon, and his father is said to have traced his descent to Codrus, son of Melanthus; both, according to Thrasylus, trace their descent to Poseidon.

Speusippus in *Plato’s Funeral Feast*, and Clearchus in his *Encomium on Plato*, and Anaxilaides in his second book *On Philosophy* say that there was a story in Athens that Ariston tried to force himself on Perictione, who was then in the bloom of youth, and was rebuffed; and that when he ceased resorting to force, he saw a vision of the god Apollo, after which he abstained from conjugal relations until Perictione gave birth.

The biographies of Plato in modern textbooks simply omit such information, yet these details offer vivid evidence of how Plato came to be called “divine”—and hence help to explain how his writings became as consecrated as anything in Jewish or Christian scripture.

In composing his biographies, Diogenes, not unlike Plutarch, the most distinguished among the ancient biographers, gave pride of place to emblematic anecdotes. As Plutarch explained at the outset of his life of Alexander, “It is not histories I am writing, but lives; and the most glorious deeds do not always reveal the working of virtue or vice. Frequently, a small thing—a phrase or flash of wit—gives more insight into a man’s character than battles where tens

of thousands die, or vast arrays of troops, or sieges of cities. Accordingly, just as painters derive their likenesses from a subject's face and the expression of his eyes, where character shows itself, and attach little importance to other parts of the body, so must I be allowed to give more attention to the manifestations of a man's soul, and thereby mold an image of his life, leaving it to others to describe the epic conflicts."<sup>9</sup> Diogenes seems similarly to assume that a vignette or a telling anecdote may reveal more about the essential character of a philosopher than the canonic writings that generations have intensively studied.

In any case, it is Diogenes Laertius alone who remains our main source for the lives—and legends—of most Greek philosophers.

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The many doctrinal excerpts—what classicists call “doxography”—present problems of their own in the work of Diogenes Laertius. While most modern scholars largely ignore the tall tales in his *Lives*, they have never ceased to mine his text for precious evidence of the doctrines put forth by a large number of ancient philosophers and the schools they founded. For the doctrines of some—the Stoics and the school of Epicurus—Diogenes Laertius is a primary or our only source. In some cases it is hard to be sure how reliable his extracts are, since many of the works he cited have been lost. Where experts agree that an extract is genuine, it is hard to be sure how to interpret material presented more or less out of context.

Above all, Diogenes represents a standing challenge to many modern accounts of ancient philosophy. John Cooper, in *Pursuits of Wisdom: Six Ways of Life in Ancient Philosophy from Socrates to Plotinus* (2012), narrows in on what he calls “mainline” philosophers—theoreticians who stress the role of reason and the capacity to reason in philosophy as a way of life. In a footnote, Cooper denigrates the importance of spiritual exercises as a constitutive component of ancient philosophy and on the conversion to a specific ancient philosophy as an existential choice; it's as if, for him, philosophy just *is* a reasoned commitment to a system of reasonable doctrines—or it isn't really philosophy at all.<sup>10</sup>

But an unprejudiced reading of Diogenes' *Lives* suggests that a one-sided emphasis on the capacity to reason as the *sine qua non* of ancient philosophy is hopelessly anachronistic.

9 Plutarch, “The Life of Alexander,” translation by Pamela Mensch.

10 John Cooper, *Pursuits of Wisdom: Six Ways of Life in Ancient Philosophy from Socrates to Plotinus* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2012), see esp. 18–19n, where his target is Pierre Hadot.

Sometimes joining one of the philosophical schools Diogenes describes involved a suspension of conventional beliefs, and sometimes a suspension of *dis*belief (as witness the legends surrounding many of the most charismatic founding figures of some major philosophical schools). Sometimes it hinged on the ability to make logical arguments. But sometimes it entailed ritualized regimens, or the memorization of core doctrines, or simply the emulation of an exemplary (if perhaps mythic) individual philosopher (as witness Pythagoras, Empedocles, Socrates, Diogenes the Cynic, Pyrrho, and Zeno of Citium). In his survey of ancient philosophical doctrines, Diogenes himself makes no effort to quarantine what seems purely rational from what seems superstitious, imaginative, dogmatic, or rooted in systematic doubt rather than reasoned knowledge.

Instead of confirming the central importance of the sort of rationality vaunted by some Greek philosophers, such as Plato, Aristotle, and Chrysippus, the work of Diogenes, taken as a whole, rather illustrates “the whimsical constitution of mankind, who must act and reason and believe,” as Hume once put it, “though they are not able, by the most diligent enquiry, to satisfy themselves concerning the foundation of these operations, or to remove the objections, which may be raised against them.”<sup>11</sup>

In this way the work of Diogenes willy-nilly poses anew the invaluable question What *is* philosophy?

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The goal of this edition has been to render Diogenes into an English prose that is fluent yet faithful to the original Greek. Throughout, Pamela Mensch has avoided easy glosses in English of passages that are inherently hard to fathom in the original Greek. The annotation is aimed at the general rather than specialist reader, and explains the various references to people, places, practices, and countless mythological characters as they occur.<sup>12</sup>

11 David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, sect. XII, 128.

12 The notes avoid commenting on various possible readings of the Greek text, or on the philosophical substance of the various views that Diogenes reproduces. Variant forms of the information found in Diogenes are cited only sparingly. Readers interested in a more comprehensive annotation of the text, including the varied extant classical sources for specific epigrams, textual excerpts, or legends and lore found in Diogenes, should consult the new critical edition of the Greek text prepared by Tiziano Dorandi, *Diogenes Laertius: Lives of Eminent Philosophers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013). See also the copious scholarly annotation in the French edition prepared under the direction of Marie-Odile Goulet-Caze, *Diogène Laërce: Vies et doctrines des philosophes illustres* (Paris: Le Livre de Poche, 1999); in the Italian translation edited by Marcello Gigante, *Diogene Laerzio: Vite dei filosofi*, 3rd ed. (Bari: Laterza, 1987); and the sparser, but still helpful, notes on sources in the Loeb Classical Library edition of the Greek, with an English translation by Robert D. Hicks (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1925).



*Socrates*



*Aristotle*

Works by Lui Shitini from the series *The Matter of an Uncertain Future*, 2011.  
Pencil on paper, 36 x 28 cm.

The text of Diogenes' *Lives* comes down to us through a manuscript tradition roughly two thousand years long. In the process of copying and recopying the manuscripts, errors and omissions have inevitably occurred. Modern editors have attempted to correct the text by removing erroneous additions and restoring passages that they believe have been lost. Our translation marks these editorial interventions using two devices. Braces—like these: {/}—are used to indicate text that is in the manuscript tradition but which we, following other modern editions, regard as corrupt. Angled brackets (</>) indicate text that is not in the manuscripts but has been introduced by editors in an attempt to reconstruct what Diogenes' original text might have said; in cases where we are uncertain how the text should be reconstructed, we put ellipses within those angled brackets.

The letters of Epicurus preserved in Book 10 present a different kind of editorial challenge. Modern scholars generally agree that certain passages in these letters are genuine parts of Diogenes' text, but not genuine parts of Epicurus' letters. Rather, these passages are thought to represent a later commentary on the letters, which was incorporated into the text of the letters from which Diogenes transcribed them. Such passages of commentary have been italicized and enclosed in square brackets.

If an unfamiliar proper name mentioned in a section of the text for the first time is not given a footnote, then the person mentioned usually is someone whom Diogenes Laertius is using as a source. The Glossary of Ancient Sources, which starts on page 634, will offer more information on such people.

The selection of essays that follows the translation will give readers a sample of some of the latest scholarship in the field.

Mensch has worked from the new, authoritative Greek text established by Tiziano Dorandi and published by Cambridge University Press—with one significant exception. As Dorandi points out, there are no chapter headings in the most important extant Greek manuscripts for the parts of the text that concern an individual philosopher, perhaps a sign that Diogenes wished his text to be regarded as a whole rather than as a series of separate chapters on individual philosophers. In order to make the work easier for ordinary readers to approach, we have nevertheless followed the traditional convention of assigning the names of individual philosophers to the relevant parts of the text where each is discussed.

In commissioning and reviewing the essays, I have been assisted by James Allen, Dorandi, Anthony Grafton, A. A. Long, and Glenn Most. I have asked the contributors to keep in mind lay readers, but some of the philological and philosophical issues at stake are fairly technical. Not every reader will be interested in every essay.

The notes to the text come from several hands. James Romm annotated the historical references, while Jay Elliott focused on philosophical notations. Madeline Miller (a novelist by choice and a classicist by training, who is no relation to the present writer) annotated most of the mythological references with help from Kyle Mest.

Trent Duffy copyedited the text and notes and served as production editor during the long process of turning this complicated manuscript into a book. In editing the essays, I also had the valuable assistance of Prudence Crowther.

The many images and maps that accompany the main text have been selected by Timothy Don. Since these images are meant to illustrate the ongoing influence of many of the philosophical anecdotes compiled by Diogenes, we have



*The Triumph of Fame over Death*, South Netherlandish, c. 1500–1530.

The winged figure of Fame, riding in a chariot pulled by a team of white elephants and sounding a trumpet, heralds the appearance of four famous men: two philosophers, Plato and Aristotle, and two rulers, Alexander the Great (bearing a golden scepter) and Charlemagne (lower left). Death, symbolized by the two female figures, is trampled underfoot.

included material that is modern as well as ancient. The book was designed by Jason David Brown.

Our common goal has been to make *Lives* as accessible as possible to English-speaking readers—and at the same time to convey some of the essential strangeness of what philosophy once was, in hopes that readers may wonder anew at what philosophy might yet become.

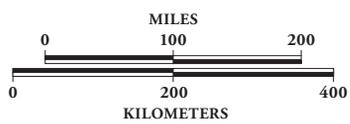
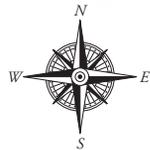
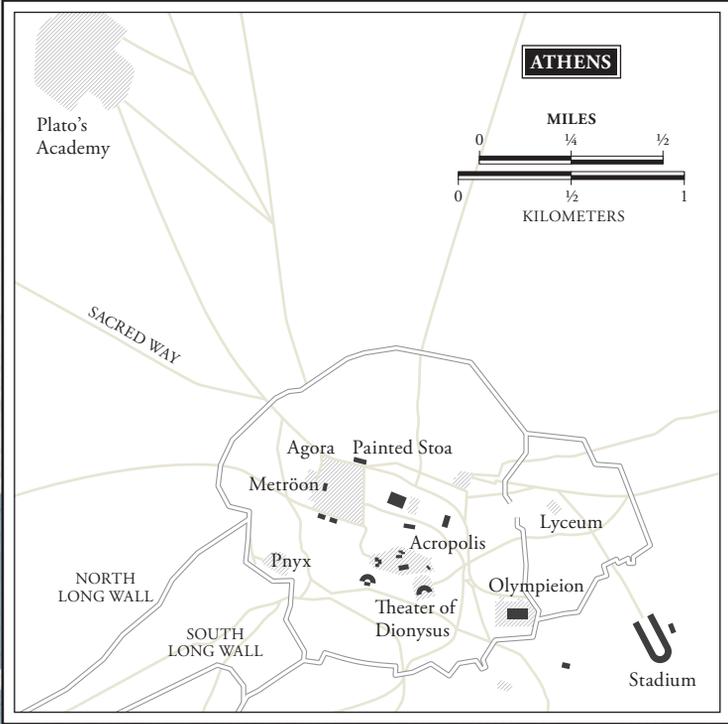
# TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

Pamela Mensch

Close translation, with all its unsolvable difficulties, is the only method by which most translators can hope to do justice to an author's work. The challenge is to respect, capture, and convey the elements of a writer's style—diction, tone, rhythm, and flow—knowing all the while that compromise in each of these areas is inevitable, and that each compromise, no matter how minute, increases the distance between the reader and the original work. That distance can never be eliminated, which is why all translators are bound to revere their intrepid predecessors, whose efforts become a lasting source of moral support. Thus it is a great pleasure to acknowledge the debt I owe to Robert Drew Hicks, Diogenes' Loeb Classical Library translator, and to the seven translators of the French edition published in 1999 by *Livre de Poche*. The ingenuity of Richard Goulet deserves special mention.

Two of our consulting editors gave me extensive help with the doctrinal material in Books 7 and 10: A. A. Long elucidated the Stoic doxography, and James Allen the letters of Epicurus. I am beholden to them for their expertise and generosity. Jay Elliott reviewed the entire translation; his responses, always astute, prompted a great many improvements. James Romm reviewed all the biographical passages, offered me an invaluable trove of suggestions, and showed himself willing to discuss and debate them to my heart's content, a gift for friendship being among his foremost. And for her unerring grasp of how to make a sentence fulfill its promise, all honor to Prudence Crowther.

Our translation is based on Tiziano Dorandi's edition of the Greek text, published in 2013 by Cambridge University Press.





ILLYRIA

Borysthene

SCYTHIA

BLACK SEA

Sinope

PAEONIA

THRACE

BOSPORUS

MACEDONIA

Amphipolis

Abdera

Byzantium

Chalcedon

Heraclea

Stagira

Maroneia

Mount Olympus

Potidaea

HELLESPONT

Lampsacus

Cyzicus

BITHYNIA

THESSALY

AEGEAN SEA

MYSIA

Mount Oeta

Petra

LESBOS

Assos

PHRYGIA

Chalcis

Eresus

Mytilene

Pitane

LYDIA

Thebes

Eretria

CHIOS

Clazomenae

Smyrna

Elis

Corinth

Marathon

Athens

SAMOS

Colophon

Ephesus

IONIA

Olympia

Argos

Aegina

SALAMIS

Miletus

PELOPONNESE

Megara

SYROS

ASTYPALAEA

COS

Cnidus

CARIA

Sparta

Soli

Lindos

CRETE

Cnossus

CYPRUS

Salamis

Citium

MEDITERRANEAN SEA

PHOENICIA

Cyrene

LIBYA

Alexandria

EGYPT



LIVES OF THE  
EMINENT  
PHILOSOPHERS



# BOOK 1

## PROLOGUE

### THALES

FL. 585 BC

### SOLON

FL. C. 600 BC

### CHILON

6TH CENT. BC

### PITTACUS

C. 650–570 BC

### BIAS

FL. 6TH CENT. BC

### CLEOBULUS

FL. 6TH CENT. BC

### PERIANDER

C. 627–587 BC

### ANACHARSIS

6TH CENT. BC

### MYSON

6TH CENT. BC

### EPIMENIDES

LATE 7TH CENT. BC

### PHERECYDES

FL. 544 BC

## PROLOGUE

1 The discipline of philosophy, some say, originated among the barbarians.<sup>1</sup> The Persians, they say, had their Magi,<sup>2</sup> the Babylonians or Assyrians their Chaldaeans,<sup>3</sup> the Indians their Naked Sages,<sup>4</sup> and the Celts and Galatians their so-called Druids and Semnotheoi,<sup>5</sup> as Aristotle says in his *Magicus*<sup>6</sup> and Sotion in the twenty-third book of his *Succession*. And they mention that Ochus<sup>7</sup> was a Phoenician, Zamolxis<sup>8</sup> a Thracian, and Atlas<sup>9</sup> a Libyan.

2 According to the Egyptians, Hephaestus<sup>10</sup> was the son of the Nile; and philosophy, over which their priests and prophets presided, began with him. Between Hephaestus and Alexander of Macedon<sup>11</sup> there elapsed 48,863 years, in the course of which there occurred 373 eclipses of the sun and 832 of the moon.<sup>12</sup>

1 Here, as often in the writings of ancient Greek authors, “barbarian” (*barbaros*) means simply “non-Greek.”

2 A caste of priests who were skilled in astronomy, astrology, and other arts. Their association with occult powers comes down to us in the word “magic.”

3 Diogenes uses “Chaldaeans” here to refer to Eastern mystics associated with magic and numerology. (The same name can refer to a Mesopotamian nation that became absorbed into other populations during the first millennium BC.)

4 Indian religious ascetics, dubbed Gymnosophists by Greeks who observed them exposing themselves to the elements.

5 Little is known about these Semnotheoi (or “Revered Gods”), who are not heard of elsewhere. The Druids were the priestly caste of the Celts.

6 The *Magicus*, a now lost work that evidently featured a magus as its main speaker, is here falsely attributed to Aristotle. In fact, it was a pseudo-Aristotelian work of the Hellenistic era.

7 No Phoenician philosopher named Ochus is known elsewhere, though a very ancient thinker named Mochus is credited by Posidonius with an atomic theory. The Phoenicians, originating in what is now Lebanon, established trading posts and colonies throughout the Mediterranean; the Greeks credited them with many inventions, including writing.

8 Herodotus (*Histories* 4.94–96) reports that Zamolxis (whom he calls Salmoxis, according to most manuscripts) was a deity of the Thracian Getae, who dwelled north of the Aegean in what is now largely southern Bulgaria.

9 Atlas is more commonly known as the god charged with holding up the vault of heaven, but some in the ancient world speculated that he had originally been a human being celebrated for knowledge of astronomy (see Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations* 5.3.8). Since Mt. Atlas, associated with the upright figure of Atlas, is located in Libya, Diogenes assumes this mortal version of Atlas was a Libyan.

10 In the traditional Greek pantheon, Hephaestus was the god of fire and metalworking, not at all a philosophic figure; but the Greeks also associated him with Egyptian Ptah, a divinity of wisdom as well as crafts.

11 Alexander the Great, king of Macedon, became ruler of Egypt in 332 BC.

12 Diogenes appears to have derived these numbers from an Egyptian source and to have mistakenly converted lunar months into years, giving a time span many times longer than what

Between the Magi, the first of whom was Zoroaster the Persian,<sup>13</sup> and the capture of Troy,<sup>14</sup> there elapsed five thousand years, as Hermodorus the Platonist says in his work *On Mathematics*. Xanthus the Lydian, however, says that six thousand years separated Zoroaster from Xerxes' crossing,<sup>15</sup> and that he was succeeded by a great many Magi, including Ostanas, Astrampsyclus, Gobryas, and Pazatas, until the overthrow of the Persians by Alexander.<sup>16</sup>

But these authors fail to notice that they attribute to the barbarians the accomplishments of the Greeks, with whom not only philosophy but the human race itself began. Let us consider, in any case, that Musaeus was a native Athenian, and Linus a Theban.<sup>17</sup> The former, they say, was the son of Eumolpus, and was the first to compose a *Theogony* and a *Sphere*; he declared that all things come into being from unity and into unity are resolved. He died at Phalerum,<sup>18</sup> and this elegiac couplet is his epitaph:

3

Here the Phalerean soil holds Musaeus,  
The beloved son of Eumolpus.

It is from the father of Musaeus that the Eumolpidae<sup>19</sup> at Athens get their name.

As for Linus, they say that he was the son of Hermes and the Muse Urania.<sup>20</sup> He composed a work describing the creation of the world, the routes of the sun and moon, and the origins of animals and fruits. His poem begins with this line:

4

There was a time when all things came into being at once.

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was intended. If the reverse conversion is performed, the numbers of (average) lunar and solar eclipses are very nearly correct.

- 13 Zoroaster (c. 628–551 BC), also known as Zarathustra, was a monotheistic religious sage who lived in Persia. Zoroastrianism took hold in Persia in the sixth century BC and is still actively practiced in Iran and South Asia and among expatriates from those regions.
- 14 The fall of Troy, the end point of the legendary Trojan War, was conventionally dated by the Greeks to about 1200 BC.
- 15 Xerxes, king of Persia, invaded Greece in 480 BC by using a bridge over the Hellespont (modern Dardanelles) to cross from Asia into Europe.
- 16 The “overthrow of the Persians” probably refers to the Battle of Gaugamela in 331 BC. Very little is known about the four Magi whom Diogenes names here, but a late Greek text titled *Oracles of Astrampsyclus*, a practical treatise on how to tell fortunes, was widely circulated in the ancient world and survives today in Byzantine versions.
- 17 Like Orpheus, whom Diogenes discusses below, Linus and Musaeus were legendary poets and musicians associated with mystical wisdom.
- 18 Phalerum, or Phaleron, was the port of Athens until the fifth century BC, when it was superseded by Piraeus.
- 19 A priestly clan at Athens. Founded by the demigod Eumolpus, according to legend, the Eumolpidae were responsible for the worship of Demeter and for celebrating the Eleusinian Mysteries in her honor.
- 20 The muse of astronomy, normally considered a consort of Apollo; her connection to the god Hermes is not otherwise attested.

Hence Anaxagoras,<sup>21</sup> borrowing this idea, said that all things were originally together until Mind came and placed them in order. Linus is said to have died in Euboea, struck by an arrow of Apollo,<sup>22</sup> and this epitaph was composed for him:

Here the earth has received the Theban Linus,  
The son of the fair-crowned Muse Urania.

And thus philosophy began with the Greeks; its very name resists translation into foreign speech.<sup>23</sup>

5 But those who attribute its invention to barbarians bring forward Orpheus the Thracian,<sup>24</sup> declaring him a philosopher and the most ancient. For my part, I do not know whether one should call a person who spoke as he did about the gods a philosopher. And what should we call a man who did not hesitate to attribute to the gods all human experience, including the obscene deeds committed rarely by certain men with the organ of speech?<sup>25</sup> The story goes that Orpheus met his death at the hands of women.<sup>26</sup> But according to the epitaph at Dium in Macedonia he was struck by a thunderbolt; the epitaph runs as follows:

Here the Muses laid the Thracian, Orpheus of the Golden Lyre,  
Whom high-ruling Zeus slew with a smoking shaft.

6 But those who say that philosophy originated with the barbarians explain the form it takes in each instance. They say that the Naked Sages and Druids express their philosophy in riddles, urging men to honor the gods and to do no evil and to practice courage. Clitarchus, at any rate, in his twelfth book, says that the Naked Sages despise even death itself. The Chaldaeans, they say, apply themselves to astronomy and prediction; and the Magi devote their time to serving the gods with sacrifices and prayers, thinking that only *their* prayers are heard;

21 A fifth-century BC philosopher known for his speculations about the origins of the natural world. Diogenes discusses his life and work at 2.6–15; see 2.6 for Mind's role in the creation of the cosmos.

22 Apollo, the god of music, killed Linus out of jealousy of his musical gifts.

23 Diogenes refers to the fact that "philosophy" comes from Greek roots meaning "love" (*phil-*) and "wisdom" (*sophia*).

24 Orpheus was revered not just as a musician but as a poet and philosopher. He is credited with founding the cult of Dionysus and playing a role in the Eleusinian Mysteries, a cult dedicated to Demeter.

25 A papyrus that emerged in the 1960s at a Greek village called Dervéni contains a fourth-century BC commentary on an Orphic theogonic poem, and indicates that much of the Orphic account of the origin of the gods did not fit with that of Hesiod or Homer. A line quoted from the poem by the author of the papyrus appears to describe Zeus swallowing the severed phallus of his grandfather Uranus, an act that Diogenes here equates with fellatio.

26 According to myth, Orpheus rejected the advances of a group of maenads (female followers of Dionysus), and in revenge they tore him to pieces.

they declare their views about the substance and origin of the gods, whom they hold to be fire, earth, and water; they condemn statues of gods, and especially the idea that some gods are male and others female. They hold discussions about justice, and consider cremation impious; they think it pious to sleep with one's mother or daughter, as Sotion says in his twenty-third book; they practice divination and prediction and say that the gods appear to them in visible form. Furthermore, they say that the air is full of images that stream forth like an exhalation and penetrate the eyes of the keen-sighted. They prohibit ornaments and the wearing of gold. Their clothing is white, their beds made of straw, and their diet composed of vegetables, cheese, and coarse bread; their staff is a reed, with which, it is said, they prick the cheese so as to take it up and eat it. 7

They are unacquainted with magic, as Aristotle says in his *Magicus* and Dinon in the fifth book of his *History*. Dinon says that the name Zoroaster, translated literally, means "Star-Worshipper";<sup>27</sup> and Hermodorus agrees with him. Aristotle, in the first book of his work *On Philosophy*, says that the Magi are more ancient than the Chaldaeans and that they have two principles, a good spirit and an evil spirit; the former is called Zeus and Oromasdes,<sup>28</sup> the latter Hades and Arimanius.<sup>29</sup> Hermippus confirms this in the first book of his work *On the Magi*, Eudoxus in his *Voyage Around the World*, and Theopompus in the eighth book of his *Philippica*. Theopompus says that according to the Magi human beings will come back to life and be immortal, and will indeed endure by means of their invocations. This is also confirmed by Eudemus of Rhodes. But Hecataeus says that according to the Magi the gods are subject to birth. Clearchus of Soli, in his work *On Education*, says that the Naked Sages are the descendants of the Magi; and some say that the Jews are also descended from them. Furthermore, those who have written about the Magi criticize Herodotus. They maintain that Xerxes would not have hurled javelins at the sun or lowered fetters into the sea,<sup>30</sup> since the Magi believe that the sun and the sea are gods; but he is likely to have destroyed statues of the gods. 8

The philosophy of the Egyptians, with respect to the gods and to justice, is as follows. They hold that the first principle was matter; then the four elements were derived from matter, and living creatures of all kinds were produced. The 10

27 This etymology incorporates the Greek roots *zōros*, "pure," and *astēr*, "star."

28 Oromasdes (or Ahura Mazda) in Zoroastrian theology is the creator and ruler of the universe, and hence seemed to the Greeks an equivalent of Zeus.

29 Arimanius (also known as Ahriman) was, according to the Zoroastrians, born from the darkness as an antagonist to Oromasdes. His dark origins led the Greeks to identify him with Hades.

30 In his *Histories* (7.35), Herodotus reports that the Persian king Xerxes became enraged at the sea for destroying a bridge, and ordered its waters lashed and chains thrown into its depths. Xerxes never threw spears at the sun, in Herodotus' account, though another Persian king, Darius, fired an arrow toward the sky (5.105).

11 sun and the moon are gods; the former is called Osiris, the latter Isis.<sup>31</sup> These gods are represented, in a riddling manner, by the beetle, the serpent, the hawk, and certain other animals, as Manetho says in his *Epitome of Natural Philosophy* and Hecataeus in the first book of his work *On the Philosophy of the Egyptians*. They set up statues and temples to these creatures because they do not know the actual form of the god. They hold that the world comes into being and is destroyed, and that it is spherical in shape; that the stars consist of fire, and that the degree of their purity affects what happens on earth; that the moon is eclipsed when it falls into the earth's shadow; that the soul survives death and migrates into other bodies; and that rain is produced by a change in the atmosphere. They provide physical explanations of all other phenomena, as Hecataeus and Aristagoras report. They created laws to secure justice, and ascribed these to Hermes; and they regarded the serviceable animals as gods. They also claimed to have invented geometry, astronomy, and arithmetic. So much concerning the invention of philosophy.

12 But the first to use the term “philosophy” and to call himself a philosopher was Pythagoras,<sup>32</sup> when he was conversing in Sicyon with Leon, the tyrant of Sicyon (or Phlius, as Heraclides Ponticus says in his work *On the Inanimate*); for he said that no one is wise but god. Before very long, the study was called wisdom, and the man who made a profession of it a sage—he who had attained the highest perfection of mind; while the man who cherished wisdom was called a philosopher. The wise men were also called sophists,<sup>33</sup> and the term was applied not only to them but to poets as well; for Cratinus, when praising Homer and Hesiod in his *Archilochoi*, refers to them as sophists.

13 The following men were considered sages:<sup>34</sup> Thales, Solon, Periander, Cleobulus, Chilon, Bias, and Pittacus. To these they add Anacharsis the Scythian, Myson of Chen, Pherecydes of Syros, and Epimenides of Crete. Some also include Pisistratus the tyrant. So much for the sages.

But philosophy has two origins, one that dates back to Anaximander,<sup>35</sup> the other to Pythagoras. Anaximander was a student of Thales; Pythagoras stud-

31 The Egyptian goddess Isis was regularly associated with the moon, magic, and resurrection.

The link between Osiris and the sun—normally identified with the god Ammon—is more tenuous.

32 Diogenes discusses Pythagoras's life and work at 8.1–50.

33 The original meaning of this word, and its sense here, is simply “wise men.” Plato turned it into a derogatory term for someone who employed rhetoric for personal gain rather than for the sake of truth. The English word “sophistry” derives from this latter use.

34 The ancients compiled a group of Seven Sages, considered the seven wisest men of early Greek thought. As Diogenes points out, the names on the list varied, depending on who was making it. All the figures named in the following list are discussed more fully in later portions of Diogenes' book.

35 Diogenes discusses Anaximander's life and work at 2.1–2.



Mosaic from the Villa of Titus Siminius Stephanus, Pompeii, first century BC–first century AD. This may represent Plato's Academy.

ied with Pherecydes. The school originated by Anaximander was called Ionian because Thales, who as a native of Miletus was an Ionian, was Anaximander's teacher. The other school was called Italian, after Pythagoras, who practiced philosophy for the most part in Italy. The one school, the Ionian, ends with Clitomachus, Chrysippus, and Theophrastus; the Italian with Epicurus.<sup>36</sup> The succession passes from Thales through Anaximander, Anaximenes, Anaxagoras, Archelaus, to Socrates, who introduced moral philosophy; from Socrates to the various Socratics, especially Plato, who founded the Old Academy; from Plato

14

<sup>36</sup> In this sentence and those that follow, Diogenes lays out the grand plan of his work, since the order in which he will relate his biographies is based on the successive leaderships of the various philosophic schools. His phrase "ends with" should not be taken to imply that a given school ceased to exist, only that his own account of that school will stop when it reaches that point.

through Speusippus and Xenocrates, to Polemon, Crantor, Crates, and Arcesilaus, who founded the Middle Academy, to Lacydes, who founded the New Academy, Carneades, and Clitomachus. And thus it ends with Clitomachus.<sup>37</sup>

15 It ends with Chrysippus in the following way: from Socrates it passes to Antisthenes, then to Diogenes the Cynic, Crates of Thebes, Zeno of Citium, Cleanthes, and Chrysippus. It ends with Theophrastus as follows: from Plato it passes to Aristotle, and from Aristotle to Theophrastus. And in this way the school of Ionia comes to an end.<sup>38</sup>

The succession of the Italian school is as follows: from Pherecydes it passes to Pythagoras, then to his son Telauges, then to Xenophanes, Parmenides, Zeno of Elea, Leucippus, and Democritus, who had many students, among whom one should mention Nausiphanes {and Naucydes}, who taught Epicurus.<sup>39</sup>

16 Among the philosophers, some have been dogmatists, others Skeptics.<sup>40</sup> The dogmatists are those who make assertions about things on the assumption that they can be grasped; the Skeptics are those who suspend judgment about them on the grounds that they cannot be grasped. Some philosophers have left written works, while others wrote nothing, as was the case, according to some, with Socrates, Philippus, Menedemus, Pyrrho, Theodorus, Carneades, and Bryson; some authorities include Pythagoras and Ariston of Chios, except that they wrote a few letters. Some philosophers wrote only one treatise each, namely Melissus, Parmenides, and Anaxagoras. Many works were written by Zeno, more by Xenophanes, more by Democritus, more by Aristotle, more by Epicurus, and more by Chrysippus.

17 Among the philosophers, some took their name from cities, like the Elians, the Megarians, the Eretrians, and the Cyrenaics; others from localities, like the Academics and the Stoics; others from incidental matters, like the Peripatetics, or from mocking epithets, like the Cynics;<sup>41</sup> others from their temperaments, like the Eudaemonists;<sup>42</sup> others from their notions, like the Philaethists,<sup>43</sup> the

37 The foregoing lists lay out the content and sequence of the first four books.

38 These lines of transmission form Books 5–7, though the order is jumbled compared with what Diogenes gives here, and the line that supposedly “ends with” Theophrastus in fact continues further.

39 These lines are followed in Books 8–10, except that Nausiphanes is not in fact given a biography there. The words “and Naucydes” are missing from some manuscripts and may have arisen from a copyist’s error.

40 This division was emphasized by the Skeptics themselves, who devoted many of their works to refuting the theories of dogmatic philosophers, particularly the Stoics.

41 Cynics were known for their unconventional manners and haphazard hygiene, which prompted them to be mocked as “dogs” (*kynes*), from which their name derived.

42 The term comes from the Greek *eu-* (good) and *daimōn* (god), and refers to a state of happiness and connection with divinity that Eudaemonists strove to cultivate.

43 These “truth-lovers” are not otherwise known.



*Aristotle with a Bust of Homer*, by Rembrandt van Rijn, 1653.

Elenctics,<sup>44</sup> and the Analogists; others from their teachers, like the Socratics and Epicureans, and so forth. And some are called natural philosophers because they investigate nature; others are called moralists because they discuss morals; those who occupy themselves in verbal hairsplitting are called dialecticians.

There are three parts of philosophy: physics, ethics, and dialectic. Physics is the part concerned with the world and its contents; ethics is concerned with life and the matters that affect us; dialectic is the part that cultivates the processes of reasoning employed by both. Until Archelaus, physics was a branch of philosophy; ethics, as has been mentioned, was introduced by Socrates; and dialectic by Zeno of Elea. In ethics there have been ten schools: the Academic, the Cyrenaic, the Elian, the Megarian, the Cynic, the Eretrian, the Dialectic, the Peripatetic, the Stoic, and the Epicurean.

18

<sup>44</sup> These “refuters” may be a designation of the followers of Socrates. Some manuscripts have the reading “Eclectics” here rather than “Elenctics,” and that may be the correct one (see chapter 21).

19 Of the Old Academy, Plato was the founder; of the Middle Academy, Arcesilaus; of the New Academy, Lacydes; of the Cyrenaic school, Aristippus of Cyrene; of the Elian, Phaedon of Elis; of the Megarian, Euclides of Megara; of the Cynic, Antisthenes of Athens; of the Eretrian, Menedemus of Eretria; of the Dialectical, Clitomachus of Carthage; of the Peripatetic, Aristotle of Stagira; of the Stoic, Zeno of Citium; as for the Epicurean school, it took its name from Epicurus himself.

Hippobotus, in his work *On Philosophical Schools*, says that there are nine sects or schools:<sup>45</sup> (1) the Megarian, (2) the Eretrian, (3) the Cyrenaic, (4) the Epicurean, (5) the Annicerean, (6) the Theodorean, (7) the Zenonian or Stoic, (8) the Old Academic, (9) the Peripatetic. He omits the Cynic, Elian, and Dialectical schools. As for the Pyrrhonians, most authorities do not consider them a sect by reason of their uncertainty; some regard them as a sect in some respects, but not in others. Yet they seem to be a sect. For we apply that term to those who follow or are thought to follow some principle with regard to appearances; on this basis we would be justified in calling the Skeptics a sect. But if we think of a sect as having a bias in favor of a series of doctrines, they could no longer be called a sect; for they have no doctrines. So much for the beginning of philosophy, its successions, its parts, and its schools.

21 But recently an Eclectic school was introduced by Potamon of Alexandria,<sup>46</sup> who made a selection from the tenets of each of the schools. In his opinion, according to what he says in his *Elementary Teaching*, the criteria of truth are (1) that by which the judgment is formed, that is, the authoritative principle, and (2) the means by which it is formed, for example, the most precise representation. His principles of the universe are matter, the efficient cause, quality, and place; for the character of every entity depends on that out of which, and that by which, it is made, and the manner and place in which it is made. The end to which he refers all things is a life made perfect in all virtue, which cannot be attained without external advantages and a body free of natural defects.

We must speak of the philosophers themselves, and in the first place of Thales.

45 In classical Greece, a “school” was not usually a formally established institution (like Plato’s Academy) but a group of like-minded philosophers with a common leader and a regular meeting place, generally in public. Belonging to a school meant pledging allegiance to a specific philosopher who served as a model to be emulated: Socrates and Plato for the Academics, Zeno for the Stoics, Epicurus for the Epicureans, Diogenes for the Cynics, etc. A primary goal was not simply to ratify a certain set of doctrines (even when the ability to define terms and analyze arguments was a constitutive component of a school’s shared culture) but to embody a characteristic way of life.

46 The word “recently” here would seem to place Potamon close to, and therefore to help determine, the time at which Diogenes wrote. Unfortunately, the only other surviving information about Potamon places him in the first century BC, and we know that Diogenes lived at least two centuries later than that, so it’s unclear why “recently” is used.

## THALES

Thales, according to Herodotus, Duris, and Democritus,<sup>47</sup> was the son of Examyas and Cleobulina, and belonged to the Thelidae, the noblest Phoenician descendants of Cadmus and Agenor.<sup>48</sup> <He was one of the Seven Sages,><sup>49</sup> as Plato says. And he was the first to be named a Sage, during the archonship of Damasius in Athens,<sup>50</sup> when the Seven were first called Sages, as Demetrius of Phalerum says in his *List of Archons*. He was admitted to citizenship at Miletus when he came there with Neileus,<sup>51</sup> who had been banished from Phoenicia. But most writers say that he was a true-born Milesian and came from a distinguished family.

After a career in politics he applied himself to natural philosophy. According to some, he left no written work. For the *Nautical Astronomy* attributed to him is said to be the work of Phocus of Samos.<sup>52</sup> Callimachus knows him as the discoverer of the Little Bear,<sup>53</sup> for he writes as follows in his *Iambics*:

He is also said to have measured the small stars  
That form the Wagon, by which the Phoenicians navigate.

According to some, he wrote only two books, *On the Solstice* and *On the Equinox*, since he considered all other matters incomprehensible. He is thought by some to have been the first to study astronomy and to predict solar eclipses and solstices,<sup>54</sup> as Eudemus says in his *History of Astronomy*. This is

47 A fifth-century BC philosopher, jointly credited, along with his teacher Leucippus, with originating atomic theory. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 9.34–49.

48 Agenor and Cadmus were mythological kings of Phoenicia; Cadmus, Agenor's son, settled in Greece and founded the city of Thebes, according to legend, and also imported writing into the Greek world. Herodotus (1.70) attests to Thales' Phoenician identity—a disputed point, as Diogenes goes on to say—but not his parentage.

49 As the angle brackets indicate, this clause was inserted by editors to fill an apparent gap in the text. Plato groups Thales with the sages at *Protagoras* 343a.

50 That is, in 582 or 581 BC. Ancient authors, lacking a numerical system of dating past events, used the chief archons at Athens—officials elected for one-year terms, whose names were recorded chronologically in lists that went back centuries—as their reference points.

51 The mythological founder of Miletus.

52 An early Greek astronomer and scientist about whom little is known.

53 The Little Bear, also referred to as the Wagon in the verses below, is better known to us as the Little Dipper. Thales could hardly have “discovered” it, but he may have been the first to recognize its utility in navigation.

54 Herodotus (1.70) attests that Thales predicted the year of a solar eclipse that, when it occurred, halted a battle between Lydians and Medes; astronomers have fixed on an eclipse seen in Asia Minor in 585 BC as a likely candidate, assuming the story is true. But it is not clear just what Herodotus means, since no astronomical science available in antiquity would have allowed the prediction of an eclipse's date. The “prediction” of solstices is discussed further, below.

why Xenophanes<sup>55</sup> and Herodotus admired him. He was also acknowledged by Heraclitus<sup>56</sup> and Democritus.

24 And some, including the poet Choerilus, say he was the first to declare that souls are immortal. He was the first to discover the course of the sun from solstice to solstice, and the first, according to some, to say that the size of the sun is one seven hundred and twentieth part of the solar circle, <and that the size of the moon is the same fraction of the lunar circle.> He was the first to call the last day of the month the thirtieth, and the first, as some say, to reason about nature.

Aristotle and Hippias say that he attributed souls even to inanimate objects, arguing from the magnet and from amber. Pamphila says that when he had learned geometry from the Egyptians,<sup>57</sup> he was the first to inscribe a right triangle in a circle, after which he sacrificed an ox.<sup>58</sup> But others, including Apollodorus the Arithmetician, tell this story of Pythagoras.<sup>59</sup> (It was Pythagoras who advanced to their furthest extent the discoveries that Callimachus in his *Iambics* attributes to Euphorbus the Phrygian,<sup>60</sup> for example “scalene polygons and triangles” and all that concerns geometrical theory.)

26 He is also thought to have given excellent counsel in political affairs. At any rate, when Croesus<sup>61</sup> sent an envoy to Miletus proposing a military alliance, Thales thwarted the overture, a measure that saved the city when Cyrus won a victory.<sup>62</sup> He himself says, as Heraclides reports, that he was always solitary and reclusive. Some say that he married and had a son named Cybisthus; others that he remained unmarried and adopted his sister’s son. And when asked why he had no children, he replied, “Out of love for children.” They say that when his mother sought to force him to marry he said it was “too soon.” And later,

55 Xenophanes of Colophon (c. 570–c. 475 BC) was a Greek philosopher and poet who lived somewhat later than Thales. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 9.18–20.

56 Heraclitus of Ephesus (fl. c. 504 BC) was a Pre-Socratic philosopher whose life and views are discussed at 9.1–17.

57 The Egyptians were known to the Greeks as the inventors of geometry, a science devised (according to Herodotus 2.109) as a means of apportioning land.

58 The sacrifice was presumably performed in gratitude to the gods for his epiphany.

59 Diogenes discusses Pythagoras at 8.1–50; the particular point mentioned here is at 8.12.

60 Euphorbus the Phrygian was a mythic warrior who fought at Troy. Pythagoras, who professed a doctrine of reincarnation, apparently believed that his own soul had once inhabited the body of Euphorbus (see 8.4–5).

61 King of Lydia in the sixth century BC, famous for his vast wealth and patronage. He apparently employed Thales as a military engineer (Herodotus 1.75), although Diogenes seems unaware of this connection.

62 Diogenes is referring to the Persian king Cyrus the Great, who defeated Croesus (c. 547 BC) and subjugated all Lydian-controlled territory, including many Ionian Greek cities. Since Thales had persuaded the Milesians not to ally with Croesus in the war against Cyrus, Cyrus dealt favorably with Miletus.

when he was past his prime and she pressed him again, he said it was “too late.” Hieronymus of Rhodes, in the second book of his *Miscellaneous Notes*, says that when Thales wished to prove that it was easy to be wealthy, he rented the oil presses when he foresaw that there would be a large olive crop and thus amassed a fortune.

He held that the original substance of all things is water, and that the world is animate and full of deities. They say he discovered the seasons of the year, and divided the year into 365 days. 27

No one instructed him, except that he went to Egypt and spent time with the priests. Hieronymus says that he measured the pyramids by their shadow, making his observations at the moment when our shadow is the same height as ourselves. He lived with Thrasybulus,<sup>63</sup> the tyrant of Miletus, as Minyas reports.

The famous story about the tripod<sup>64</sup> found by the fishermen and sent to the Sages by the people of Miletus runs as follows. They say that certain Ionian youths purchased a catch of fish from some Milesian fishermen. And when the tripod was dragged out with the fish, it became the subject of a dispute until the Milesians sent a delegation to Delphi.<sup>65</sup> And the god gave the following oracle: 28

Scion of Miletus, you ask Phoebus<sup>66</sup> about a tripod?  
It belongs, I declare, to him who is the wisest of all.

Accordingly, they give<sup>67</sup> it to Thales. And he gives it to another, who gives it to another until it comes round to Solon, who, declaring that the god is the wisest, sent it to Delphi. But Callimachus, in his *Iambics*, gives a different version of the story, which he received from Laeandrius of Miletus. In this version, Bathycles, an Arcadian, bequeathed a bowl with the solemn instruction that it be “given to the most useful of the sages.”<sup>68</sup> It was then given to Thales, and, after going round to all the sages, came back to Thales. He sent it to Apollo at Didyma with this dedication, according to Callimachus: 29

Thales offers me, twice received as a prize,  
To the guardian of the people of Neileus.

63 Thrasybulus ruled Miletus in the late seventh and early sixth centuries BC. “Tyrants,” the Greek term for rulers who lacked the legitimacy of monarchic lineage, often tried to bolster their authority by attracting artists and sages to their courts.

64 Tripods, multipurpose three-legged stands, were highly valued in the ancient Greek world, serving often as offerings to gods or prizes in contests.

65 Located at the foot of Mt. Parnassus, Delphi was home to the oracle of Apollo, the most famous source of prophecy and divine advice in the ancient world.

66 Another name for Apollo.

67 The shift in tense here corresponds to the original Greek.

68 The story of a gift being offered to “the wisest man” was a common one in the ancient world. Diogenes gives a number of variations on the tale here and elsewhere.



Bronze rod tripod, early sixth century BC, Greek.

But the prose inscription runs as follows: “Thales of Miletus, son of Examyas, to Delphinian Apollo, after twice receiving it from the Greeks.” The bowl was carried from place to place by the son of Bathycles, whose name was Thyriion, as Eleusis says in his work *On Achilles* and Alexo of Myndus in the ninth book of his *Mythical Tales*.

30 But Eudoxus of Cnidus and Euanthes of Miletus say that a friend of Croesus received from the king a golden drinking-cup, in order to bestow it on the wisest of the Greeks; and this man gave it to Thales. And when it came round to Chilon,<sup>69</sup> he asked Pythian Apollo who was wiser than he. And the god replied, “Myson.” We will speak of Myson in due course.<sup>70</sup> (In the list of Sages, Eudoxus includes Myson instead of Cleobulus, while Plato includes him in place of Periander.) About Myson, Pythian Apollo replied with the following verses:

<sup>69</sup> Another of the archaic sages; see 1.68–73.

<sup>70</sup> At 1.106–8.

I declare that one Myson of Chen, in Oeta,  
Surpasses you in wise-heartedness.

The question was posed by Anacharsis.<sup>71</sup> But Daimachus the Platonist and Clearchus hold that a bowl was sent by Croesus to Pittacus and began its round from him.

Andron in his *Tripod* says that the Argives offered a tripod as a prize of virtue to the wisest of the Greeks; Aristodemus of Sparta<sup>72</sup> was judged worthy of the honor, but he withdrew in favor of Chilon. Alcaeus recalled Aristodemus in these verses: 31

No inept word spoke Aristodemus in Sparta:  
“Money is the man; no pauper attains honor.”

Some say that a vessel with its cargo was sent by Periander<sup>73</sup> to Thrasybulus, the tyrant of Miletus. It was shipwrecked in Coan waters, and the tripod was later found by certain fishermen. But Phanodicus says it was found in Athenian waters and brought to the city. And when an assembly was held it was sent to Bias, for reasons I will discuss in the life of Bias.<sup>74</sup>

Others say that it was fashioned by Hephaestus and sent by that god to Pelops<sup>75</sup> on the occasion of his marriage. Afterward it came to Menelaus,<sup>76</sup> and then, seized by Paris with Helen, it was cast into the Coan sea by the Spartan woman,<sup>77</sup> who said that it would be a cause of conflict. In time, when certain Lebedians<sup>78</sup> had bought the contents of a fishing basket at the same place, the tripod was hauled up, and when the Lebedians quarreled with the fishermen about it they put ashore at Cos. When they could not resolve the dispute, they reported the fact to Miletus, their mother-city. The Milesians, when their ambassadors were slighted, made war on the Coans. Many fell on both sides, and an oracle declared that the tripod should be given to the wisest. Both parties agreed on Thales. And 32

71 Diogenes means that Anacharsis, another of the archaic sages (see 1.101–5), had posed a question to the oracle that resulted in this response. Later (at 1.106) he quotes the wording of the question.

72 There are a number of significant historical figures named Aristodemus, but none of them seem to correspond to the sage cited here.

73 Tyrant of Corinth in the archaic period, sometimes listed as one of the Seven Sages (see 1.94–100).

74 See 1.82–88 for the life of Bias, and 1.82 for the point mentioned here.

75 A mythological king of Olympia for whom the Peloponnese is named. He defeated the previous king, Oenomaus, in a chariot race and married his daughter Hippodameia.

76 In mythology, Menelaus, grandson of Pelops, became king of Sparta after marrying Helen. She was later abducted by the Trojan prince Paris, precipitating the Trojan War.

77 Diogenes means Helen, who was born a Spartan princess.

78 Residents of Lebedos, a city on the west coast of Asia Minor, founded as a colony of Miletus.

33 after it had made its round, he dedicated it to Apollo of Didyma.<sup>79</sup> The oracle the Coans received runs as follows:

The quarrel between the sons of Merops<sup>80</sup> and the Ionians will not cease  
Until the golden tripod, which Hephaestus cast into the sea,  
Is sent from the city and reaches the seer,  
A man who is wise about the present, the future, and the past.

The Milesians' oracle began,

Scion of Miletus, you ask Phoebus about a tripod?

as has been mentioned. So much for this version of the story.

Hermippus in his *Lives* attributes to Thales the remark that some attribute to Socrates, namely that there were three blessings for which he was grateful to Fortune: “First, that I was born a man and not a beast, secondly a man and not  
34 a woman, and thirdly a Greek and not a barbarian.” It is said that once, when brought outdoors by an old woman to observe the stars, he fell into a ditch, and the old woman, hearing his wail, said, “Since you can’t see what’s underfoot, Thales, do you think you’ll know what’s in the sky?” Timon also knows him as an astronomer, and praises him in his *Lampoons*, saying,

Like Thales, among the Seven Sages, an astute observer of stars.

His writings, according to Lobon of Argos, run to two hundred lines. His statue is said to carry the following inscription:

Ionian Miletus reared Thales and made him known,  
The astronomer whose wisdom is unsurpassed.

35 To his songs belong the following verses:

Numerous words do not express a sound opinion.  
Seek for one thing only: that which is wise.  
Choose one thing only: that which has merit.  
For you will check the tongues of men whose chatter never ceases.

And the following maxims are attributed to him:

The most ancient of beings: god, for he is uncreated.  
The most beautiful thing: the universe, for it is god’s creation.

79 Didyma, located on the coast of Asia Minor, contained an important temple and oracle dedicated to the god Apollo.

80 A mythical figure from Miletus; “the sons of Merops” would therefore be a roundabout way of referring to the Milesians.



*Thales of Miletus*, etching by Jacob de Gheyn III, 1616.

Notice the tripod to the figure's right and various measuring instruments at his feet.

The largest thing: space, for it contains all things.  
 The quickest thing: mind, for it runs through everything.  
 The strongest thing: necessity, for it masters everything.  
 The wisest thing: time, for it discovers everything.

He said that there was no difference between life and death. "Why, then," someone asked, "do you not die?" "Because," he replied, "it makes no difference." To the man who asked which was older, night or day, he said, "Night is older, by one day." Someone asked him whether a man who does evil escapes the gods' notice. "No," he replied, "nor he who thinks evil." To the adulterer who asked whether he should deny the charge under oath he replied, "Is perjury not worse than adultery?" When asked what is difficult, he said, "To know oneself." "What is easy?" "To advise another." "What is most pleasant?" "To succeed." "What is the divine?" "That which has no beginning and no end." "What is the strangest thing you have seen?" "An elderly tyrant." "How

36

could one most easily bear misfortune?” “By seeing one’s enemies faring worse.”  
 “How could we live the best and most honest lives?” “By refraining from doing  
 37 that which we censure in others.” “Who is happy?” “The man who is healthy  
 in body, resourceful in mind, and educable in nature.” He tells us to remember  
 our friends, whether present or absent; not to embellish our appearance, but to  
 be beautiful by our pursuits. “Do not enrich yourself dishonorably, and let no  
 tale prejudice you against those who have shared your confidence.” “Whatever  
 provision you make for your parents,” he said, “expect the same from your  
 children.” He said that the Nile floods when its waters are driven back by the  
 etesian winds,<sup>81</sup> which blow in the opposite direction.

38 Apollodorus in his *Chronology* says that Thales was born in the first year of  
 the thirty-fifth Olympiad.<sup>82</sup> He died at the age of seventy-eight (or, as Sosicrates  
 says, at the age of ninety). For he died in the fifty-eighth Olympiad,<sup>83</sup> being a  
 contemporary of Croesus, whom he undertook to take across the Halys with-  
 out a bridge, when he had diverted the course of the river.<sup>84</sup>

There have been five other men named Thales, as Demetrius of Magnesia  
 says in his *Men of the Same Name*: an orator from Callatia whose style was  
 defective; a gifted painter from Sicyon; an ancient who lived at the time of  
 Hesiod, Homer, and Lycurgus; a fourth mentioned by Duris in his work *On*  
*Painting*; a fifth, more recent and little known, whom Dionysius mentions in  
 his *Critical Writings*.

39 The sage died from heat and thirst and weakness, at an advanced age,  
 while viewing an athletic competition. The inscription on his tomb reads:

The tomb is small, but the man’s renown soars to the skies;  
 Behold the grave of Thales, the most thoughtful of mortals.

And here is my own epigram about him from the first book of my *Epi-  
 grams*, also entitled *Pammetros*:<sup>85</sup>

One day as Thales watched the games,  
 You snatched the sage from the stadium.

81 The etesian, or “yearly,” winds blew from the north in winter, and so were invoked by some  
 early thinkers to explain the summer flooding of the Nile; the river’s waters, it was thought,  
 were pushed backward by the winter winds, then flowed in full spate when those winds ceased.

82 This Olympiad began in 640 BC.

83 This Olympiad began in 548 BC.

84 The Halys is the longest river in Asia Minor; it often formed the boundary between Lydia and  
 the Persian Empire. According to Herodotus (1.74–75), Thales found a novel way for Croesus  
 to cross it on his invasion of Persian territory.

85 In his *Epigrams*, Diogenes wrote verses about famous figures in a variety of meters, earning it  
 the nickname *Pammetros*, meaning “[Poems of] All Meters.” The book itself has not survived,  
 but many of the poems are preserved thanks to Diogenes’ reuse of them.



*Thales Causing the River to Flow on Both Sides of the Lydian Army,*  
by Salvatore Rosa, c. 1663–1664.

I commend you, Zeus, Lord of the Sun, for drawing him toward you;  
For he could no longer see the stars from earth.

He was the author of “Know thyself,” which Antisthenes, in his *Successions*, attributes to Phemonoe,<sup>86</sup> and which was appropriated by Chilon. 40

Of the Seven Sages—it seems proper to discuss them in general terms at this point—the following accounts are given. Damon of Cyrene, who wrote *On the Philosophers*, censures all the sages, but especially the Seven. Anaximenes says that they all wrote in verse. Dicaearchus says that they were neither sages nor philosophers, but clever men with a bent for legislation. Archetimus of Syracuse has described their meeting at the court of Cypselus,<sup>87</sup>

<sup>86</sup> The mythological first priestess of the oracle at Delphi, believed to be the daughter of Apollo and credited with having invented the hexameter. The famous phrase “Know thyself” was carved on the temple of Apollo at Delphi.

<sup>87</sup> Tyrant of Corinth in the mid-seventh century BC.

which he himself claims to have attended. Ephorus, however, says that the meeting took place at the court of Croesus, and without Thales. Some say they met at the Pan-Ionian festival,<sup>88</sup> at Corinth, and at Delphi. And there is disagreement about their utterances, which are attributed differently by different writers, as in the following instance:<sup>89</sup>

There was a Lacedemonian sage, Chilon by name, who said,  
“Nothing in excess; to all good things their proper season.”

There is also disagreement about their number. For Laeandrius includes, in place of Cleobulus and Myson, Leophantus, son of Gorgidas, of Lebedus or Ephesus, and Epimenides of Crete. Plato in his *Protagoras* includes Myson in place of Periander. Ephorus includes Anacharsis in place of Myson. And some also include Protagoras. Dicaearchus gives us four who are generally accepted: Thales, Bias, Pittacus, and Solon. He names six others, from whom he selects three: Aristodemus, Pamphylus, Chilon the Lacedemonian, Cleobulus, Anacharsis, and Periander. Some add Acusilaus of Argos, the son of Cabas or Scabras. Hermippus in his work *On the Sages* counts seventeen, from which various selections of seven are made: they are Solon, Thales, Pittacus, Bias, Chilon, Myson, Cleobulus, Periander, Anacharsis, Acusilaus, Epimenides, Leophantus, Pherecydes, Aristodemus, Pythagoras, Lasos son of Charantides or Sisymbrius (or, according to Aristoxenus, of Chabrinus), a native of Hermione, and Anaxagoras. Hippobotus in his *List of Philosophers* includes Orpheus, Linus, Solon, Periander, Anacharsis, Cleobulus, Myson, Thales, Bias, Pittacus, Epicharmus, and Pythagoras.<sup>90</sup>

The following letters are attributed to Thales.

Thales to Pherecydes

I hear that you intend to be the first Ionian to address the Greeks about divine matters. And perhaps it was a sound decision to publish your book rather than entrust it to anyone, no matter who, which is of no use. If it would give you pleasure, I would like to correspond with you about what you have written. And if you invite me to Syros,<sup>91</sup> I will pay you a visit. Would Solon of Athens and I be of sound mind if after sailing to Crete to pursue our inquiries there, and to Egypt to confer with the priests and astronomers there,

88 The Panionia, or Pan-Ionian festivals, drew Greeks from the cities and islands of western Asia Minor to a common location for athletic and musical contests.

89 Diogenes' citation of the following verses as an instance of disputed attribution assumes that readers are accustomed to think of "Nothing in excess" as a maxim of Solon's (see 1.63), not Chilon's.

90 Diogenes' own selection of archaic sages, here in Book 1, follows none of the lists mentioned, but comes closest to the inclusive group of ten attributed to Dicaearchus.

91 One of the Cyclades islands in the Aegean Sea.



*The Muse Urania and Thales*, tempera painting by Antonio Canova, c. 1800.

we would not sail to you? For Solon will come too, with your leave. Fond of home as you are, you rarely visit Ionia and have no desire to meet strangers; instead you apply yourself, as I expect, solely to writing. We, on the other hand, who write nothing, make the circuit of Greece and Asia.

44

Thales to Solon

If you leave Athens, it seems to me that you could most comfortably take up residence in Miletus, among colonists from your own country.<sup>92</sup> For here you are in no danger. If you are distressed at the thought that we Milesians are ruled by a tyrant—for you abhor all dictators—you would at least enjoy the society of your friends. Bias wrote inviting you to Priene. If the city of Priene suits you better, settle there, and I myself will come and live near you.

<sup>92</sup> Certain myths traced the foundation of Miletus to refugees from Athens, even though in fact the Milesians had closer connections to Megara.

## SOLON

45 Solon, son of Execestides, was a native of Salamis.<sup>93</sup> It was he who first introduced the “shaking off of burdens”<sup>94</sup> at Athens. This was a ransoming of persons and property. For men used to borrow money by pledging their bodies as security, and many, owing to their poverty, were serfs. He was the first to forgive a debt (of seven talents owed to his father), and he encouraged others to do likewise. This law was called a “shaking off of burdens” for obvious reasons.

He then framed the rest of his laws, which would take too long to enumerate, and had them inscribed on revolving wooden tablets.<sup>95</sup>

46 But his greatest accomplishment must be recounted. Athens and Megara both laid claim to Salamis, his birthplace. And when the Athenians had suffered many defeats, they voted that anyone who again advised them to fight over Salamis should be condemned to die. Solon, feigning madness and donning a garland, rushed into the agora. There he had his elegiac poem about Salamis read to the Athenians by a herald and succeeded in rousing them. They  
47 again went to war with the Megarians and won a victory thanks to Solon. The verses that follow did most to fan the Athenians’ fury:

Would that, exchanging countries,  
I were from Pholegandros or Sicinos,  
Rather than from Athens. For this rumor will soon reach men’s ears:  
This fellow’s from Attica; he’s one of those who betrayed Salamis.

and

Let us to Salamis, to fight for a fair isle  
And shake off wretched shame.

48 He also persuaded them to acquire the Thracian Chersonese.<sup>96</sup> And lest he be thought to have acquired Salamis merely by force and not by right, he dug up certain graves and showed that the corpses were turned eastward (in conformity with burial customs at Athens), that the tombs themselves faced eastward, and that their inscriptions bore the names of the demes of the de-

93 An island off the western coast of Attica.

94 The Greek word is *seisachtheia*. It was coined as a description of Solon’s program of debt reduction, a set of measures designed to help the small landholders and landless poor of Athens who had, over decades, become deeply indebted to their wealthier countrymen.

95 These tablets, called *axones* by Plutarch (*Solon* 25), were evidently designed to rotate on a spindle so that multiple faces could be displayed.

96 Now known as the Gallipoli Peninsula, this spit of land helped protect Athens’s trade routes through the Dardanelles.



Engraving of Solon, by Pierre-Michel Alix, after Jean-François Garnerey, 1793–1795.

ceased, a practice peculiar to the Athenians.<sup>97</sup> And some say that in Homer’s Catalogue,<sup>98</sup> after the line

Ajax brought twelve ships from Salamis,

Solon inserted the line

And posted them next to the Athenian phalanxes.

From then on the people paid heed to him and would gladly have had him rule them as a tyrant. But he declined. And perceiving beforehand the ambitions of Pisistratus<sup>99</sup> his kinsman (according to Sosicrates), he did all he could to hinder him. Dashing into the Assembly<sup>100</sup> with spear and shield, he warned the people of Pisistratus’ imposture; and what’s more, he declared, in these words, that he was ready to help them: “Men of Athens, I am wiser

49

97 In populous Athens, citizens were often identified by way of their deme or native district, as in “Aeschines of Sphettus.”

98 Diogenes refers here to the famous “Catalogue of Ships” in *Iliad* Book 2, which lists the Greek contingents that came to Troy and the number of ships each contributed. Since Athens was conspicuously absent from that list, the insertion of the line quoted here would have done much to bolster Athenian civic pride. The line does appear in some modern editions of the *Iliad*, as 2.558, though others mark it as spurious.

99 Pisistratus was to become tyrant of Athens in 561 BC and dominate the city, at times by force, through most of the next thirty-five years. Solon probably lived long enough to witness the start of Pisistratus’ tyranny, an event that erased many of his hard-won reforms.

100 The Ekklesia, or Assembly, at Athens was an open meeting place where all citizens could debate and vote; it was the most democratic organ of Athenian government. By contrast the Boulé, or Council, referred to below was composed in Solon’s day of wealthier members more inclined to favor one-man rule.

than some of you and braver than others. Wiser than those who fail to discern Pisistratus' deception, and braver than those who, though aware of it, keep silent out of fear." The Council, which was composed of Pisistratus' partisans, declared that he was mad, to which he replied,

A little time will show the people my madness.  
It will show it indeed, when the truth comes out.

50           These elegiac verses prove that he foretold the tyranny of Pisistratus:

From a cloud issues the force of snow and hail;  
And thunder follows upon brilliant lightning;  
And by mighty men a city is destroyed, and a people  
Plunge unknowingly into enslavement by a tyrant.

When Pisistratus had seized power, Solon, unable to persuade the people, placed his weapons in front of the generals' quarters. Saying, "My country, I have aided you by word and deed," he sailed away to Egypt and to Cyprus, and reached the court of Croesus.<sup>101</sup> And when asked by him, "Whom do you consider happy?" Solon replied, "Tellus of Athens, and Cleobis and Biton."<sup>102</sup> His remarks on that occasion have been repeated again and again.

51           Some say that Croesus, after arraying himself in all his finery and seating himself on his throne, asked Solon whether he had ever seen a more beautiful sight. "Yes," Solon replied, "roosters and pheasants and peacocks, since they have been adorned with a natural brilliancy and are ten thousand times more beautiful." After leaving that place he lived in Cilicia and founded a city that he named Soli, after himself. In it he settled some few Athenians, who in the course of time were no longer fluent in their native dialect and were said to "solecize."<sup>103</sup> The inhabitants of that town call themselves Solenses, those from Soli in Cyprus Solii. When he learned that Pisistratus was already reigning as tyrant, he wrote as follows to the Athenians:

101 It seems likely that Croesus' reign did not in fact overlap with Solon's life span, but there is room for doubt, and in Book 1 of his *Histories*, Herodotus immortalized the idea that the two had met and conversed.

102 According to the words Herodotus attributes to Solon (1.30–31), Tellus died gloriously in battle, having lived to see his children and grandchildren grow up healthy, and thus could be counted the happiest of men. Cleobis and Biton were second happiest, in that they had died peacefully, after a glorious feat of strength, in the prime of life. Diogenes regards these Solonic parables as too familiar to his readers to bear repeating.

103 *Soloikismos* in Greek means "a grammatical blunder," and the English "solecism" is derived from it. The word was widely explained in antiquity as a reference to the town of Soli, and modern etymologists have not disagreed.



*Solon Before Croesus*, by Nikolaus Knüpfer, c. 1650–1652.

If you have suffered badly through your own baseness,  
 Do not attribute your troubles to the gods, as if they were fated. 52  
 For you yourselves exalted these men and gave them pledges.  
 And that is why you endure evil servitude.  
 Each of you follows in the footsteps of a fox,  
 Yet you are all devoid of sense.  
 For you look to the wily words of a man,  
 And pay no regard to the consequences.

So spoke Solon. After he had gone into exile, Pisistratus wrote to him as follows:

Pisistratus to Solon 53  
 I was not the only man to aim at a tyranny in Greece, nor, as a descendant of Codrus,<sup>104</sup> am I unsuited for the office. For I merely regained the privileges the Athenians swore to confer on Codrus and his family, though they later revoked them. In everything else I do no wrong in the sight of gods or men, and I permit the Athenians to manage public affairs according to the laws you framed for them. And they fare better than they would under a democracy, for I allow no one to run riot. And though I am tyrant I accord myself no undue rank or honor, but simply the privileges said to have belonged to the

104 A mythical king of Athens.

kings in former times. Each Athenian pays one tenth of his income, not to me but to a fund for defraying the costs of public sacrifices or any other charges the city incurs, or in the event we are faced with a war.

- 54 I do not blame you for revealing my intention; for you did so out of goodwill to the city rather than through enmity to me, and in ignorance, too, of the kind of rule I was going to establish. For had you known, you might perhaps have tolerated it and not gone into exile. Return home, then, trusting my word, though it is not given under oath, that Solon will suffer no harm from Pisistratus. Be aware that no other enemy of mine has suffered any harm. If you think fit to be one of my friends, you will be among the foremost. For I see in you nothing deceitful or untrustworthy. And if you wish to live in Athens on other terms, you will have my permission. But do not on my account deprive yourself of your country.

So wrote Pisistratus. Solon says that seventy years is the limit of man's life.

- 55 He is thought to have framed excellent laws: "If a man does not support his parents, let him be disenfranchised; and likewise the man who consumes his patrimony. Let the idle man be held accountable to anyone who wishes to indict him." Lysias, however, in his speech against Nicidas,<sup>105</sup> says that Draco<sup>106</sup> wrote this law; to Solon he attributes the law that bars courtesans from the tribune.<sup>107</sup> Solon also curtailed the honors of athletes who competed in the games, setting the allowance of an Olympic victor at five hundred drachmas,<sup>108</sup> of an Isthmian victor at one hundred, and proportionally for the others. For he thought it vulgar to increase the rewards of those men; such increases should instead be awarded only to those who had died in battle, whose sons, moreover, should be maintained and educated at public expense.

- 56 As a result, many citizens strove to prove themselves valiant in battle, like Polyzelus, Cynegirus, Callimachus, and all who fought at Marathon;<sup>109</sup> or again like

105 No such speech is known from the corpus of Lysias, an Athenian orator and legal speechwriter of the fifth century BC.

106 Draco was the author (c. 620 BC) of the first written code of laws of Athens; he imposed death as the penalty for many offenses, the origin of the word "draconian."

107 The word translated as "tribune" here is *bēma*, which would normally refer to the *bēma* in the Athenian Assembly; but since women were not admitted to that body in the first place, it's not clear what "tribune" is here meant.

108 The drachma was the ancient currency used by many Greek city-states, including Athens. Aristophanes, in *Wasps*, says that half a drachma, the daily wage of a juror, was enough to support a family of three for a day.

109 At the Battle of Marathon in 490 BC, Athens and her allies decisively defeated the invading Persian forces of Darius I. Callimachus and Cynegirus both died there, and Miltiades, mentioned just below, was one of the generals leading the Athenian forces.

Harmodius and Aristogeiton,<sup>110</sup> Miltiades, and thousands more. Athletes, on the other hand, incur great expense while training, and as victors cause trouble; they are crowned for being victorious over their country rather than over their adversaries. And when they have grown old, according to the passage of Euripides,

They go about like cloaks that have grown threadbare.<sup>111</sup>

Perceiving this, Solon received them without undue favor. Excellent also is the following law: the guardian of orphans may not marry their mother; and the man who comes into the estate on the death of the orphans may not be their guardian. And this one as well: an engraver of seals is not permitted to retain the imprint of a seal ring he has fashioned.<sup>112</sup> And: if someone knocks out the eye of a man who only has one, he should have both his eyes knocked out. That which you did not deposit, do not remove, on pain of death. A magistrate found intoxicated should be punished with death.

57

He decreed that at public readings of Homer the works should be recited in their proper order, so that wherever the first reader left off, there the second should begin. Solon therefore did more than Pisistratus to shed light on Homer,<sup>113</sup> < . . . > as Dieuchidas says in the fifth book of his *Megarian History*. This rule mainly concerned the passage that begins, “Those who dwelled in Athens. . . .”<sup>114</sup>

Solon was the first to name the thirtieth day of the month the Old-and-New Day.<sup>115</sup> He was the first to institute a meeting of the nine archons<sup>116</sup> so that they might confer among themselves, as Apollodorus says in the second book of his work *On Legislators*. When civil strife broke out, he sided not with those in the city, or with those of the plain, or with those of the coast.<sup>117</sup>

58

He used to say that speech is a reflection of action; and that the man whose power is strongest is king; and that laws are like spiderwebs: for if something light and weak falls on them they bear up against it; but under

110 Unlike the other names mentioned here, which all belong to war heroes, Harmodius and Aristogeiton died as a result of a failed attempt to assassinate the tyrants ruling Athens, in 514 BC.

111 A passage from Euripides’ tragedy *Autolyceus*, which survives only in fragments.

112 Retaining such seals would enable them to impersonate the seal owner in legal documents.

113 Pisistratus was credited in antiquity with creating the first full edition of Homer’s works, but that legend is rejected by modern scholars.

114 *Iliad* 2.546.

115 The name “Old-and-New Day” was unique to Athens. Almost every community in ancient Greece had its own calendar, and calendric systems were easily changed (see 1.59).

116 In Solon’s day, the nine archons at Athens were magistrates elected annually, each responsible for different areas of civic administration. The chief or royal archon was nominally the head of the group, and is often referred to simply as “archon” for a particular year.

117 These three regional factions, each with its own economic interests and agenda, were roughly equivalent to political parties today.

the weight of something larger they break up and are gone. He used to say that silence is the seal of speech, the opportune moment the seal of silence.

59 He used to say that those who had influence with tyrants were like the pebbles used for calculations; for just as each pebble at times represents a larger number, at other times a smaller, so the tyrant treats each of his advisers at times as great and illustrious, at other times as worthless. When asked why he had not framed a law against parricide, he said, “In the hope that it will not happen.” Asked how the number of crimes men commit could be kept to a minimum, he said, “If the uninjured were as incensed by wrongdoing as the injured.” He also said, “Wealth breeds satiety, satiety insolence.” He required the Athenians to adopt a lunar calendar. He prohibited Thespis from producing tragedies,<sup>118</sup> arguing that falsehood was pernicious. Thus when Pisistratus wounded himself,<sup>119</sup> Solon said that this was what came of tragic drama. He gave men the following advice, as Apollodorus says in his work *On the Philosophical Schools*: Trust good character more than an oath. Do not lie. Pursue worthy goals. Be in no hurry to make friends; but once they are made, do not discard them. Command only when you have learned to be ruled. Give the best advice, not the most pleasant. Make reason your guide. Have no dealings with base men. Honor the gods. Respect your parents. They say that when Mimnermus<sup>120</sup> had written:

May I, free of disease and sorrows,  
Meet death in my sixtieth year.

61 Solon reproached him in the following verses:

May you take my advice and erase those verses,  
And bear me no grudge that I propose something better;  
Revise them, Ligyastades, and chant as follows:  
May I meet death in my eightieth year.

Among the songs attributed to him is the following:

Watch every man and observe whether,  
Harboring in his heart a hidden spear,  
He greets you with beaming countenance,  
And whether his speech, double-dealing,  
Issues from a dark spirit.

118 Thespis of Icaria (fl. c. 536 BC) is credited with inventing a kind of drama in which a speaking actor conversed with the chorus, the earliest form of Greek tragedy.

119 This political ploy is described in Solon’s letter to Epimenides (see 1.64–66).

120 An elegiac poet and musician who lived in the seventh century BC, believed to be from Smyrna. Solon addresses him below as Ligyastades, a nickname referring to shrillness of singing voice.



Philosophers of the ancient world: Plato, Pythagoras, and Solon.  
Sixteenth-century fresco, Church of St. George, Suceava, Romania.

He clearly wrote<sup>121</sup> his laws, public speeches, and words of advice addressed to himself, elegiac verses (numbering five thousand), including his poem about Salamis and the Athenian constitution, poems in iambic meter, and epodes.<sup>122</sup>

His statue bears the following inscription:

62

Salamis, which brought the wicked insolence of the Medes to an end,  
Begot Solon, the venerable legislator who stands before you.

He flourished in the forty-sixth Olympiad, in the third year of which he served as archon in Athens,<sup>123</sup> as Sosicrates says. It was then that he framed his

121 In other words, Diogenes vouches for the authenticity of the works he lists here. The literary records of great figures like Solon had often become crowded with spurious and pseudonymous works by the time Diogenes surveyed them.

122 Of this vast corpus, only a few fragments survive, mostly poems in the elegiac meter (a few of which appear to be complete).

123 This Olympiad began in 596 BC, so Solon's term as chief archon fell in 594-93 (since archonships began and ended in summer).

laws. He died in Cyprus at the age of eighty, after instructing his kinsmen to convey his bones to Salamis and, when they had been reduced to ashes, scatter them over the land. Hence Cratinus in his play *Chirons* makes him say,

I inhabit an island, as men report,  
For I was scattered throughout the city of Ajax.<sup>124</sup>

63 There is also my own epigram in the above-mentioned *Pammetros*, where I discourse about all the illustrious dead in all meters and rhythms, in the form of epigrams and lyrics. It runs as follows:

Distant Cyprian fire consumed the body of Solon.  
Salamis harbors his bones, their dust has nourished grain.  
Revolving wooden tablets brought his soul to the heavens  
For the laws he framed sit lightly on his fellow citizens.

He is said to have been the author of “Nothing in excess.”<sup>125</sup> And Dioscurides, in his *Memoirs*, says that when Solon wept for his dead son (of whom I have learned nothing), and someone said to him, “But it will do no good,” he replied, “That’s why I weep, because it does no good.”

The following letters are attributed to him.

64 Solon to Periander<sup>126</sup>  
You tell me that many are plotting against you. If you intend to get rid of them all, you should lose no time. Someone could scheme, even among those you might not suspect; one man because he fears for his own safety, another because he has observed that you take fright at everything. And he might earn the city’s gratitude if he found a way for you not to suspect him. Thus your best course would be to resign, and so be rid of the blame. But if you must at all costs remain tyrant, give thought to how you may acquire a mercenary force superior to the forces of the city. Then you will have no one to fear, and need not banish anyone.

Solon to Epimenides<sup>127</sup>  
It turns out that my laws were not destined to confer much benefit on the Athenians, any more than you did by purifying the city. For religion and legislators are unable, by themselves, to benefit cities; it can only be done by those who lead the multitude in whatever direction their judgment dictates.

124 The “city of Ajax” refers to Salamis, the island from which Ajax (a Trojan War hero) hailed.

125 See 1.41.

126 Periander was tyrant of Corinth in the late seventh and early sixth centuries BC, and also was listed by some among the Seven Sages; Diogenes discusses his life and work at 1.94–100.

127 Epimenides was a Cretan whose name sometimes was included among the Seven Sages; Diogenes discusses his life and work at 1.109–15.

Thus religion and laws, when things are going well, are beneficial; under adverse conditions they are of no help.

Nor are my laws, nor all my statutes, any better. But those who sat back did the commonwealth harm, namely those who did not prevent Pisistratus from aiming at a tyranny. Nor was I, when I warned them, considered trustworthy. He who flattered the Athenians was trusted more than I who told them the truth. For my part, after placing my weapons in front of the generals' quarters,<sup>128</sup> I declared that I was wiser than those who did not perceive that Pisistratus was aiming at a tyranny, and braver than those who hesitated to resist him. They, however, denounced the madness of Solon. And finally I bore witness, saying, 'My country! I, Solon, am ready to defend you by word and deed; but to some of my countrymen I appear mad. I will therefore abandon public life as the only enemy of Pisistratus. Let others, if they like, attend him as a bodyguard.' For understand, my friend, that the man was utterly intent on becoming tyrant. He began by being a demagogue. Later, after wounding himself, he appeared before the court of the Heliaea<sup>129</sup> and cried out that his wounds had been inflicted by his enemies; and he asked the people to provide him with a guard of four hundred young men. And the people, unwilling to listen to me, gave him the men. These were his club-bearers. And after that he dissolved the popular assembly. It was in vain that I strove to free the poor from serfdom, since now they are in servitude to one master, Pisistratus.

Solon to Pisistratus

I believe that I will suffer no harm at your hands. For before you became tyrant I was your friend, and now I have no quarrel with you other than that of any other Athenian who dislikes tyranny. Whether it is better for them to be ruled by one man or to live under a democracy, let each man decide for himself, relying on his own judgment. And I declare that of all tyrants you are the best. But I see that it is not honorable for me to return to Athens, lest someone reproach me on the grounds that, though I granted the Athenians equality of civic rights and decided not to be a tyrant myself when I had the opportunity, I now return and approve of what you are doing.

Solon to Croesus

I admire you for your kindness to me. And, by Athena, if I did not wish beyond anything to live in a democracy, I would rather reside in your palace than at Athens, where Pisistratus is ruling by force. But I prefer to live where all have fair and equal rights. I will pay you a visit, however, as I am eager to become your guest-friend.

128 Diogenes relates this gesture of resignation on Solon's part at 1.50.

129 A large jury composed of six thousand adult Athenian citizens, chosen by lot, who judged accusations made against archons and other public officials.

## CHILON

68 Chilon, son of Damagetas, was a Lacedemonian.<sup>130</sup> He composed an elegiac poem in two hundred verses, and used to say that it is the excellence of a man to foresee the future insofar as it can be grasped by reason. To his brother, who took it ill that he had not become ephor<sup>131</sup> as Chilon had, the latter said, “I know how to submit to injustice, but you do not.” He was appointed ephor in the fifty-sixth Olympiad<sup>132</sup> (Pamphila says it was in the sixth<sup>133</sup> and that he was the first to become an ephor), during the archonship of Euthydemus, as Socrates says; and he was the first to introduce the custom of making the ephors the kings’ auxiliaries. Satyrus, however, says that this was done by Lycurgus.<sup>134</sup>

As Herodotus says in his first book, when Hippocrates was sacrificing at Olympia and his cauldrons boiled spontaneously, it was Chilon who advised him not to marry, or, if he had a wife, to divorce her and disown his children.<sup>135</sup>

69 They say that he inquired of Aesop what Zeus was doing, and Aesop said, “He is humbling the proud and exalting the humble.”<sup>136</sup> When asked in what respect the educated differed from the uneducated, he said, “In good hopes.” When asked what is hard, he said, “To keep a secret, to use leisure well, and to be able to bear an injury.” He offered the following advice: Watch your tongue, especially at a drinking party. Do not speak ill of your neighbors; for if you do you will be spoken of in ways that give you pain. Make no threats, for that is womanish. Be quicker to visit friends in adversity than in prosperity. Make a thrifty marriage. Do not speak ill of the dead. Honor old age. Take thought for your safety. Prefer a loss to an ill-gotten gain; the one will only grieve you once, the other forever. Do not laugh at another’s misfortune. When strong be gentle, that you may be respected, rather than feared, by your neighbors. Learn how to manage your own house well. Do not let your tongue outrun your thought.

70

130 Lacedemonians were residents of Laconia, the region around, and including, the city of Sparta.

131 Ephors (literally, “overseers”) were Spartan officials, elected annually by the popular assembly. They wielded large executive powers.

132 This Olympiad began in 556 BC.

133 Pamphila’s dating to the sixth Olympiad would move Chilon’s ephorate a full two centuries back from where Diogenes places it; she seems to have misunderstood some phrase like “he first became ephor” to mean “he was the first to become ephor.”

134 The legendary lawgiver and founder of the Spartan constitution, who, if he really existed, probably lived in the late ninth or early eighth century BC.

135 The anecdote is related by Herodotus (1.59). Since the son of Hippocrates turned out to be Pisistratus, tyrant of Athens, Chilon’s advice gives premonitory meaning to the spontaneous boiling of the cauldrons.

136 According to legend, Aesop lived on the island of Samos in the early sixth century BC. The exchange between him and Chilon involves a reinterpretation of the question “What is Zeus doing?” a phrase that, in common usage, amounted to “What’s the weather like?”

Chilon, engraving by Jan Harmensz. Muller, c. 1596. Attributing the motto “*nosce teipsum*” (“know yourself”) to the philosopher, the artist has included it at the top of the round frame.



Control your temper. Do not despise divination. Do not desire impossibilities. Do not hurry on the road. When speaking, do not gesticulate; for that is a sign of madness. Obey the laws. Remain calm.

Of his songs the following is the most famous:

71

By the touchstone gold is tested,  
Giving clear proof; and by gold the mind of men,  
Both good and evil, is put to the test.

They say that one day, in old age, he said that he knew of no instance in his life when he had broken the law; but on one point he was doubtful. When judging a suit in which a friend was involved, he pronounced sentence according to the law, but persuaded < . . . ><sup>137</sup> to acquit the accused, in order to safeguard both the law and his friend.

He was especially renowned among the Greeks for his warning about Cythera, the island off the coast of Laconia. For when he learned how it was situated,<sup>138</sup> he said, “Would that it had not arisen there, or else had sunk into the sea!” And his warning was sensible. For Demaratus,<sup>139</sup> who had been

72

137 There is a problem in the text here, probably due to a scribe who misunderstood the story and replaced some phrase like “the jurors” or “the court” with “his friend.” The friend, of course, did not need any persuading, being the object of the rescue effort.

138 The island lies close enough to the coast near Sparta that it affords a useful base for enemies attacking the Peloponnese.

139 King Demaratus of Sparta was forced from the throne in 491 BC. As an exile, he became

banished by the Lacedemonians, advised Xerxes to station his fleet off the island. And Greece would have been captured had Xerxes obeyed him. Later, during the Peloponnesian War, Nicias<sup>140</sup> subdued the island, installed an Athenian garrison, and did the Lacedemonians considerable harm.

Chilon was a man of few words; hence Aristagoras of Miletus called that style of speaking Chilonian. < . . . > is the son of Branchus, the man who founded the temple at Branchidae.<sup>141</sup> Chilon was an old man near the fifty-second Olympiad,<sup>142</sup> when Aesop the fable writer was in his prime. He died, as Herippus says, at Pisa,<sup>143</sup> after he had embraced his son, an Olympic victor in boxing. His death was caused by excessive joy coupled with the weakness of old age. And everyone at the festival escorted his distinguished funeral procession.

My own epigram about him runs as follows:

73

I am thankful to you, Torch-bearer Pollux,<sup>144</sup>  
That Chilon's pugilist son won the olive wreath.  
If his father died of joy at seeing him crowned,  
We need not take offense. May such a death be mine.

His statue bears the following inscription:

Sparta, crowned for bravery, bred Chilon,  
The wisest of the Seven Sages.

His maxim is: Give a pledge, suffer the consequences. This short letter is his:

Chilon to Periander<sup>145</sup>

You send me word of an expedition against foreigners that you yourself will accompany. It strikes me that for a ruler domestic affairs are dangerous. I call that tyrant fortunate who dies at home.

---

adviser to the Persian crown and helped Xerxes in his invasion of Greece in 480 BC. His advice about Cythera is reported by Herodotus (7.235).

140 Nicias (c. 470–413 BC) was an Athenian general who helped lead his city's forces against Sparta in the Peloponnesian War. In his history of that conflict, Thucydides reports on the garrisoning of Cythera, at 4.53–57.

141 The name of this son of Branchus has fallen out of the manuscripts. Branchidae is another name for Didyma and also for the caste of priests who presided over the oracle there.

142 This Olympiad began in 572 BC; this date would have Chilon reaching old age before becoming ephor (see 1.68).

143 Not the city in Italy but a town in the western Peloponnese whose territory included Olympia, the site of the Olympic games.

144 Pollux, who, along with his twin brother Castor, formed the divine pair known as the Dioscuri (Roman Gemini), was famous for a legendary boxing victory.

145 For Periander, see 1.94–100.

## PITTACUS

Pittacus, son of Hyrrhadius, was a native of Mytilene.<sup>146</sup> Duris says that his father was a Thracian. With the help of Alcaeus<sup>147</sup> brothers he deposed Melanchrus, the tyrant of Lesbos. And when the Athenians and Mytilenaeans fought over the territory of Achileis,<sup>148</sup> Pittacus served as the Mytilenaeans' general; Phrynon, an Olympic victor in the pancratium,<sup>149</sup> commanded the Athenians. Pittacus agreed to meet Phrynon in single combat. Hiding a net beneath his shield he entangled Phrynon, killed him, and recovered the territory. Later however, as Apollodorus says in his *Chronology*, the Athenians and Mytilenaeans submitted their claims to arbitration. Periander heard the case and decided in favor of the Athenians. 74

At the time, however, the Mytilenaeans honored Pittacus highly and entrusted him with power. After ruling for ten years and putting the government in order, he resigned from office and lived ten years more. The people of Mytilene assigned him a tract of land. This he dedicated as a sacred territory; it is now called the Pittaceium. Sosicrates says that after he had cut off a small portion for himself he declared that the half was more than the whole. And when Croesus offered him presents of money he declined them, saying that he had twice as much as he wanted. For when his brother died without issue Pittacus had inherited his estate. 75

Pamphila, in the second book of her *Commentaries*, says that Pittacus' son Tyrhaeus, while sitting in a barbershop in Cyme, was killed by a smith with the blow of an axe. When the people of Cyme sent the murderer to Pittacus, he, on learning what had happened, released the man, saying, "Forgiveness is better than remorse." Heraclitus, however, says that it was Alcaeus he released when he had him in his custody, saying, "Forgiveness is better than vengeance." 76

Pittacus framed laws: If a man transgresses when drunk, the penalty should be doubled. (His purpose was to discourage drunkenness, since the island possessed wine in abundance.) He said, "It is hard to be good," a saying cited by Simonides<sup>150</sup> when he says, "The maxim of Pittacus: 'To become a

146 The largest city on the island of Lesbos.

147 Born c. 625–620 BC in Mytilene, Alcaeus was one of the most admired ancient lyric poets. His family helped Pittacus topple the tyrant of Mytilene, but they then had a falling-out, and Alcaeus subsequently wrote a great deal of invective poetry against Pittacus.

148 The region where the tomb of Achilles was located.

149 Pancratium (or *pankration*) was a brutal mix of boxing and wrestling. Beyond a bar against biting and eye gouging it had no restrictions and was regarded as the most dangerous athletic event.

150 Simonides of Ceos (c. 556–476 BC), one of the most celebrated lyric poets of Greece, composed epigrams in honor of the Battles of Marathon, Plataea, and Thermopylae.



Sixth-century AD silver spoon from Turkey. The hexametric engraving in Greek on the bowl's interior and handle translates as: "Pittacus, who was from Mytilene, said 'Nothing in excess.'"

- 77 truly good man is hard." Plato also mentions him in the *Protagoras*: "Even the gods do not fight against necessity."<sup>151</sup> And "Rule reveals the man." When someone asked him what is the best thing, he said, "To do well the work in hand." And when asked by Croesus what is the best rule, he said, "The rule of changeful wood," by which he meant the law.<sup>152</sup> He also urged men to achieve bloodless victories. In response to the Phocaeans<sup>153</sup> saying that we must search for a good man, he said, "If you seek too hard, you will not find him." And to those who asked what he was grateful for he said, "Time." What is invisible? "The future." What is trustworthy? "The earth." What is untrustworthy? "The sea." He said that it was the mark of sagacious men, before difficulties arise, to provide against their arising, and that of courageous men, once difficulties have arisen, to deal with them well. Do not discuss your plans beforehand, since, if you fail, you will be laughed at. Reproach no one with his misfortune, for fear of Nemesis.<sup>154</sup> Restore what you have been entrusted with. Do not speak ill of a friend, or even of an enemy. Practice piety. Love temperance. Revere truth, fidelity, experience, tact, fellowship, and diligence.
- 78

Of his songs the following is the most famous:

With bow and quiver full of arrows  
 We must march against the scoundrel.  
 No word from his mouth may be trusted,  
 For he harbors in his heart a deceitful thought.

- 79 He also composed elegiac verses (six hundred in number) and a prose work, *On Laws*, for his fellow citizens.

151 *Protagoras* 345d.

152 Apparently, a reference to wooden tablets on which laws were inscribed.

153 Phocaea was the northernmost Ionian city in Asia Minor. Diogenes refers to "the Phocaeans" as though this was a well-known sage, but no Phocaeans philosophers are otherwise known.

154 The goddess who personified retribution. Nemesis determined the portion of happiness or suffering allotted to each person.

He flourished in the forty-second Olympiad.<sup>155</sup> He died during the archonship of Aristomenes, in the third year of the fifty-second Olympiad,<sup>156</sup> an old man who had passed his seventieth year. His monument carries the following inscription:

With a mother's tears, holy Lesbos mourns  
<The death> of her offspring, Pittacus.

His maxim: Know the right moment.

There was another Pittacus, a legislator, as Favorinus says in the first book of his *Reminiscences* and Demetrius in *Men of the Same Name*. He was called the Short.

It is said that once when a young man was consulting him about marriage, Pittacus gave this answer, which Callimachus includes in his Epigrams:

A stranger from Atarneus asked Pittacus of Mytilene, 80  
The son of Hyrrhadius, this question:  
“Old man, two marriages beckon me:  
One bride is of my rank in wealth and birth,  
The other is above me. Which is the better match?  
Come now, advise me: which should I take for a wife.”  
So he spoke. But Pittacus, raising his staff, an old man's weapon,  
Said, “Look yonder. They will tell you the whole story.”  
Some boys with tops were whipping them,  
Spinning them fast in a wide crossroads.  
“Follow in their track,” he said. And the man stood nearby.  
The boys were saying, “Keep to your own ground.”  
Hearing these words, the stranger ceased to aim  
At the richer house, heeding the cry of the boys.  
And just as that man led home the poor bride,  
Do likewise, Dion: keep to your own ground.

He seems to have been moved to give this advice by his own situation. 81  
For his own wife, who was better born than he, being the sister of Draco,<sup>157</sup> son of Penthilus, treated him with great haughtiness.

Alcaeus nicknamed him Sarapous and Sarapon (Splay-Footed) because his feet were broad and he dragged them after him; he was called Cheiropodes (Chapped-Foot) because his feet were chapped, a condition they called *cheirades*; they called him Gaurex (Braggart) because he tended to swagger; Phuskon and

155 This Olympiad began in 612 BC.

156 This Olympiad began in 572 BC, so he died in 570.

157 Probably a different Draco than the famous Athenian lawmaker.

Gastron (Paunch and Potbelly) because he was stout; Zophodormidas (Diner-in-the-Dark) because he used no lamp; Agasurtos (Swept-Clean) because he was dirty and slovenly. He took exercise by grinding corn, as Clearchus the philosopher reports.

He wrote the following short letter.

Pittacus to Croesus

You bid me come to Lydia that I may behold your wealth. But even without seeing it, I am convinced that the son of Alyattes<sup>158</sup> is the richest of kings. There is no advantage to me in a journey to Sardis; for I have no need of gold, and have acquired goods sufficient even for my friends. Nevertheless I will come, that I may join you as your guest.

## BIAS

82 Bias, son of Teutamides, a native of Priene, was the sage whom Satyrus preferred among the Seven. Some say he was wealthy, though Duris says he was a foreigner. Phanodicus says that he ransomed some young Messenian women who had been captured in war, raised them as his daughters, provided them with dowries, and sent them back to their fathers in Messenia. In time, as has been related, when the bronze tripod bearing the inscription “To the wise man” was found by fishermen at Athens, Satyrus says that the young women came forward to the Assembly (though others, including Phanodicus, say it was their father), recounted their story, and declared that Bias was wise. And the tripod was sent off to him. And Bias, when he saw it, declared that Apollo was  
83 wise, and would not accept it. But some say that he dedicated it to Heracles in Thebes, since he was a descendant of the Thebans who had established a colony at Priene. Phanodicus says the same.

It is said that when Alyattes<sup>159</sup> was besieging Priene, Bias fattened two mules and drove them into the camp, and that Alyattes was amazed that the citizens’ prosperity extended even to their beasts. Hoping to obtain a truce, he sent a messenger. But Bias, after he had piled up heaps of sand and placed a layer of wheat on the top, showed them to the man. And finally, on being informed of this, Alyattes concluded a peace with the people of Priene. Shortly

158 Meaning Croesus.

159 The king of Lydia (c. 600–560 BC) and father of Croesus. Through conquest he made Lydia one of the significant powers in Anatolia.



Gold-painted, cast-lead medal, designed by Valerio Belli, sixteenth century, Italian.

*Left:* The obverse side features a bust of Bias with Greek inscription “Of Bias of Priene.”  
*Right:* Statue of Apollo holding a lyre within a niche; the smaller niches on each side contain a tripod and an altar surmounted by a flaming bowl, respectively. The Greek inscription on the border reads, “I alone receive the tripod.”

thereafter, when Alyattes sent word inviting Bias to his court, Bias said, “I, in turn, invite Alyattes to eat onions,” that is, to weep. It is said that he was a formidable legal counselor. But he used his powers of speech for a good end. It is to this that Demodicus of Leros is alluding when he says:

84

If you happen to be arguing a case, plead as they do at Priene.

And Hipponax:

Better at pleading cases than Bias of Priene.

He died in the following way. Late in life he had been pleading on behalf of some client. When he finished his speech, he leaned his head on his grandson’s chest. Opposing counsel made his speech, and when the judges voted and issued a verdict in favor of the man Bias was representing, the court was dismissed and Bias was found dead in his grandson’s arms. The city gave him a magnificent funeral and had these words inscribed on his tomb:

85

This stone conceals Bias, glorious Priene’s  
 Native son, and the Ionians’ great ornament.



*Bias Weeps and Condemns* (detail), by Joachim Wtewael, 1605.

My own epitaph is:

Here lies Bias, whom Hermes guided calmly to Hades,  
 The snow of old age upon his head.  
 For he spoke, pleaded a case on behalf of a friend.  
 Then, inclining his head in his grandson's arms, he prolonged his long sleep.

He wrote a poem of two thousand lines about Ionia, explaining how its prosperity could be assured. Of his songs the following is the most famous:

Please all the citizens in the city you inhabit.  
 For this earns the most gratitude.  
 But a stubborn manner often flashes forth with harmful mischief.

86 “The growth of strength is the work of nature; but the power to speak in aid of one’s country belongs to soul and good sense. Abundant wealth comes to many merely by chance.” He said that he is unfortunate who cannot bear misfortune, and that it is a disease of the soul to desire what is unattainable and to

be forgetful of the misfortunes of others. When asked what was difficult, he said, "To bear nobly a change for the worse." He was once on a voyage with impious men. When a storm overtook the ship and even they called upon the gods, he said, "Be silent, lest they notice you aboard this ship." When asked by an impious man what piety was, he was silent. And when the man asked him the reason, he said, "I am silent because you ask about matters that do not concern you."

When asked what is sweet to men, he said, "Hope." He said it was more agreeable to decide a dispute between two enemies than between two friends. For in the latter case one would be sure to make one of his friends an enemy, while in the former he would make one of his enemies a friend. When asked what activity gives a man pleasure, he said, "Making a profit." He said that men should measure life as if they were going to live both for a short and a long time, and to love their friends as if they would one day hate them, since the majority of men are bad. And he gave this advice: Be slow to undertake any enterprise; but persevere steadfastly in whatever you undertake. Do not rush to speak, for that is a sign of madness. Love wisdom. As concerns the gods, say that they exist. If a man is unworthy, do not praise him because of his wealth. Prevail by persuasion, not by force. Attribute to the gods whatever good you do. Take wisdom as your provision from youth to old age, for it is more dependable than all other possessions. 87 88

Bias is mentioned by Hipponax, as has been said; and the implacable Heraclitus praised him highly, writing, "In Priene lived Bias, son of Teutames, a man of more account than all the rest." And the people of Priene dedicated a sacred precinct to him, which is called the Teutameum. His maxim is: Most <men> are bad.

## CLEOBULUS

Cleobulus, son of Eugoras, was a native of Lindos,<sup>160</sup> though Duris says he was a Carian. Some say that he traced his descent back to Heracles, that he was distinguished for strength and beauty, and that he was conversant with Egyptian philosophy. He had a daughter Cleobuline, who composed riddles in hexameters. She is mentioned by Cratinus, who used her name, in the plural form, as the title of one of his comedies. He is also said to have restored the temple of Athena founded by Danaus.<sup>161</sup> He composed songs and riddles whose verses number three thousand. 89

160 A town on the island of Rhodes.

161 A mythical hero, father of the Egyptian Danaids.

And some say that he composed the epigram on Midas's<sup>162</sup> tomb:

90 I am a maiden of bronze, and I rest upon the tomb of Midas.  
 As long as water flows and tall trees grow,  
 And the sun rises and shines, and the bright moon,  
 And rivers run, and the sea washes against the shore,  
 Abiding on his tear-drenched tomb I shall announce  
 To passersby that Midas is buried here.

They cite as evidence a song of Simonides in which he says,

What man with any sense would praise  
 Cleobulus, the denizen of Lindos,  
 Who has compared the might of a pillar  
 To ever flowing rivers and the flowers of spring,  
 To the flame of the sun and the golden moon,  
 And even to the ocean's eddies?  
 For all things are inferior to the gods.  
 And as for stone, even mortal hands  
 May crumble it. His is the advice of a fool.

The epitaph is not composed by Homer,<sup>163</sup> who they say lived many years before Midas.

The following riddle in Pamphila's *Commentaries* is attributed to Cleobulus:

91 One father, twelve sons. Each of these has twice  
 Thirty daughters who have two possible forms.  
 Some are white, the others black.  
 And though immortal, they all die.

The answer is, "The year."<sup>164</sup>

Of his songs the following is the most famous:

Want of taste prevails among mortals,  
 And a multitude of words; but the right moment will suffice.  
 Set your mind on something noble. May gratitude not be vain.

He said that we should give our daughters in marriage when they are maidens in years, but women in wisdom, thereby indicating that we must also edu-

162 Several kings of Phrygia, in central Anatolia, bore the name Midas, including the king who had the legendary golden touch; it's not clear which Midas is meant here.

163 Diogenes is here gainsaying a well-known attribution of the epitaph to Homer.

164 These sixty "daughters" are the (white) days and (black) nights, counted separately, of the months ("sons") of the year.

cate our daughters. He said that we should render a service to a friend to make him an even better friend, and to any enemy to make him a friend. For we must guard against the censure of friends and the schemes of enemies. Whenever a man leaves his house, let him first ask himself what he intends to do; and on his return let him ask himself what he has done. He advised men to train the body well; to be fonder of hearing than of speaking; to prefer knowledge to ignorance; to restrict their speech to words of good omen; to be friendly to virtue, hostile to vice; to avoid injustice; to counsel their city for the best; to prevail over pleasure; to do nothing by violence; to educate their children; to bring an end to enmity. Do not show affection to your wife or quarrel with her when strangers are present; for the former is a sign of folly, the latter of madness. Do not chastise a servant when you have been drinking, for you will be thought the worse for wine. Marry a person of your own rank; for if you take a wife who is your superior, he said, you will have her kinsmen as masters. Do not laugh at those who are being mocked, for you will incur their hatred. Be not arrogant in prosperity, nor abject in poverty. Know how to bear reversals of fortune with nobility.

He died in old age, having lived seventy years. His inscription reads:

Here Lindos, glory of the sea, bewails the passing  
Of her native son, the sage Cleobulus.

His maxim is: Moderation is best. And to Solon he wrote the following letter:

Cleobulus to Solon<sup>165</sup>

You have companions and a home everywhere. But I maintain that Lindos, which is governed by a democracy, will be most agreeable to Solon. The island lies in the ocean, and one who lives here has nothing to fear from Pisistratus. And friends from everywhere will come to visit you.

## PERIANDER

Periander, son of Cypselus, a native of Corinth, was of the family of the Heraclidae.<sup>166</sup> His wife, Lysida, whom he called Melissa, was the daughter of Procles, the tyrant of Epidaurus, and Eristheneia, the daugh-

165 For Solon, see 1.45–67. The presumed date of this letter is the end of Solon's life, when Pisistratus had already become tyrant at Athens.

166 The descendants of Heracles who used their ancestry to claim authority over the Peloponnesian kingdoms.

ter of Aristocrates and sister of Aristodemus, who together reigned over almost all of Arcadia, as Heraclides of Pontus says in his work *On Power*. By Lysida he had two sons, Cypselus and Lycophron, the younger a man of intelligence, the elder weak-minded. After some time, in a fit of anger, he killed his wife, either throwing a footstool at her, or with a kick, when she was pregnant, having trusted the false accusations of concubines, whom he later burned alive.

95 To Corcyra he banished the son named Lycophron, who grieved for his mother. But when Periander had grown old, he sent for his son to succeed him in the tyranny. The Corcyraeans, anticipating his plan, killed his son. Thereupon, in a fit of rage, Periander sent the sons of the Corcyraeans to Alyattes<sup>167</sup> to be castrated. But when their ship touched at Samos, they took refuge in the temple of Hera, and were saved by the Samians.<sup>168</sup>

Periander died of grief at the age of eighty. Sosicrates says that he died forty-one years before Croesus, three years before the forty-ninth Olympiad.<sup>169</sup> Herodotus, in his first book, says that he was a guest-friend of Thrasybulus, the tyrant of Miletus.

96 Aristippus,<sup>170</sup> in the first book of his work *On the Luxuriousness of the Ancients*, relates the following story about Periander. His mother, Crateia, conceiving a passion for him, had intercourse with him in secret, and he took pleasure in it. And when the affair came to light, he became harsh to everyone, so pained was he at being detected. And Ephorus reports Periander's vow: that if he won a victory in the chariot race at Olympia, he would dedicate a golden statue. But after his triumph he found himself short of gold; and at a local festival, noticing that the women had adorned themselves, he confiscated all their ornaments and sent the promised offering.

Some say that, wishing to keep his burial place unknown, he devised the following stratagem. He ordered two young men, to whom he had shown a certain road, to go there at night, kill the man they met, and bury him. Then he instructed four others to go in pursuit of the first men, and to kill and bury them; and again, he sent out a larger number to pursue the four. And thus he himself was slain when he encountered the first pair.<sup>171</sup> The Corinthians inscribed these words on his cenotaph:

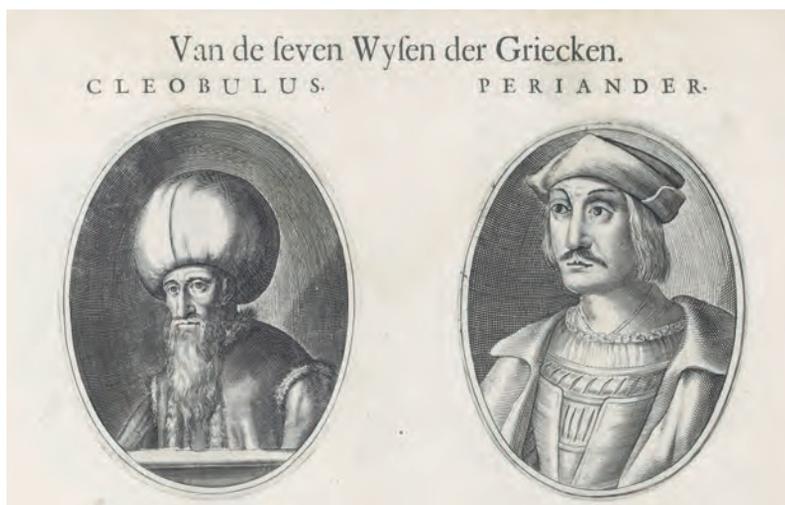
167 The king of Lydia and father of Croesus.

168 This story is taken from Herodotus (3.48).

169 This Olympiad began in 584 BC.

170 Not the hedonist philosopher Aristippus of Cyrene, whose life is discussed at 2.65–104, but a later author who assumed that name, presumably to give his work greater credibility. This man is sometimes referred to as Pseudo-Aristippus.

171 That is, his own assassination and burial, at his own orders, began the whole sequence.



Portraits of Sinan Pasha and Odet de Foix, used as images of Cleobulus and Periander by an anonymous printmaker, seventeenth century, Amsterdam.

Here Corinth holds in her sea-girt bosom  
Periander, a prince of wealth and wisdom.

97

My own verses about him run as follows:

Grieve not that you have not gained your end.  
Instead delight in all that god gives.  
For the sage Periander perished in despair  
At not gaining an end he desired.

His maxim is: Do nothing for money; for one should gain that which deserves to be gained. He composed a didactic poem in two thousand verses. He said that those who would reign securely as tyrants should make goodwill their bodyguard, not weapons. When someone asked him why he was tyrant, he replied, “Because to step down voluntarily and to be deposed are both dangerous.” His other sayings include: Tranquillity is beautiful. Rashness poses danger. Shameful gain is < . . >. Democracy is better than tyranny. Pleasures fade, but honors are immortal. Be moderate in prosperity, sensible in adversity. Be the same to your friends whether they are in prosperity or adversity. Keep your promises. Betray no secrets. Correct not only those who transgress, but also those who are about to do so.

98

He was the first to have a bodyguard and to transform his rule into a tyranny. And he did not let anyone live in the town without his consent, as Ephorus and

Aristotle say. He flourished in the eighty-third Olympiad<sup>172</sup> and was tyrant for forty years.

99 Sotion, Heraclides,<sup>173</sup> and Pamphila in the fifth book of her *Commentaries* say that there were two men named Periander, one a tyrant, the other a sage of Ambracia. Neanthes of Cyzicus agrees and says that the two men were related to each other. And Aristotle says that the Corinthian Periander was the sage; but Plato denies this.

His maxim is: Practice is everything. He also wished to dig a canal across the isthmus.<sup>174</sup>

The following brief letters are attributed to him.

Periander to the Sages

Many thanks to Phoebus Apollo that I found you together, and that my letters will also bring you to Corinth. For my part, I shall receive you, as you know yourselves, in the most democratic manner. I hear that last year you assembled at the Lydian court in Sardis. So do not hesitate now to come to me, the ruler of Corinth. For the Corinthians will be pleased to see you coming to the house of Periander.

Periander to Procles<sup>175</sup>

100 The murder of my wife was unintentional. But you injure me deliberately when you set my son against me. So either dispel my son's hostility, or I will take my revenge. For I long ago paid my debt for your daughter by burning on her pyre the clothes of all the women of Corinth.<sup>176</sup>

And Thrasybulus wrote to him as follows:

Thrasybulus to Periander

I gave your herald no answer; but I took him to a cornfield, and cut off the ears of corn that grew higher than the rest, striking them with a staff while he accompanied me. And he will report to you, if you ask him, what he heard or saw. And you must follow my example if you wish to strengthen your dictatorship: Slay the citizens who are preeminent, whether or not they appear hostile to you. <Since> for a dictator, every man, even a friend, arouses suspicion.

172 This Olympiad began in 448 BC.

173 Not Heraclides Ponticus, who was mentioned in 1.94, but Heraclides Lembus.

174 The Isthmus of Corinth linked the Peloponnese with mainland Greece. Archaeological evidence shows that a paved track (the *diolkos*) was constructed across the isthmus during Periander's time, allowing ships to be transported between the Ionian and Aegean Seas. Today a canal connects them.

175 Procles was Periander's father-in-law (see 1.94).

176 Herodotus explains how Periander habitually consulted the ghost of his dead wife and, regarding her as a kind of deity, took her advice to burn the clothes of all the Corinthian women (5.92).



Corinthian terra-cotta *dinos* (a vessel used to mix the wine and water that were then served at symposia), attributed to the Polyteleia Painter, c. 630–615 BC.

## ANACHARSIS

Anacharsis the Scythian was the son of Gnurus, and brother of Caduidas, the Scythian king.<sup>177</sup> But his mother was a Greek, which is why he spoke both languages. He composed a poem of eight hundred verses on the customs of the Greeks and the Scythians with regard to simplicity of life and military matters. And because of his outspokenness he furnished the occasion for a proverb: “To talk like a Scythian.” 101

Sosicrates says that he came to Athens in the forty-seventh Olympiad,<sup>178</sup> during the archonship of Eucrates. Hermippus says that on arriving at Solon’s house Anacharsis told one of his servants to announce that he had come and wished to see Solon and, if possible, to become his guest-friend. And the servant, when he conveyed the message, was ordered by Solon to tell Anacharsis that men generally make guests only of persons from their own country. In response Anacharsis said that he was now in Solon’s own country and had a right to be entertained as a guest. And Solon, struck by his quick-wittedness, admitted him and made him his greatest friend. 102

After a while, when he returned to Scythia and was thought to be subverting his country’s customs (since he made much of Greek ways), he was shot by his brother’s arrow while hunting, and perished after having said that

177 The Scythians were a network of non-Greek, nomadic tribes, dwelling generally north and east of the Black Sea and around the Sea of Azov.

178 This Olympiad began in 592 BC.

he had returned from Greece in safety thanks to *logos*, but was killed in his native land thanks to *phthonos*.<sup>179</sup> Some say that he was slain while performing Greek rites.<sup>180</sup>

Here is my own epigram about him:

103           When Anacharsis, after roaming widely, came to Scythia,  
               He wished to persuade everyone to live according to Greek customs.  
               But when the word on his lips was still unachieved,  
               A winged arrow swiftly spirited him to the immortals.

It was he who said that the vine bears three clusters of grapes; the first is that of pleasure; the second that of drunkenness; and the third that of disgust. He said he found it astonishing that among the Greeks the skilled compete, but the amateurs judge. When asked how one could avoid becoming too fond of wine, he said, “By keeping before your eyes the disgraceful conduct of drunkards.” He used to say that he found it surprising that the Greek lawgivers penalize the violent, but reward athletes for striking one another. Upon learning the hull of a ship was four finger-breadths thick, he said that this was the distance that separated the passengers from death.

104           He said that olive oil was a drug that induces madness, because athletes, when they anoint themselves with it, are maddened against one another. Why, he said, do they prohibit lying and yet tell blatant falsehoods in their business dealings? He was astonished, he said, that the Greeks, to begin with, drink from small cups and, once they are sated, from large ones. His statues bear this inscription: “Bridle speech, gluttony, and lust.” When asked whether there are flute players in Scythia, he said, “No, nor even vines.”<sup>181</sup> When asked which are the safest vessels, he said, “Those in dry dock.” And he said that the most astonishing thing he had seen in Greece was that they leave smoke on the mountains and convey the fuel into the city.<sup>182</sup> When asked which are more numerous, the living or the dead, he said, “In which category, then, do you place those who are sailing?” When reproached by a native of Attica because he was a Scythian, he said, “In truth, my native land is a disgrace to me, but you are a disgrace to your native land.” When asked what among men is both good and bad, he said, “The tongue.” He said it was better to have one friend of great worth than many worth nothing. He defined the

105

179 In Greek, *logos* means “reason” or “speech” and *phthonos* means “malice” or “jealousy.”

180 The latter version of Anacharsis’s death is taken from Herodotus, *Histories* 4.76–77.

181 Flute players and musicians were an important part of the convivial atmosphere at the Greek symposium, or drinking party. Anacharsis jokes that in Scythia they don’t even have the *makings* of wine.

182 A reference to the production of wood charcoal.

market as a place where men may deceive and defraud one another. Insulted by a drunken youth, he said, “Young man, if in youth you cannot hold your liquor, you will be a water carrier in old age.”

According to some, he invented for the needs of life the anchor and the potter’s wheel.

And he wrote the following letter:

Anacharsis to Croesus

I, O king of the Lydians, have come to the land of the Greeks to be instructed in their customs and pursuits. I have no need of gold, but am content to return to Scythia a better man. At any rate, I have come to Sardis, as I attach great importance to earning your esteem.

## MYSON

Myson, son of Strymnon—as Sosicrates says, on Hermippus’ authority—106  
was a native of Chen, from a village in Oeta or Laconia,<sup>183</sup> and is numbered among the Seven Sages. They say that his father was a tyrant. We are told by someone that when Anacharsis inquired whether anyone was wiser than he, the Pythian priestess<sup>184</sup> gave the following response (which has been quoted in the life of Thales as her reply to a question from Chilon<sup>185</sup>):

I declare that one Myson of Chen, in Oeta,  
Surpasses you in wise-heartedness.

His curiosity aroused, Anacharsis went to the village in summer and found Myson fitting a plow handle to a plow and said, “But Myson, it is not the season for a plow.” “Which is just the time,” Myson replied, “to repair it.” But others say that the oracle begins with the words, “I mean a certain Eteian,” and the people wonder, “Who’s this Eteius?”<sup>186</sup> 107 Parmenides says that Etis is the deme in Laconia to which Myson belonged. Sosicrates, in his *Successions*, says that his father was from Etis, his mother from Chen. Euthyphro, son of Heraclides of Pontus, says he was a Cretan; for Eteia is a town in Crete. Anaxilaus says he was an Arcadian.

183 Chen seems to have been a village in Thessaly, near Mount Oeta, though Diogenes reveals that, even in his time, there was uncertainty over its location.

184 The human voice of the oracle of Delphi.

185 See 1.30.

186 The anecdote hinges on the misunderstanding of *Eteios*, an adjective meaning either “from Etis” or “from Eteia,” as a name. The two places from which Myson was thought to have come are both so obscure that no one recognized the names in the adjectival *Eteios*.

Myson is mentioned by Hipponax, who says:

. . . And Myson, whom Apollo  
Declared the wisest of all men.

108 Aristoxenus, in his *Miscellaneous Notes*, says that he was not very different from Timon and Apemantus,<sup>187</sup> since he was a misanthrope. At any rate, he was seen in Lacedaemon laughing alone in a deserted place. When someone suddenly came up to him and asked why, with no one present, he was laughing, Myson replied, “It’s just for that reason.” Aristoxenus says that the reason he remained obscure is that he belonged not to a city, but to a village, and an unimportant one at that. Hence, because of his obscurity, some people (Plato the philosopher is the exception) attributed to Pisistratus what belonged to Myson. For Plato mentions him in the *Protagoras*,<sup>188</sup> making him one of the Seven in place of Periander.

He used to say that we should not investigate facts based on arguments, but should investigate arguments based on facts. For the facts were not arranged to account for the arguments, but the arguments to account for the facts.

He died at the age of ninety-seven.

## ΕΠΙΜΕΝΙΔΗΣ

109 Epimenides, as Theopompus and many others say, was the son of Phaestius. Some, however, say that his father was Dosiadas, others Agesarchus. He was a native of Crete, from Cnossus, though he changed his appearance by letting his hair grow. Sent one day by his father to the country to find a sheep, he stepped out of the road at midday and fell asleep in a cave for fifty-seven years. Waking up after all that time, he searched for the sheep, thinking he had been asleep only a short time. When he did not find it he went to the farm; and finding that everything had changed and someone else was in possession, he returned to the town, utterly perplexed. And there, entering his own house, he found some people who asked him who he was. At last, after finding his younger brother, by then an old man, he learned the whole truth from him. He became celebrated throughout Greece, and was regarded as the man most loved by the gods.

110 When the Athenians were afflicted with a pestilence, the Pythian priestess advised them to purify the city. They sent a ship to Crete, under the command

187 Timon and Apemantus, two famously embittered Athenians, were dramatized by Shakespeare in *Timon of Athens*, based on stories found in Plutarch and Lucian.

188 At 343a.



*Epimenides Performing Sacrifices for the City of Athens*, by Amico Aspertini, sixteenth century.

of Nicias, son of Niceratus, to appeal to Epimenides for help. And on his arrival, in the forty-seventh Olympiad,<sup>189</sup> he purified their city and brought the pestilence to an end in the following way. Taking sheep, some black and some white, he brought them to the Areopagus.<sup>190</sup> From there he let them go wherever they liked, having ordered those who followed them to note the place where each sheep lay down, and to offer a sacrifice to the local deity; and thus he brought the evil to an end. And that is why even today one may find altars in the Athenian demes that bear no name, memorials of that atonement. But according to others, he said that the cause of the pestilence was the Cylonian pollution,<sup>191</sup> and showed them how to rid themselves of it. And consequently two young men, Cratinus and Ctesibius, were put to death and the pestilence was brought to an end. The Athenians voted him a talent of money and a ship to convey him back to Crete. But he did not accept the money; and he created a friendship and a military alliance between the Cnossians and the Athenians.

111

Shortly after returning home he died, as Phlegon says in his work *On Longevity*, having lived 157 years; but according to the Cretans, 299 years. Xenophanes of Colophon, however, says he heard that Epimenides lived to the age of 154.

189 This Olympiad began in 592 BC.

190 The Areopagus (literally, “the rock of Ares”) was the site of many councils throughout Athenian history. At the time of Epimenides, the council of archons gathered there.

191 Cylon was an Athenian nobleman who, in 632 BC, attempted to make himself tyrant of Athens by seizing the Acropolis. His coup failed and he escaped, but his followers remained behind, surrendering and seeking shelter in the temple of Athena. Megacles, the chief magistrate, initially promised to spare them but then had them killed. This violation of divine sanction incurred “pollution” or ritual guilt.

He wrote poems, *The Birth of the Curetes and Corybantes*, a *Theogony* in five thousand verses, and *The Building of the Argo and Jason's Voyage to Colchis* in six thousand five hundred verses. He also wrote prose works: *On Sacrifices*, *On the Cretan Constitution*, and *On Minos and Rhadamanthys* in four thousand lines.<sup>192</sup> He founded in Athens the temple of the Revered Goddesses, as Lobon of Argos says in his work *On Poets*. He is said to have been the first to purify houses and fields and to found temples. There are some who say that he did not go to sleep, but that he withdrew for a time, occupied in gathering roots.

There is a letter he is supposed to have written to Solon the lawgiver containing the constitution that Minos<sup>193</sup> established for the Cretans. But Demetrius of Magnesia, in his work *On Poets and Writers of the Same Name*,<sup>194</sup> tries to prove that the letter is late and that it was not written in the Cretan dialect but in Attic, and in New Attic at that. But I have found another letter that runs as follows:

Epimenides to Solon  
 113 Courage, my friend. For if Pisistratus had attacked the Athenians when they were still serfs and not in possession of good laws,<sup>195</sup> he would have held power forever, after enslaving the citizens. But as it is, he is trying to enslave men who are not cowardly; men who with pain and shame remember the warning of Solon, and will not tolerate rule by a tyrant. But even if Pisistratus himself keeps the city under his thumb, I do not expect that his power will pass to his children. For it is hard for men who have lived in freedom under the best laws to be slaves. As for you, do not wander, but come to me in Crete. For here the monarch will pose you no danger. But if some of his friends fall in with you on your travels, I fear that something terrible may happen to you.

114 Such is his letter. But Demetrius says that some have reported that he received a special kind of food from the Nymphs and kept it in a cow's hoof; and that he assimilated this food a little at a time, produced no excrement, and was never seen to eat. Timaeus mentions him in his second book. Some say that the Cretans sacrifice to him as to a god; for they say that he was exceptionally <fore>sighted. At any rate, when he saw Munychia he said that the Athenians were unaware of all the ills that place would cause them; otherwise, they would destroy it with their teeth.<sup>196</sup> And he said this long before the event. It is also said that he was the first to call himself Aeacus;<sup>197</sup> that he

192 None of these works survive.

193 The legendary king of Crete, a son of the god Zeus and the princess Europa.

194 This work is elsewhere cited by Diogenes under a shorter title, *Men of the Same Name*.

195 That is, before the reforms instituted by Solon.

196 The hill of Munychia, in the Piraeus, was situated so that it could be held by even a small armed force; enemies of Athens in fact used it on several occasions to set up garrisons.

197 The mythical king of Aegina, famed for his piety and his skill.

predicted for the Lacedemonians their defeat by the Arcadians; and that he claimed to have come back to life many times.

Theopompus in his *Marvels* says that when Epimenides was building the temple of the Nymphs, a voice broke forth from the sky saying, “Epimenides, build a temple not for the Nymphs, but for Zeus.” And he predicted for the Cretans the defeat of the Lacedemonians by the Arcadians, as has been mentioned; and the Lacedemonians were indeed defeated at Orchomenus. 115

And he grew old over the course of days equal in number to the years during which he had slept. For this is also reported by Theopompus. Myronianus in his *Parallels* says that the Cretans called him Cures. The Lacedemonians guard his body among themselves in obedience to an oracle, as Sosibius the Laconian says.

There have been two other men named Epimenides: the genealogist and the author who wrote about Rhodes in the Doric dialect.

## PHERECYDES

Pherecydes, son of Babys, was a native of Syros, as Alexander says in his *Successions*, and a student of Pittacus. Theopompus says that he was the first to write about nature and the gods. 116

Many marvelous tales are told about him. When he was walking along the beach in Samos and saw a ship running with a fair wind, he said that it would soon sink; and down it went before his eyes. And while drinking water that had been drawn up from a well he predicted that on the third day there would be an earthquake; and that is what happened. As he was leaving Olympia, he advised Perilaus, his host in Messene, to emigrate with his household; but Perilaus did not obey him, and Messene was captured.

He urged the Lacedemonians to honor neither gold nor silver, as Theopompus says in his *Marvels*. He told them that Heracles had given him this command in a dream; and on that same night Heracles ordered the kings to obey Pherecydes. But some connect these stories with Pythagoras. Hermippus says that in the course of a war between Ephesus and Magnesia (in which he wanted the Ephesians to prevail), he inquired of a passerby where he came from. When the man replied, “From Ephesus,” Pherecydes said, “Then drag me by the legs and set me in the territory of Magnesia, and announce to your countrymen that after the victory they should bury me where they find me. And tell them Pherecydes has laid this command upon them.” The man delivered the message. And the next day the Ephesians attacked and conquered the Magnesians; and they buried Pherecydes where he had died and honored him 117  
118

magnificently.<sup>198</sup> According to others, he went to Delphi and hurled himself from Mount Corycus.<sup>199</sup> But Aristoxenus, in his work *On Pythagoras and His Disciples*, says that he died a natural death and was buried by Pythagoras in Delos. Others say that he died from a disease caused by vermin. And when Pythagoras visited and asked how he was, he poked his finger out the door and said, “My skin makes it clear.” Ever since, among the learned, the expression is understood to imply a negative condition; those who use it in a positive sense are using it incorrectly. He said that the gods’ word for table is *thuoros*, or that  
 119 which takes care of offerings.<sup>200</sup>

Andron of Ephesus says that there were two natives of Syros named Pherecydes, the one an astronomer, the other a theologian and the son of Babys, with whom Pythagoras studied. Eratosthenes, however, says that there was only one Pherecydes of Syros, the other Pherecydes being an Athenian genealogist.

The book written by Pherecydes of Syros survives; it begins thus: “Zeus and Cronos and Chthonia existed always; and Chthonia received the name *Ge* because Zeus gave her earth (*ge*) as a gift of honor.” His sundial is also preserved on the island of Syros.

Duris, in the second book of his *Seasons*, says that the following verses were inscribed on his tomb:

120           The sum of all wisdom has been mine; but tell my friend Pythagoras,  
               If any more existed, that he is the foremost  
               Among all the Greeks. I speak no lie.

Ion of Chios says about him:

              So endowed was this man with courage and modesty,  
               That even in death his soul lives a happy life,  
               If the sage Pythagoras has truly seen  
               And learned from all men their thoughts.

There is also my own poem in the Pherecratean meter:<sup>201</sup>

              The renowned Pherecydes,  
               To whom Syros once gave birth—  
               His former beauty lost,

198 The point of this story is unclear, but Pherecydes seems to have anticipated that the presence of his body would harm the Magnesians.

199 Likely a reference to the Corycian cave near the top of Mount Parnassus.

200 That is, the altars serve as tables for the gods.

201 Pherecratean meter, dating back to archaic Greece, was not normally used as the sole meter of an entire poem. Diogenes made a point of experimenting with obscure verse forms, and indeed titled his (now lost) poetry book *Pammetros*, which means “[Poems of] All Meters.”

Consumed, they say, by lice— 121  
 Bade them place him straightaway  
 Upon Magnesian ground,  
 That he might give victory  
 To the brave citizens of Ephesus.  
 For there was an oracle, known only to him,  
 Which commanded this.  
 And he died among them.  
 Thus it would be true to say:  
 If anyone is truly wise,  
 He is useful both while he lives  
 And when he is no more.

He lived in the fifty-ninth Olympiad.<sup>202</sup> He wrote the following letter:

Pherecydes to Thales<sup>203</sup> 122  
 May you die well when your time has come. Disease has overtaken me since I received your letter. I was ridden with lice and racked by fever. I have therefore ordered my servants, after they bury me, to bring you what I have written. If you and the other sages approve of it, make it public as it is; if, on the other hand, you do not approve it, do not make it public. For the work did not yet satisfy me. The facts are not firmly established and I do not claim to have discovered the truth, but only what can be said when discoursing about the gods. The rest must be thought out, for everything is conjectural. Pressed harder by my illness, I did not allow any of the doctors or my friends to enter my room. But when they stood at the door and asked how I was, I passed my finger through the keyhole and showed them that I was devoured by the evil. And I told them to come tomorrow to the burial of Pherecydes.

These are the men who were called the Sages. Some include the tyrant Pisistratus. We must speak of the philosophers,<sup>204</sup> beginning with Ionian philosophy, which was inaugurated by Thales, whose student was Anaximander.

202 This Olympiad began in 544 BC.

203 On Thales, see 1.22–40.

204 See 1.12, where Diogenes alludes to the distinction, implicit here, between sages and sophists, who already possess wisdom, and philosophers, who yearn for a wisdom that they have not yet attained.



# BOOK 2

ANAXIMANDER

610-C.547 BC

ANAXIMENES

D. C. 528/25 BC

ANAXAGORAS

C. 500-428 BC

ARCHELAUS

FL. 5TH CENT. BC

SOCRATES

469-399 BC

XENOPHON

C. 430-C. 354 BC

AESCHINES

C. 425-C. 350 BC

ARISTIPPUS

C. 435-350 BC

PHAEDO

5TH-4TH CENT. BC

EUCLIDES

C. 450-380 BC

STILPO

4TH CENT. BC

CRITO

5TH CENT. BC

SIMON

5TH CENT. BC

GLAUCON

5TH-4TH CENT. BC

SIMMIAS

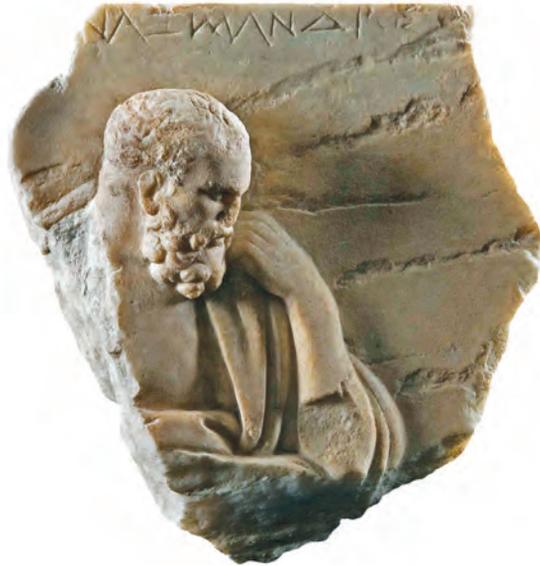
LATE 5TH AND EARLY 4TH CENT. BC

CEBES

5TH CENT. BC

MENEDEMUS

C. 339-265 BC



Relief representing Anaximander, probably a Roman copy of an earlier Greek original.

## ANAXIMANDER

- 1 Anaximander, son of Praxides, was a native of Miletus.<sup>1</sup> He affirmed the unlimited<sup>2</sup> as a first principle and element, without defining it as air or water or anything else. He also affirmed that though its parts change, the whole is unchangeable; that the earth, spherical in shape, lies in its midst, holding the place of a center;<sup>3</sup> that the moon, shining with borrowed light, is illuminated by the sun; and that the sun is not smaller than the earth, and that it consists of the purest fire.

He was the first to invent the gnomon,<sup>4</sup> and he placed it on the sundials in Lacedaemon, as Favorinus says in his *Miscellaneous History*, to indicate the

1 Miletus, an Ionian city on the southwest coast of Asia Minor, seems to have been the intellectual center of the Greek world in the sixth century BC, as Athens was in the subsequent century.

2 In Greek, *to apeiron*, which can mean “the unbounded,” “the infinite,” or “the undifferentiated.”

3 The theory that the earth was the center of the solar system was standard, though not universally accepted, in the ancient Greek world.

4 A simple vertical rod mounted on a calibrated stand, such that the length of the rod’s shadow could be precisely measured. These measurements made possible various calculations based on the sun’s position relative to the earth.



*Anaximander Showing His Student How to Establish a Gnomon*, by Antoine Bergey, 1838–1839.

solstices and equinoxes; he also built clocks.<sup>5</sup> He was the first to draw on a map the contours of the land and of the sea; he also fashioned a sphere.<sup>6</sup>

2

He published a summary of his doctrines, which by chance fell into the hands of Apollodorus the Athenian, who in his *Chronology* says that in the second year of the fifty-eighth Olympiad<sup>7</sup> Anaximander was sixty-four and that he died shortly thereafter, having flourished near the period when Polycrates<sup>8</sup> was tyrant of Samos. They say that the boys made fun of his singing, and that when he learned of it he said, “Then for the boys’ sake I must sing better.”

There was another Anaximander, a historian, also of Miletus, who wrote in the Ionic dialect.<sup>9</sup>

5 Meaning, presumably, *clepsydrae*, water clocks that measured time by the passage of water through a narrow aperture.

6 The Greek word *sphaira* can denote a terrestrial globe but here probably refers to an armillary sphere or model of the celestial dome.

7 This Olympiad began in 548 BC.

8 Polycrates seized power in Samos around 535 BC.

9 The ancient Greek language had widely varying dialects; Ionic Greek was spoken mostly by the Greeks of Asia Minor.

## ANAXIMENES

3 Anaximenes, son of Eurystratus, was a native of Miletus and a student of Anaximander. Some say that he also studied with Parmenides.<sup>10</sup> He declared that air is a first principle, as is the unlimited.<sup>11</sup> He held that the stars move, not under the earth, but around it.<sup>12</sup> He wrote simply and plainly in the Ionic dialect.

He lived, according to Apollodorus, at the time of the capture of Sardis<sup>13</sup> and died in the sixty-third Olympiad.<sup>14</sup>

There have been two other men named Anaximenes, both of Lampsacus, the one an orator, the other a historian; the latter was the nephew of the orator, who wrote about the achievements of Alexander.<sup>15</sup>

Anaximenes the philosopher wrote the following letter:

Anaximenes to Pythagoras<sup>16</sup>

4 Thales, son of Examyas, has met an unfortunate end in old age. He left his house at night, as was his habit, with his serving woman, to view the stars, and, forgetting where he was as he gazed, he stepped over the edge of a steep slope and fell.<sup>17</sup> Thus the astronomer of Miletus met his end. Let us, who were his students, remember the man, and let our children and students do likewise, and let us continue to regale one another with his words. Let all our discussions begin with Thales.

10 Parmenides of Elea was a fifth-century philosopher who founded the Eleatic school. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 9.21–23.

11 If the text is correct, Anaximenes accepted the theory of his teacher Anaximander that *to apeiron* (the unlimited) gave rise to the physical world, and added air as a second generative element; but some editors emend the text to say that he assigned this role to air alone.

12 That is, stars disappear from view at certain times of year only because they are blocked by earth's higher elevations, not because they have moved below the horizon.

13 Sardis, the capital of Lydia, fell to the Persians around 547 BC.

14 This Olympiad began in 528 BC.

15 Confusingly, Diogenes attributes a work of history to the uncle of Anaximenes (c. 380–320 BC), while designating the nephew (also named Anaximenes) a historian. A surviving Greek handbook of oratory, the *Rhetoric to Alexander*, is thought to be the work of the older man.

16 For Pythagoras's life and work, see 8.1–50. At 8.49 Diogenes includes one of Pythagoras's letters to Anaximenes.

17 A similar story is told of Thales at 1.34. Contrary to what Anaximenes writes here, Thales apparently survived his fall, since Diogenes reports that Thales died of old age while watching an athletic contest (1.39).

And another:

Anaximenes to Pythagoras

You were the better-advised among us when you migrated from Samos to Croton,<sup>18</sup> where you live in peace. For the sons of Aeaces<sup>19</sup> wreak unending havoc, and the Milesians have no respite from tyrants. And the king of the Medes terrifies us,<sup>20</sup> though not, at any rate, as long as we are willing to pay tribute. But the Ionians are about to go to war with the Medes to regain their common freedom;<sup>21</sup> and once the battle is joined we can have no more hope of safety. How, then, could Anaximenes have the heart to talk of aether and the like when threatened with destruction or slavery? But you are in favor with the people of Croton and all the other Greek inhabitants of Italy; students come to you even from Sicily.

5

## ANAXAGORAS

Anaxagoras, son of Hegesibulus or Eubulus, was a native of Clazomenae.<sup>22</sup> He was a student of Anaximenes and was the first to set mind above matter. For at the beginning of his treatise, which is written in a pleasing and lofty style, he says, “All things were together; then mind came and set them in order.” This is why he was called Nous (Mind); and Timon in his *Lampoons* says of him:

6

And perhaps, they say, there is Anaxagoras, a great hero  
whom they call Mind because his was the mind that awakened suddenly  
and tied together all that had formerly been in a state of confusion.

He was distinguished for his noble birth and wealth, but also for his magnanimity, since he made over his patrimony to his relatives. For when they accused him of neglecting it, he said, “Then why don’t *you* look after it?” And at last he retired and devoted himself to the study of nature, without troubling

7

18 A Greek city in southern Italy.

19 Aeaces was a tyrant of Samos; his two sons were Syloson and Polycrates. The dates here are difficult to reconcile, as the Ionian Revolt (mentioned below) lasted from 499 to 494 BC—after the supposed rule of Aeaces had ended. The letter may refer not to the original Aeaces but to a grandson of the same name.

20 The Persians were often referred to as “Medes” by the Greeks, though in fact the Medes were a distinct people ruled by the Persians. The king Anaximenes refers to is Darius I, who ruled the Persians from 522 to 486 BC.

21 The Ionian Revolt, which began in 499 BC, was a failed attempt by the Greek city-states of Asia Minor, led by Miletus, to break away from Persian rule and cease paying tribute.

22 An Ionian city near Smyrna, in present-day Turkey.

himself about the city's affairs. And when someone inquired, "Do you care nothing for your native land?" he replied, "Hush!<sup>23</sup> I am greatly concerned for my native land," and pointed to the sky.

He is said to have been twenty years old at the time of Xerxes' crossing<sup>24</sup> and to have lived for seventy-two years. Apollodorus, in his *Chronology*, says that he was born in the seventieth Olympiad and died in the first year of the eighty-eighth.<sup>25</sup> He began to study philosophy at Athens during the archonship of Callias,<sup>26</sup> at the age of twenty, as Demetrius of Phalerum says in his *List of Archons*; and there he remained, they say, for thirty years.

8 It was he who said that the sun is a red-hot mass of iron and is larger than the Peloponnese. (Others, however, ascribe this view to Tantalus.<sup>27</sup>) He said that the moon has habitations as well as crests and ravines. He took as first principles the bodies whose particles are all identical: for just as gold is said to be made up of gold dust, so the universe is made up of small homogeneous bodies.<sup>28</sup> And mind, on the one hand, is a first principle of movement; among  
9 bodies, on the other hand, the heavy ones occupy the region below, <like the earth>; and the light ones, like fire, the region above; water and air occupy the intermediate region. Thus the sea spreads over the earth, which is flat, and its moisture evaporates through the action of the sun. As for the stars, in the beginning their motion resembled that of a dome, so that the celestial pole, which is always visible, was vertically overhead; but later it assumed an inclined position. He held that the Milky Way is a reflection of the light of those stars that are not illuminated by the sun; that comets are a conglomeration of planets that emit flames; and that shooting stars are thrown off by the air like sparks. Winds arise when the air is rarefied by the action of the sun. Thunder is a collision of clouds; lightning the violent friction of clouds; and an earthquake a subsiding of air into the earth.

23 The Greek word used here implies that something impious or sacrilegious has been uttered.

24 Xerxes I of Persia invaded Greece in 480 BC. He crossed from Asia into Europe by building a pontoon bridge across the Hellespont (Dardanelles).

25 The seventieth Olympiad began in 500 BC; the first year of the eighty-eighth was 428 BC.

26 Like other ancient writers, Diogenes used the one-year terms of the chief archons at Athens, in addition to Olympiads, in place of numerical dates (which had not yet been devised). Sequential lists of these chief archons were available to him and, presumably, his readers, for use as a cross-reference. Here, the year referred to is 456 BC.

27 Tantalus was the patriarch of the mythic house of Atreus. He is not elsewhere known as an astronomical theorist, but in one myth, he was allowed to ascend to the heavens, from where, presumably, he was able to observe the sun at close range.

28 This difficult sentence cannot mean that all substances in the universe are pure (in fact Anaxagoras believed that most were mixtures), but rather that all matter can be resolved into pure elements.



*Anaxagoras*, by Jusepe de Ribera, 1636.

Animals were produced from moisture, heat, and earth, but later from one another, males from the right side, females from the left.

They say that he predicted the falling of the stone at Aegospotami,<sup>29</sup> which he said would fall from the sun. Hence Euripides, who was his student, said

10

<sup>29</sup> The “falling stone” refers to a meteorite that, according to other sources, fell near the town of Aegospotami, on the Hellespont, around 468 BC. Such an event would not, of course, be predictable.



Bronze goat, late fifth century BC, Greek.

in his *Phaethon*<sup>30</sup> that the sun is a golden clod. Furthermore, when he went to Olympia, he sat down wrapped in a leather cloak as if it were going to rain; and rain it did. When someone asked him whether the mountains at Lampsacus would ever become a sea, he is said to have replied, “Yes, if time doesn’t come to an end.” When asked to what end he had been born, he said, “To study the sun, the moon, and the sky.” To someone who said, “You were deprived of the Athenians,” he replied, “On the contrary, they were deprived of me.” When

30 The lost *Phaethon* told the story of a son of the god Helios who attempts to drive his father’s chariot of the sun—with disastrous consequences. The playwright Euripides was known for his interest in philosophic speculation about nature and the gods.

he saw the tomb of Mausolus,<sup>31</sup> he said, “A costly tomb is the image of wealth turned to stone.” To someone who complained that he was dying in a foreign land, he said, “From whatever point it starts, the descent to Hades is the same.” 11

According to Favorinus in his *Miscellaneous History*, Anaxagoras seems to have been the first to declare that the poetry of Homer is concerned with virtue and justice; and Metrodorus of Lampsacus, who was his disciple,<sup>32</sup> lent even more support to this view; it was he who was the first to pay serious attention to Homer’s treatment of nature. Anaxagoras was also the first to publish a book of prose. Silenus, in the first book of his *Histories*, says that during the archonship of < . . . ><sup>33</sup> a stone fell from the sky and that Anaxagoras declared that the entire vault of heaven is made of stones; that it coheres by the force of its rotation; and that if this were weakened it would fall. 12

Various accounts of his trial<sup>34</sup> are given. Sotion in his *Succession of the Philosophers*, says that Anaxagoras was indicted for impiety by Cleon<sup>35</sup> because he declared the sun to be a red-hot mass of iron; and that when Pericles, his student, pleaded for him, he was fined five talents and banished. Satyrus in his *Lives* says that it was Thucydides,<sup>36</sup> Pericles’ political opponent, who initiated the action, and that the charge was not only for impiety but also for siding with the Medes, and that he was sentenced to death by default. Satyrus adds that when he received word of two things at the same time, his condemnation and the death of his sons, he said about the sentence, “As concerns my accusers and myself, long ago nature condemned us to die”; and about his sons, “I knew that my children were mortal.” (Some, however, attribute this remark to Solon, others to Xenophon.) Demetrius of Phalerum, in his work *On Old Age*, says that Anaxagoras buried his sons with his own hands. Hermippus in his *Lives* says that Anaxagoras was confined to prison while awaiting execution. Pericles came forward and asked the people whether they had anything to reproach him with 13

31 The widow of Mausolus, Artemisia II, did not in fact begin constructing the famous Mausoleum at Halicarnassus, one of the Seven Wonders of the World, until the fourth century BC, long after Anaxagoras had died.

32 The word here translated “disciple” would normally imply a personal connection, but Metrodorus of Lampsacus (mentioned in the life of Epicurus, at 10.10 ff.) lived over a century later than Anaxagoras. Diogenes may have used the word very loosely, or he may simply be mistaken about chronology.

33 The manuscripts give a name, Demylus, that doesn’t appear in the archon lists, so the text here is apparently corrupt.

34 Anaxagoras was indicted by the Athenians, perhaps around 450 BC, and forced into exile. The official charge was impiety, but Anaxagoras’s close association with Pericles, at that time a rising leader of the *dēmos* with many aristocratic enemies (discussed below), added fuel to the feelings against him.

35 Cleon in fact came to prominence in Athens only in the late 430s, after Anaxagoras was almost certainly in exile.

36 Not the famous historian, but an Athenian politician and orator.



*Pericles and Anaxagoras*, late eighteenth century, French.

14 in his own life. And when they replied that they had not, he said, “Well, I am this man’s student. Do not be carried away by slanders and put him to death, but listen to me and release him.” And Anaxagoras was released; but as he could not bear the insult he had suffered, he did away with himself. Hieronymus, in the second book of his *Miscellaneous Notes*, says that Pericles brought him into court so weak and wasted by disease that he owed his acquittal more to pity than to the merits of his case. So much for his trial.

He seemed to have harbored hostility toward Democritus,<sup>37</sup> whom he failed to engage in a dialogue. At the end he returned to Lampsacus, and it

<sup>37</sup> Democritus of Abdera (b. c. 460/57 BC) is traditionally considered the originator, along with his teacher Leucippus, of the theory that all matter is composed of atoms. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 9.34–49.

was there that he died. And when the magistrates of the city asked what he wanted done for him, he said they should let the children make merry every year in whatever month he died; and the custom is kept up even now. When he died, the people of Lampsacus gave him a distinguished burial and had the following verses inscribed on his tomb: 15

Here, after approaching the farthest limit  
Of the truth of the celestial world, lies Anaxagoras.

My own verses about him run as follows:

He once declared the sun to be a mass of red-hot iron,  
And for this Anaxagoras was bound to die.  
His friend Pericles saved him, though he himself,  
His wisdom failing, ended his own life.

There have been three other men named Anaxagoras, of whom no other account contains a complete list: the first was an orator of the school of Isocrates; the second a sculptor mentioned by Antigonus; and the third a grammarian, a student of Zenodotus.

## ARCHELAUS

Archelaus, son of Apollodorus (or as some say of Midon), was a native of Athens or Miletus, a student of Anaxagoras, and a teacher of Socrates. It was he who first brought natural philosophy from Ionia to Athens.<sup>38</sup> He was called the naturalist because with him natural philosophy came to an end, after Socrates had introduced ethics. Yet Archelaus seems also to have touched on ethics. For he has discussed laws and goodness and justice. But Socrates, who received the subject from him and advanced it to its <pinnacle,> was thought to be its inventor. Archelaus held that becoming has two causes, heat and cold; that living things were generated from slime; and that the just and the shameful exist not by nature, but by convention.<sup>39</sup> 16

His theory is as follows. He says that water, melted by heat to the extent that, <permeated> by the action of fire, it is compacted, produces earth; but 17

38 In the sixth century BC, Miletus, a city that had close contact with Mesopotamian cosmology and science, had been the center of Greek speculation about nature and physical phenomena; later, Athens took over the central role Miletus had played.

39 The distinction here is between *physis* (nature) and *nomos* (convention, or the customs and laws that structure human forms of association), a distinction that later became a major topic of debate, especially in the dialogues of Plato.

insofar as it overflows its perimeter, it generates air. Hence earth is constrained by air, and air by fire that surrounds it. He says that living creatures are generated from earth when it is heated and emits a milklike slime that serves as a kind of nourishment; and in this same way earth produced human beings. He was the first to say that sound is produced when air is struck; and that a sea forms in hollow places when water filters through earth. He said that the sun is the largest of the stars, and that the universe is infinite.

There have been three other men named Archelaus: the man who described the countries traversed by Alexander; the writer who composed *Natural Curiosities*; and an orator who wrote a handbook on rhetoric.

## SOCRATES

18 Socrates was the son of Sophroniscus, a stonemason, and Phaenarete, a midwife, as Plato says in the *Theaetetus*; he was an Athenian and belonged to the deme of Alopece. It was thought that he collaborated with Euripides; hence Mnesilochus<sup>40</sup> says:

This new play of Euripides is the *Phrygians*,  
For which Socrates supplied the firewood.<sup>41</sup>

And he refers to some of Euripides' plays as "patched up by Socrates." And Callias in the *Captives*:

A.<sup>42</sup> Why, then, have you an air so solemn and high-minded?  
B. I have the right; Socrates is responsible.

Aristophanes in the *Clouds*:

It's he who writes for Euripides  
Those witty, wordy tragedies.<sup>43</sup>

19 He studied with Anaxagoras, according to some, but also with Damon,<sup>44</sup> as Alexander says in his *Successions*. After the condemnation of Anaxagoras,

40 Some editors emend the text to read "Mnesimachus," a poet of Middle Comedy (fl. c. 360 BC).

41 A pun on the title *Phrygians* (*Phruges* in Greek). The word *phrugana* means "firewood."

42 Diogenes quotes a passage of dialogue between two characters, without identifying who they are. "A" and "B" are used here, and throughout this volume, to distinguish two anonymous speakers.

43 This passage does not appear in our manuscripts of *Clouds*, a play that survives intact. It may come from a play by Teleclides, also called *Clouds*, or from a different version of Aristophanes' play, which is known to have been revised.

44 Damon of Athens was a musical theorist of the fifth century BC.

he became a student of Archelaus the natural philosopher; he also became his beloved, according to Aristoxenus. Duris says that he was a slave and a stoneworker; and some say that the statues of the Graces on the Acropolis are his work, given that they are clothed.<sup>45</sup> Hence Timon, in his *Lampoons*, says:

From these the sculptor turned away, a prater about laws,  
An enchanter of the Greeks, an expounder of subtle arguments,  
A sneerer who mocked the orators, a quasi-Attic dissembler.

For he was formidable in rhetoric as well, according to Idomeneus; and Xenophon reports that the Thirty prevented him from teaching the art of speech.<sup>46</sup> And Aristophanes portrays him in a comedy making the weaker argument the stronger.<sup>47</sup> For he was the first, as Favorinus says in his *Miscellaneous History*, with his student Aeschines,<sup>48</sup> to teach rhetoric; Idomeneus confirms this in his work *On Socrates and His Associates*. He was the first to discourse about the conduct of life, and the first of the philosophers to be condemned and executed. Aristoxenus, son of Spintharus, says that he made money: for example, he would invest a sum and collect the interest, and then, when it was spent, invest the sum again.

Demetrius of Byzantium says that Crito,<sup>49</sup> captivated by the beauty of his soul, removed him from the workshop and educated him. Having grasped that the study of nature is of no concern to us, Socrates discoursed on ethics in the workshops and the agora; and he claimed to be investigating

what evil and what good has been done in your halls.<sup>50</sup>

Since he often spoke too vehemently in the course of his inquiries, men pummeled him with their fists or tore his hair out, and for the most part he was laughed at and despised. And he bore all these things so patiently that once when he had been kicked, and someone expressed surprise that he stood

45 The statues of the three Graces were located at the entrance to the Acropolis. Pausanias reports that when Socrates decided to dedicate his life to philosophy, he destroyed the statues; another ancient source, Pliny the Elder, says that the statues on the Acropolis were the work of a different stoneworker named Socrates.

46 The Thirty were a brutal oligarchic regime installed after Sparta's defeat of Athens in the Peloponnesian War (404 BC). The passage of Xenophon that Diogenes cites here belongs to a surviving work, the *Memorabilia* (1.2.31).

47 A reference to *Clouds*, where a personified Weaker Argument wins out in a contest with Stronger Argument. The play caricatures Socrates as a shyster who can help litigants win dubious court cases.

48 Not the famous orator, but Aeschines of Sphettus, a follower of Socrates whose Socratic dialogues survive only in fragments (see 2.60–64).

49 A wealthy Athenian whose devotion to Socrates is immortalized in the Platonic dialogue named after him. See 2.121.

50 Homer, *Odyssey* 4.392.

for it, Socrates replied, “If a donkey had kicked me, should I have taken it to court?” So much for Demetrius’ account.

22 He had no need to go abroad, like most people, except if he had to serve in a military expedition.<sup>51</sup> For the rest of the time he remained where he was and pursued his inquiries all the more zealously with those who conversed with him, not so as to change their minds, but to try to learn the truth. They say that when Euripides had given him the treatise of Heraclitus<sup>52</sup> and he was asked, “What do you think of it?” he replied, “The parts I have understood are excellent, as are the parts I have not understood, I suppose; except that a Delian diver<sup>53</sup> is needed to plumb their depths.”

23 He took care to exercise and kept in good condition. At any rate he served in the campaign to Amphipolis;<sup>54</sup> and when Xenophon had fallen from his horse in the Battle of Delium, Socrates bore him on his back and saved him.<sup>55</sup> And when all the Athenians were fleeing, he himself retired at his own pace, looking around calmly and remaining ready to defend himself should anyone attack him. He also served in the expedition to Potidaea,<sup>56</sup> which was made by sea; for one could not get there on foot, as the war made the land route impassable. It was there that he is said to have stayed in the same position for an entire night; and they say that when he had won the prize of valor after the battle he resigned it in favor of his beloved Alcibiades,<sup>57</sup> according to Aristippus<sup>58</sup> in the fourth book of his work *On the Luxuriousness of the Ancients*. Ion of Chios says that in his youth he went abroad to Samos with Archelaus; and Aristotle says he

51 In his dialogues Plato mentions Socrates’ military service in three campaigns of the 420s BC, the time of Athens’s war against Sparta.

52 Heraclitus of Ephesus was a philosopher and poet with a famously obscure mode of expression. Diogenes discusses his life and views in 9.1–17.

53 The island of Delos was the birthplace of Apollo, the god who communicated, often enigmatically, through the Delphic oracle. Deep-sea divers harvested pearls and sponges off its coast.

54 The Battle of Amphipolis (422 BC) was a decisive victory for the Spartans in the Peloponnesian War.

55 The Boeotians, allies of Sparta, defeated the Athenians at Delium in 424 BC. According to Plato, Socrates showed great stamina in that battle (see *Symposium*, 221a–b), but he could not in fact have rescued Xenophon, who was only a few years old at the time.

56 The siege of Potidaea, in the Chalcidice, occupied the years 432–429 BC, and resulted in a costly victory for the Athenians. According to the account given in Plato’s *Symposium* (219e–220e), Socrates rescued Alcibiades during the combat.

57 Alcibiades (c. 450–404 BC) was an Athenian general and statesman, notorious for changing his allegiance several times during the course of the Peloponnesian War; he was also the most prominent follower of Socrates. The most famous depiction of their relationship occurs in the *Symposium* of Plato, where, in the course of making a speech praising Socrates, Alcibiades recalls how Socrates rejected his sexual advances. Plato also wrote a dialogue called *Alcibiades* that paints a warm picture of the teacher–student relationship.

58 Not the hedonist philosopher Aristippus of Cyrene (whose life is discussed at 2.65–104), but a later author who assumed that name, presumably to give his work greater credibility. This man is sometimes referred to as Pseudo-Aristippus.



Two bronze helmets roughly concurrent with the time period in which Socrates fought for Athens. *Left:* A helmet of the Corinthian type from the early fifth century BC. *Right:* An Attic type helmet ornamented with a silver satyr's head, more difficult to date precisely, that was excavated in Athens in the nineteenth century.

went to Delphi,<sup>59</sup> he also went to the isthmus, according to Favorinus in the first book of his *Reminiscences*.

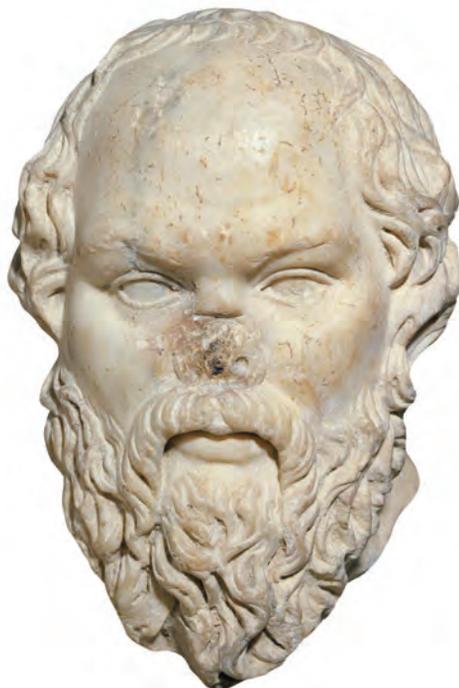
He was firm in his convictions and a supporter of the democracy, as is clear from his refusal to obey Critias and his associates when they ordered him to conduct the wealthy Leon of Salamis to them for execution.<sup>60</sup> And he alone voted to acquit the ten generals.<sup>61</sup> And when it was possible for him to escape

24

<sup>59</sup> None of Aristotle's surviving works contain this information.

<sup>60</sup> Critias, a former student of Socrates, headed the regime of the Thirty that briefly ruled Athens after its defeat by Sparta in 404 BC. Among their tactics was the deputizing of private citizens to arrest their political enemies. Socrates was enlisted to arrest Leon of Salamis, but apparently refused to comply, and the regime fell before he paid any penalty for his recalcitrance. Plato's *Apology of Socrates* alludes to this episode (32c).

<sup>61</sup> Socrates was taking his allotted turn as one of the officers in charge of the Boulê, a governing body, on the day when a controversial trial took place. The *stratêgoi* (generals) leading the Athenian navy at Arginusae (406 BC) were indicted on a capital charge for failing to retrieve the bodies of the dead after the battle. Six of the group stood trial. According to Plato, Socrates did not vote to acquit, but insisted, alone and without success, on standing by existing rules and trying each of the *stratêgoi* separately (*Apology* 32b).



Portrait head of Socrates, Roman, c. AD 170–195,  
likely based on a prototype attributed to Lysippus from the fourth century BC.

from prison he declined to do so;<sup>62</sup> he even rebuked his friends for weeping over him,<sup>63</sup> and while imprisoned made his finest and most famous remarks.

25 He was self-reliant and honorable. And once, according to Pamphila in the seventh book of her *Commentaries*, when Alcibiades offered him a large piece of land where he might build a house, he said, “And suppose I needed shoes and you offered me a hide, that I might make myself a pair. Would it not be ridiculous for me to accept it?” Often, when observing the multitude of things for sale, he would say to himself, “How many things I can do without!” And he was continually reciting these iambics:

Silver plate and purple garments  
Are useful for actors in tragedy, not for life.<sup>64</sup>

62 In his dialogue *Crito*, Plato depicts one of Socrates’ followers, Crito, trying to persuade his friend to escape from prison and go into exile rather than submit to execution.

63 On the day his death sentence was carried out (Plato, *Phaedo* 117d–e).

64 These verses have been variously attributed. Whoever wrote them, they likely postdate the



*Socrates XI*, by Heleno Bernardi, 2006. Foam head and soap, 133 × 100 cm.

He showed how little he thought of Archelaus of Macedon, Scopa of Cranon, and Eurylochus of Larissa<sup>65</sup> by not accepting their gifts of money or visiting their courts. And his way of life was so well regulated that on the many occasions when a plague broke out at Athens, he was the only man who did not fall ill.

Aristotle says that Socrates lived with two women: his first wife was Xanthippe, by whom he had Lamprocles; his second was Myrto, the daughter of Aristides the Just,<sup>66</sup> whom he took without a dowry and by whom he had Sophroniscus and Menexenus. Others say that he married Myrto first; still others, including Satyrus and Hieronymus of Rhodes, say that he was married to both at the same time. For they say that when the Athenians, because of a shortage

26

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death of Socrates, so he could not in fact have recited them.

65 Of these three would-be benefactors of Socrates, only Archelaus, king of the Macedonians in the late fifth century BC, is otherwise known.

66 Aristides was an Athenian statesman and general of the early fifth century BC; he was nicknamed the Just for his sterling record of public service.

of men, wished to increase their population, they decreed that a man could marry one Athenian woman and have children by another; and that Socrates accordingly did so.<sup>67</sup> He easily disregarded even those who mocked him. He prided himself on the simplicity of his life, and never took a fee. He used to say that he most enjoyed the food that least needed a condiment, and the drink that made him least in want of another. He said that the man whose needs are fewest is nearest to the gods. One may grasp this from the comic poets, who, in the course of ridiculing him, unwittingly sing his praises. Thus Aristophanes:<sup>68</sup>

O man who righteously desires great wisdom,  
 What a blessed life you will lead among the Athenians and the rest of the world!  
 For your memory, intelligence, and hardihood are excellent.  
 You never tire, whether standing or walking,  
 Never shiver from cold, never hunger for breakfast;  
 From wine you abstain, and from gluttony and all other nonsense.

28 Ameipsias,<sup>69</sup> who portrays him in a threadbare cloak, says:

You have come to us, Socrates, the best of a small number of men, and the vainest by far. Well, at least you are hardy. Where could we get you a decent coat?

Your sorry state is a reproach to the cobblers. . . .

Yet, however hungry he is, the man has never stooped to flatter.

This disdainful, high-minded spirit of his is also brought to light by Aristophanes, when he says:

Because you swagger along in the streets, gazing askance,  
 barefoot, enduring many ills, and look up at us with a grave  
 [and solemn countenance.<sup>70</sup>

Yet sometimes, adapting himself to circumstances, he would even don fine clothing, as in Plato's *Symposium*,<sup>71</sup> when he is on his way to Agathon's house.

29 He was adept at both persuading and dissuading. Thus after conversing with

67 Diogenes agrees with Plutarch and other late sources in claiming that Socrates married twice. But it should be noted that Plato and Xenophon, both contemporaries of Socrates, mention only Xanthippe.

68 The passage quoted here is a slightly altered version of *Clouds* 412–17.

69 A comic poet and contemporary of Aristophanes. The passage is from his lost play *Konnos*, which features a caricature of Socrates very similar to that in *Clouds*.

70 *Clouds* 362–63.

71 The dialogue recounts a drinking party at the house of the tragedian Agathon, during which the participants made speeches about love.



*Socrates Tears Alcibiades from the Embrace of Sensual Pleasure*, by Jean-Baptiste Regnault, 1791.

Theaetetus<sup>72</sup> about knowledge, he sent him away divinely inspired, as Plato says; but when Euthyphro had indicted his own father for the murder of a foreigner, Socrates, after conversing with him about piety, dissuaded him from his course.<sup>73</sup> And by his exhortations he turned Lysis<sup>74</sup> into a highly moral person. He was also adept at basing his arguments on facts. When his son Lamprocles was incensed with his mother, Socrates put the boy to shame, as Xenophon has somewhere mentioned.<sup>75</sup> And when Glaucon, Plato's brother, wished to enter politics, Socrates dissuaded him, as Xenophon says,<sup>76</sup> on the grounds of his inexperience, whereas he encouraged Charmides,<sup>77</sup> who had a natural bent for politics.

72 Theaetetus (c. 414–369 BC), an Athenian mathematician, appears as a character in Plato's dialogue of the same name.

73 This conversation is dramatized in Plato's *Euthyphro*.

74 Lysis is Socrates' main interlocutor in Plato's dialogue *Lysis*.

75 *Memorabilia* 2.2.1–2.

76 *Ibid.*, 3.6.1–2.

77 Glaucon's son Charmides became an Athenian statesman. He is the chief interlocutor of Socrates in Plato's dialogue *Charmides*, a discussion of temperance.

30 He aroused the proud spirit in Iphicrates the general<sup>78</sup> by showing him how the gamecocks of Meidias the barber flapped their wings at those of Callias.<sup>79</sup> And Glauconides<sup>80</sup> thought that the city should secure Socrates for itself as it would a pheasant or a peacock.

He used to say that it was strange that any man could easily tell you how many sheep he had, but could not name all the friends he had made, so little did they mean to him. Seeing Euclides<sup>81</sup> devoting himself to eristic arguments,<sup>82</sup> he said, “You’ll be able to deal with sophists, Euclides, but not with men.” For he considered such hair-splitting useless, as Plato says in the *Euthydemus*.<sup>83</sup>

31 When Charmides offered him some slaves, so that he might derive an income from them, he would not accept them. And he took no notice of the beauty of Alcibiades, according to some.<sup>84</sup> He praised leisure as the finest of possessions, as Xenophon says in his *Symposium*.<sup>85</sup> He declared that there was only one good, knowledge, and only one evil, ignorance; and that wealth and noble birth bring their possessor no honor; on the contrary, they bring every evil. For example, when someone told him that the mother of Antisthenes<sup>86</sup> was a Thracian, he replied, “But did you imagine that so noble a man could have been born of two Athenian parents?” And when Phaedo,<sup>87</sup> who had been taken captive in war, was sitting in prison, Socrates had him ransomed by Crito, and made a philosopher of him.

32 Late in life he learned to play the lyre, saying there was nothing strange in studying what one does not know. And he was constantly dancing, since he thought that kind of exercise kept the body in good condition, as Xenophon says in his *Symposium*. He used to say that his *daimonion* warned him of future events.<sup>88</sup> He said that well-being was no little thing, but was attained little by

78 Iphicrates was an Athenian general of the first half of the fourth century; he was a youth during Socrates’ old age.

79 Callias was a tyrant of Chalcis and a very powerful man, by contrast with the insignificant Meidias.

80 Given the patronymic form of the name (“son of Glaucon”), this may refer to Plato’s nephew, Charmides.

81 Euclides of Megara (c. 450–380 BC) was a Socratic philosopher; his life and views are discussed at 2.106–12.

82 Throughout his dialogues, Plato sharply distinguishes between eristic arguments, made in the spirit of trying to defeat an opponent, and dialectic, which deploys reason in a shared effort to gain knowledge.

83 Plato’s *Euthydemus* satirizes the sophists and contrasts their methods with those of Socrates.

84 In Plato’s *Symposium*, beginning at 216d, Alcibiades recounts his unsuccessful attempt to seduce Socrates.

85 4.44.

86 Considered the founder of the Cynic school. Diogenes discusses Antisthenes’ life and views at 6.1–19.

87 A follower of Socrates. Diogenes discusses Phaedo at 2.105.

88 *Daimonion* is a diminutive form of the word *daimōn*, a term that can refer to a god, to a demigod or spirit, or to the supernatural generally. According to several sources, Socrates



Two views of *Socrates*, by Constantin Brancusi, 1922. Oak on a limestone base.

little. And he said that he knew nothing except the fact that he knew nothing.<sup>89</sup> He used to say that when people pay high prices for early fruit, they must give up hope of its ripening in season. When someone once asked him, “What is the virtue of a young man?” he replied, “Nothing in excess.” He said that a man should study geometry only to the point where he is able to measure the land he either acquires or cedes.

When he heard the line in Euripides’ play *Auge* where the poet says about virtue:

33

It’s best to let it wander at will,

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heard an in-dwelling voice, inaudible to others, which he called his *daimonion*. Plato (*Apology* 31d) has Socrates claim that his *daimonion* told him only what *not* to do, but Xenophon (e.g., *Memorabilia* 4.8.1) says it also urged positive action.

<sup>89</sup> See Plato, *Apology* 21–22.

Socrates rose and left the theater, saying that it was absurd to make a fuss about a slave who could not be found, and to allow virtue to perish in this way. When asked whether or not one should marry, he said, “Whichever you do you will regret it.” He used to say he found it surprising that sculptors take the trouble to turn a block of marble into a perfect likeness of the subject, but take no trouble about themselves, lest they turn out to resemble marble blocks. He thought that young men should constantly examine themselves in the mirror, the handsome that they might prove handsome in character, and the ugly that they might conceal their ugliness by education.

34 When he had invited some rich men to his house, and his wife Xanthippe was ashamed of the dinner, he said, “Take heart: if they are reasonable they will adapt themselves; if worthless, it won’t matter to us.” He used to say that some men live to eat, while he himself ate to live. To <the man who feared> the worthless multitude, he said it was as if someone who rejects a single four-drachma piece as valueless should accept as valuable a heap of such coins. When Aeschines said, “Poor as I am, I have nothing else to give; but I offer you myself,” Socrates replied, “But don’t you feel that you are offering me the greatest gift of all?” To someone who, ignored when the Thirty rose to power, took it ill, Socrates said, “You don’t regret that, do you?”<sup>90</sup> To a man who said, “The Athenians have condemned you to die,” he replied, “And nature has also condemned them to die.” (Some, however, attribute this remark to Anaxagoras.) When his wife said, “You die unjustly,” he replied, “Would you prefer that I die justly?” When he dreamt that someone said to him,

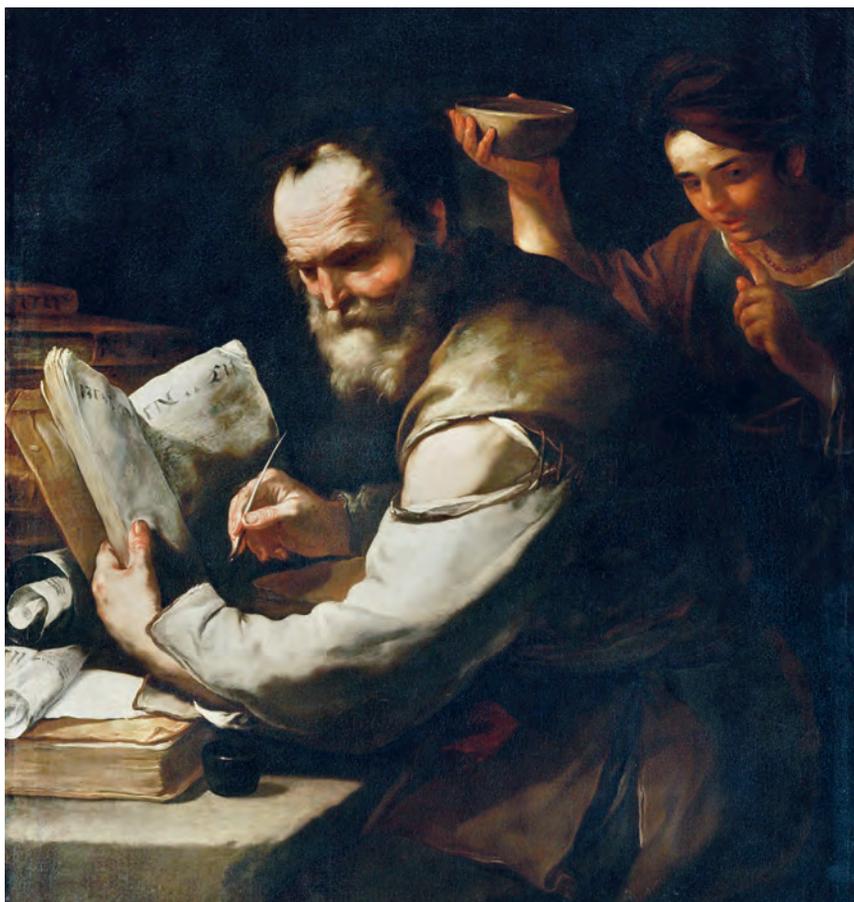
On the third day you will reach fertile Phthia,

he said to Aeschines, “On the third day I shall die.”<sup>91</sup> When he was about to drink the hemlock, and Apollodorus offered him a beautiful cloak to die in, Socrates asked, “Then is my own cloak good enough to live in but not to die in?”<sup>92</sup> When told, “So-and-so is speaking badly of you,” he said, “It’s only because he hasn’t learned to speak well.” When Antisthenes had turned his cloak so that its tear became visible, Socrates said, “I discern your vanity through your cloak.” To someone who asked, “Doesn’t So-and-so insult you?” he replied, “Not at all, for what he says doesn’t apply to me.” He said that we should offer ourselves as butts

90 This translation presents one possible interpretation of a difficult sentence. Another is that Socrates is asking whether the man has anything on his conscience—i.e., a transgression that the Thirty will discover and punish.

91 According to Plato, Socrates recounted this dream to Crito, not Aeschines (*Crito* 44b). The line of verse is quoted from the *Iliad* (9.363), where Achilles vows to leave the Greek army at Troy and sail homeward. The interpretation of the dream thus configures death as a voyage toward one’s homeland.

92 Socrates was famous for dressing in ragged clothing.



*Xanthippe Dousing Socrates*, by Luca Giordano, 1665.

for the comic poets: “For if they say something apt, they will make us better men; and if not, it’s of no concern to us.” Of Xanthippe, who first scolded him and later drenched him with water, he said, “Didn’t I say that Xanthippe’s thunder would end in rain?” When Alcibiades said that Xanthippe’s scolding was intolerable, he said, “But I am used to it, exactly as if I were constantly hearing the clattering of pulleys. And as for you,” he asked, “do you mind the cackling of geese?” “No,” replied Alcibiades, “for they provide me with eggs and goslings,” to which Socrates replied, “Well, Xanthippe provides me with children.” Once when she had stripped off his coat in the marketplace, and his friends advised him to use his hands to defend himself, he said, “Of course, by Zeus, so that each of you, while we are sparring, may say, ‘Good one, Socrates!’ and

37

‘Well done, Xanthippe!’” He used to say that he consorted with a cantankerous woman just as horsemen do with mettlesome horses. “And just as these men,” he said, “once they have tamed them, easily master the rest, so I, by living with Xanthippe, will know how to adapt myself to everyone else.”

For these words and deeds, and others like them, he was honored by the Pythian priestess when she gave Chaerephon the famous response:

Of all men Socrates is the wisest.<sup>93</sup>

38 It was mainly for this that he was envied, and especially because he would refute those who had a high opinion of themselves, showing them to be fools, as he surely did in the case of Anytus, according to Plato’s *Meno*.<sup>94</sup> For Anytus, unable to bear being ridiculed by Socrates, began by inciting Aristophanes and his circle against him, and then persuaded Meletus<sup>95</sup> to lodge a complaint against him for impiety and corrupting the youth.

The complaint was lodged by Meletus, and the speech delivered by Polycrates, as Favorinus says in his *Miscellaneous History*. Polycrates the sophist wrote the speech, as Hermippus says; others, however, say that it was written by Anytus; and Lycon the demagogue made all the preliminary arrangements.<sup>96</sup>

39 Antisthenes<sup>97</sup> in his *Successions of Philosophers* and Plato in the *Apology* say that he had three accusers: Anytus, Lycon, and Meletus; that Anytus was angered on behalf of the craftsmen and politicians; Lycon on behalf of the orators; and Meletus on behalf of the poets, all of whom he ridiculed. But Favorinus, in the first book of his *Reminiscences*, says that the speech of Polycrates against Socrates is not genuine; for he says that it contains a reference to the reconstruction of the walls by Conon, which occurred six years after the death of Socrates.<sup>98</sup> And that is indeed the case.

93 According to both Plato and Xenophon, Chaerephon journeyed to Delphi to ask the oracle about Socrates. The response of the oracle is given differently by the two authors. In Plato’s *Apology* (21a), the oracle says that no one was wiser than Socrates; Xenophon’s *Apology* (14) has the oracle assert that no one was freer, more just, or more prudent. Neither text quotes the oracle’s response in verse form, as Diogenes does here (in iambic trimeter).

94 Anytus was the principal accuser in Socrates’ trial (and, according to some sources, also a suitor of Alcibiades, who spurned him in favor of Socrates). In *Meno* (89e–95a), Anytus argues with Socrates over why men do not raise sons as virtuous as themselves and ends up accusing Socrates of slandering the great.

95 Meletus was another of Socrates’ accusers; in Plato’s *Apology* (24d–27d) he is humiliated when cross-examined by Socrates.

96 Lycon was the third Athenian to put his name to Socrates’ indictment, along with Anytus and Meletus. The “preliminary arrangements” mentioned here are legal procedures for bringing a defendant to trial.

97 Not the Athenian philosopher of Socrates’ own time, but Antisthenes of Rhodes, who lived two centuries later.

98 The walls referred to are the Long Walls that connected Athens to its seaport, Piraeus. Partly



Socrates debating with his pupils, from the thirteenth-century Seljuk Turkish manuscript  
*The Best Maxims and Most Precious Dictums of Al-Mubashir*.

The indictment against him was drawn up as follows (for it is still available today in the Metröon,<sup>99</sup> says Favorinus): “This complaint was lodged under oath by Meletus, son of Meletus of Pitthos, against Socrates, son of Sophroniscus of Alopece: Socrates breaks the law because he does not recognize the gods recognized by the city, and because he introduces other new divinities; and he breaks the law because he corrupts the youth. The penalty is death.” As for the philosopher, when he read the speech Lysias had written in his defense, he said, “A fine speech, Lysias, but it is not suitable for me.” For it was clearly more forensic than philosophical. When Lysias asked, “But how, if the speech is fine, would it not suit you?” Socrates replied, “Well, wouldn’t fine clothes and fine shoes also be unsuitable for me?”

Justus of Tiberias, in his work *The Garland*, says that during the trial Plato ascended to the tribune and said, “Though I am the youngest, men of Athens, of those who have ascended to the speaker’s platform,” at which point the jurors

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torn down in 404 BC as a result of the Athenian defeat in the Peloponnesian War, they were rebuilt in the 390s, with the help of Conon, an Athenian naval strategist.

<sup>99</sup> The Metröon (literally, “mother’s building”) was a temple in Athens dedicated to the mother goddess; it was used as an archive and council hall.

42 roared, “Get down!” Socrates was condemned by 281 votes (more than those cast for acquittal);<sup>100</sup> and when the jurors were assessing what he should suffer or what fine he should pay, he said he would pay a fine of twenty-five drachmas.<sup>101</sup> (Eubulides says he agreed to pay one hundred.) And when the jurors raised an uproar, he said, “In view of my services, I propose as a penalty that I be maintained in the Prytaneum at public expense.”<sup>102</sup>

They sentenced him to death, 80 votes being added to the number cast for conviction.<sup>103</sup> He was imprisoned, and a few days later he drank the hemlock after engaging in many noble discussions, which Plato recounts in the *Phaedo*. According to some, he composed a paean that begins:

Hail Apollo of Delos, and Artemis, renowned children!

But Dionysodorus says that the paean is not his work. He also composed a fable, not very successful, in the manner of Aesop, which begins:

Aesop once told the inhabitants of the town of Corinth  
Not to judge virtue by the wisdom of a jury trial.

43 He was thus no longer among men; and the Athenians immediately felt such remorse that they closed the wrestling arenas and gymnasia. They banished his other accusers, but sentenced Meletus to death.<sup>104</sup> They honored Socrates with a bronze statue, sculpted by Lysippus,<sup>105</sup> which they placed in the Pompeion.<sup>106</sup> And when Anytus visited Heraclea, the people banished him by proclamation that very day. And it was not only in the case of Socrates

100 In Plato's *Apology* (36a), Socrates says he would have been acquitted had 30 votes been changed. Diogenes alone gives an exact number of votes cast for conviction. Assuming that the size of the jury was 501—a typical size for Athenian juries—there is a small mathematical discrepancy between Diogenes and Plato, since subtracting 30 from 281 would still result in a conviction. It could be that Plato had Socrates use a round number, 30 instead of 31.

101 A relatively modest amount, since a drachma was a day's wage for a skilled laborer.

102 The Prytaneum was a state council house where councilors, as well as victorious athletes, were fed at public expense. Given the chance to propose his own sentence, after conviction, Socrates mockingly suggested that he dine in the Prytaneum, according to Plato (*Apology* 36d).

103 No other source attests to this remarkable increase in the antipathy to Socrates between the guilt phase of his trial and the sentencing phase. If Diogenes' information is accurate, 80 jurors who had previously voted to acquit Socrates, presumably angered by his flippant sentencing proposals, now voted to execute him.

104 Plutarch (*Moralia* 537f–538a) says that the accusers of Socrates were socially ostracized but neither banished nor killed.

105 Lysippus of Sicyon, one of the greatest sculptors of the fourth century BC, was born after Socrates' death and could not have cast his features from life. A bust of Socrates widely reproduced in the ancient world, of which several copies survive, is thought to reflect an idealized original created by Lysippus.

106 The Pompeion was a place for the storage of processional gear for the ceremonies accompanying the Panathenaic Festival.



A cavelike structure in Athens, described in popular traditions as “the prison of Socrates.”  
Anonymous photograph, c. 1895.

that the Athenians repented, but in a great many others. For they fined Homer, as Heraclides says, fifty drachmas on the grounds of insanity, and declared that Tyrtaeus was deranged, and honored Astydamas with a bronze statue before Aeschylus and his fellow poets.<sup>107</sup> And Euripides reproached them in his *Palamedes*,<sup>108</sup> saying,

44

You have slain, have slain, the all-wise,  
The harmless nightingale of the Muses.

So much for that account. But Philochorus says that Euripides died before Socrates.

Socrates was born, according to Apollodorus in his *Chronology*, during the archonship of Apsephion, in the third year of the seventy-seventh Olympiad, on

107 Neither Homer nor the archaic Spartan poet Tyrtaeus ever resided in Athens or was subject to Athenian law; and Astydamas, a minor tragic poet of the fourth century BC, certainly never attained higher fame than Aeschylus, who was already revered as a master playwright before Astydamas's birth.

108 This lost play dealt with a hero of the Trojan War, who (according to other myths) invented musical notation. The lines quoted must have referred to the killing of Palamedes by the Greek army at Troy.

the sixth of Thargelion,<sup>109</sup> the day when the Athenians purify the city, and the day, according to the Delians, that Artemis was born. He died in the first year of the ninety-fifth Olympiad,<sup>110</sup> at the age of seventy. Demetrius of Phalerum agrees. But others say he died at the age of sixty. Socrates and Euripides were both students of Anaxagoras;<sup>111</sup> Euripides was born in the first year of the seventy-fifth Olympiad, during the archonship of Calliades.<sup>112</sup>

It seems to me that Socrates discoursed on natural philosophy as well as ethics, at least where he converses about divine providence; Xenophon mentions this too, though he declares that Socrates talked only about ethics. But Plato, after mentioning Anaxagoras and some other physicists in the *Apology*, addresses on his own account topics that Socrates disregarded, though he attributes everything to Socrates.

Aristotle says that a sorcerer who came to Athens from Syria predicted, among the other evils awaiting Socrates, that he would die a violent death.<sup>113</sup>

My own verses about him run as follows:

Drink, Socrates, now that you are in the house of Zeus;  
 For truly did the god call you wise, and wisdom is a god.  
 For you merely received the hemlock from the Athenians,  
 But it is they who, through your mouth, have drained the cup.

He had for rivals, as Aristotle says in his third book *On Poetry*,<sup>114</sup> a certain Antilochus of Lemnos and Antiphon the soothsayer, just as Pythagoras<sup>115</sup> had as his rivals Cylon and Onatas; and Homer, during his lifetime, Syagrus, and after his death, Xenophanes of Colophon; and Hesiod, during his lifetime, Cercops, but after his death, the aforementioned Xenophanes; and Pindar, Amphimenes of Cos; Thales, Pherecydes; Bias, Salarus of Priene; Pittacus, Antimenidas and Alcaeus; Anaxagoras, Sosibius; and Simonides, Timocreon.

Among those who succeeded him and were called Socratics, the leaders were Plato, Xenophon, and Antisthenes; among the ten traditional Socratics, the four most distinguished are Aeschines, Phaedo, Euclides, and Aristippus. We must speak first about Xenophon; then about Antisthenes, later, among

109 The third year of this Olympiad began in the summer of 470 BC, but Thargelion was the second to last month of the year, so Socrates would actually have been born in 469 by our calendar. Apsephion was archon (chief magistrate) from 469 to 468.

110 This Olympiad began in 400 BC.

111 See 2.6–15 on Anaxagoras.

112 Calliades was archon from 480 to 479 BC; the seventy-fifth Olympiad began in 480.

113 This story is not found in the extant works of Aristotle.

114 Not the extant work by Aristotle, usually called *Poetics*, but a lost work with a similar title.

115 Ionian philosopher and mathematician of the sixth century BC; his life and views are discussed at 8.1–50.



*The Death of Socrates*, by Jacques-Louis David, 1787.

the Cynics; then about the Socratics, and in turn about Plato,<sup>116</sup> since the ten schools begin with him,<sup>117</sup> and he himself founded the first Academy. This then is the order I will follow.

There was another Socrates, a historian who wrote a geographical description of Argos; another a Peripatetic from Bithynia; another a composer of epigrams; and finally a native of Cos, who wrote about the names of the gods.

## XENOPHON

Xenophon was the son of Gryllus; he was an Athenian of the deme of Erchia. He was modest and extraordinarily handsome. It is said that Socrates met him in a narrow lane, extended his staff and blocked his way, inquiring where each

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116 This list does not correspond to the sequence of Diogenes' text; his treatment of Antisthenes, though he was one of the earliest followers of Socrates, is held off until Book 6, so as to be grouped with other Cynics. The others listed here are discussed in Books 2 and 3.

117 See 1.19, where Diogenes lists, as descendants of Plato's Academy, the schools known as Academic, Cyrenaic, Elian, Megarian, Cynic, Eretrian, Dialectical, Peripatetic, Stoic, and Epicurean, as well as later phases of the Academy itself.

kind of food was being sold; on receiving an answer, he then asked, “Where do men become good and honorable?” Xenophon was perplexed, and Socrates said, “Follow me, then, and learn.” And from then on he was a student of Socrates.<sup>118</sup> He was the first to note down Socrates’ words, which he published under the title *Memorabilia*.<sup>119</sup> He was also the first philosopher to write a work of history.

49 Aristippus,<sup>120</sup> in the fourth book of his work *On the Luxuriousness of the Ancients*, says that Xenophon fell in love with Clinias<sup>121</sup> and said of him, “As it is, I find it sweeter to gaze at Clinias than at all the beautiful things in the world. I would accept being blinded to everything else if I could gaze at him alone. I am vexed with night and with sleep because I cannot see him, and I take the greatest joy in day and the sun because they show me Clinias.”<sup>122</sup>

50 He became an ally of Cyrus<sup>123</sup> in the following way. He had a close friend named Proxenus,<sup>124</sup> a Boeotian, who was a student of Gorgias of Leontini<sup>125</sup> and a friend of Cyrus. This man, who was living in Sardis at the court of Cyrus, sent a letter to Xenophon at Athens, inviting him to visit so that he might become a friend of Cyrus. Xenophon showed the letter to Socrates and asked for his advice. And Socrates sent him to Delphi to consult the oracle. Xenophon obeyed, came into the god’s presence, and inquired not *whether* he should go off to Cyrus, but *how* he should go to him. For this he was reproached by Socrates, who nevertheless advised him to go. And he went to Cyrus and became as close a friend to him as Proxenus himself.<sup>126</sup> As for all that occurred on his expedition and on the return journey, Xenophon has himself given us an adequate account.<sup>127</sup> He remained on bad terms with

118 Xenophon was about four decades Socrates’ junior.

119 The work still survives, as do several of Xenophon’s Socratic dialogues: *Apology*, *Symposium*, and *Oeconomicus*.

120 Not Aristippus of Cyrene (discussed at 2.65–104), but a later writer who appropriated the name and is known today as Pseudo-Aristippus.

121 A member of the family that produced Pericles and Alcibiades, Clinias appears as a character in Plato’s dialogue *Euthydemus*.

122 These words are nearly an exact quote of a passage of Xenophon’s *Symposium* (4.12), where a character in the dialogue, Critobulus, is the speaker.

123 Cyrus the Younger (d. 401 BC) was a Persian prince who tried to unseat his older brother, the reigning king Artaxerxes II, with the help of Greek mercenaries. Xenophon was one of the mercenaries who assisted him in his attempted coup.

124 An old friend of Xenophon who had joined the mercenary army Cyrus was then recruiting.

125 An influential sophist and teacher of rhetoric (c. 485–380 BC).

126 The story of Xenophon’s decision is adapted by Diogenes from Xenophon’s own account in the *Anabasis* (3.1.4–8), his narrative of the adventures of the so-called Ten Thousand, a Greek mercenary army hired by Cyrus to help him unseat his brother.

127 The *Anabasis* describes how the Ten Thousand, stranded deep within Persian territory after Cyrus’ death, managed to fight their way back to port cities of the Black Sea, largely under Xenophon’s leadership.



*The Episode of the Retreat of the Ten Thousand*, by Jean-Adrien Guignet, c. 1842.  
A mid-nineteenth-century representation of Xenophon's *Anabasis*.

Meno of Pharsalus,<sup>128</sup> who throughout the expedition commanded the mercenary troops; and at one point he reproaches him for having a beloved older than himself; he also reproaches one Apollonides for piercing his ears.<sup>129</sup>

After the expedition and the misfortunes it met with in Pontus and the betrayals of Seuthes,<sup>130</sup> the king of the Odrysians, he went to Asia, to Agesilaus, the king of the Spartans, and provided him with Cyrus' soldiers as mercenaries;<sup>131</sup> for he was devoted to Agesilaus beyond measure. At that point he was banished by the Athenians for siding with the Spartans. When he was in Ephesus and had some money, he gave half to Megabyzus, the priest of Artemis, to keep until his return, or, if he should not return, to apply to the setting up of a statue in honor of the goddess. The other half he sent as a votive offering to Delphi. Then he departed for Greece with Agesilaus, who had been recalled for the war against Thebes.<sup>132</sup> And the Spartans accorded Xenophon the office of *proxenos*.<sup>133</sup>

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128 A character in the eponymous dialogue by Plato and one of Xenophon's fellow soldiers in the army of the Ten Thousand. Xenophon describes him as a greedy schemer at *Anabasis* 2.6.21–29.

129 *Ibid.*, 3.1.26 and 31. The second passage makes clear that male ear-piercing was seen as inappropriate for a proper Greek.

130 Seuthes served as a general for Amadocus I, a Thracian king, and later seized the throne for himself. For a time he employed the Ten Thousand. The betrayals mentioned here include Seuthes' reluctance to pay the Greek troops and his attempt to undermine Xenophon's command.

131 Agesilaus II (c. 445–359 BC) was a Spartan king whom Xenophon portrayed admiringly in his extant biographical work, *Agesilaus*. Some years after the Ten Thousand arrived back in Anatolia, having fought their way out of Mesopotamia, Xenophon met up with Agesilaus, who was then leading a Spartan invasion of the western Persian empire (*Anabasis* 5.6).

132 The Corinthian War, which resulted in a Spartan victory over Thebes and its allies in 394 BC.

133 A Greek *proxenos* lived in a foreign city and served as a kind of chargé d'affaires for all legal

52 Then he left Agesilaus and went to Scillus,<sup>134</sup> a place in Elis not far from the city. He was accompanied by his wife, whose name was Philesia, according to Demetrius of Magnesia, and two sons, Gryllus and Diodorus, as Dinarchus says in his work *Against Xenophon in a Matter of Dereliction*,<sup>135</sup> the sons were nicknamed the Dioscuri.<sup>136</sup> Making the festal assembly a pretext, Megabyzus joined him there. Xenophon recovered his money, purchased an estate, and dedicated it to the goddess;<sup>137</sup> through the estate runs a river, the Selinus. (A river in Ephesus has the same name.) From then on he spent his time hunting, entertaining his friends, and writing his histories.<sup>138</sup> Dinarchus says that his house and farm were given to him by the Spartans.

53 But there is also a report that Phylopidas the Spartan sent to him at Scillus some slaves from Dardanus,<sup>139</sup> whom he had captured, and that Xenophon disposed of them as he saw fit, and that the Elians marched against Scillus and succeeded, owing to the Spartans' late arrival, in capturing the place. At that point his sons withdrew to Lepreum<sup>140</sup> with a few servants, and Xenophon himself, who had previously gone to Elis, joined his sons in Lepreum and escaped with them to Corinth, where he settled. In the meantime, since the Athenians had voted to assist the Spartans, Xenophon sent his sons to Athens

54 to serve in their expedition in defense of Sparta. For they had actually been educated in Sparta, as Diocles says in his *Lives of the Philosophers*. Without performing any conspicuous feat, Diodorus returned safe from the battle. He had a son, who had the same name as his brother. But Gryllus, who had been posted with the cavalry (this was in the battle near Mantinea<sup>141</sup>), fought valiantly and died, as Ephorus says in his twenty-fifth book. (Cephisodorus was serving as cavalry commander, Hegesilaus as general.) It was in this battle that Epaminondas<sup>142</sup> fell. They say that at that very time Xenophon was per-

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and procedural matters involving visitors from his home city.

134 A small town in the western Peloponnese.

135 The speech referred to countered a suit apparently brought by Xenophon against a certain Aeschylus, whom he accused of a contract violation.

136 A reference to Castor and Pollux, a pair of divine twin brothers. It's not clear whether Xenophon's sons were also twins.

137 *Anabasis* 5.3.7–10.

138 The *Hellenica*, a historical record of Greece in the late fifth and early fourth centuries BC, survives intact. Xenophon also wrote most of his Socratic works at Scillus, by his own report.

139 A city on the Hellespont, named after the mythical progenitor of the Trojan royal family.

140 A town about twelve miles south of Scillus.

141 The Battle of Mantinea (362 BC) was fought between the Thebans and Spartans, with many allies assisting each side. Xenophon describes the battle in his *Hellenica* but says nothing of the death of his son.

142 A Theban general and statesman (c. 418–362 BC) who was instrumental in freeing Thebes from Spartan subjugation and building up its army.



Terra-cotta statuette of a horse, fourth century BC, Greek.

forming a sacrifice, his head crowned with a wreath. When his son's death was reported to him, he removed the wreath; but afterward, when he learned that his son had died nobly, he replaced it. Some report that he did not even shed a tear, but said, "Well, I knew he was mortal." Aristotle says that countless authors wrote encomia and funeral orations for Gryllus, a certain number of them in order to gratify his father.<sup>143</sup> Moreover, Hermippus, in his work *On Theophrastus*, says that even Isocrates<sup>144</sup> wrote an encomium for Gryllus. But Timon mocks Xenophon in these lines:

A pair of weak discourses, or a triad, or even more, such as Xenophon or the <vigorous> Aeschines might be persuaded to write.

Such was his life. He flourished in the fourth year of the ninety-fourth Olympiad,<sup>145</sup> and departed for the expedition with Cyrus during the archonship of Xenaenetus, the year before the death of Socrates.<sup>146</sup>

He died, as Stesiclides of Athens says in his *List of Archons and Olympic Victors*, in the first year of the 105th Olympiad,<sup>147</sup> during the archonship of Callimedes, the year Philip,<sup>148</sup> son of Amyntas, came to power in Macedonia. He died in Corinth, as Demetrius of Magnesia says, apparently at an advanced age. He was an accomplished man in every respect, an avid horseman

143 The surviving works of Aristotle contain no such information.

144 Athenian statesman and essayist active during most of the fourth century BC.

145 This Olympiad began in 404 BC, so the fourth year was 401.

146 Xenaenetus was archon (chief magistrate) in the year that began in the summer of 401 BC. The execution of Socrates occurred in 399.

147 This Olympiad began in 360 BC. In fact Xenophon lived several years past this date, as is known from his surviving works.

148 Philip II, the father of Alexander the Great.

and hunter, and an able tactician, as is clear from his writings.<sup>149</sup> He was pious, fond of sacrifices, and adept at prophecy from the entrails of sacrificial victims; and he modeled himself closely on Socrates.

He wrote roughly forty works, though these have been divided into books in various ways:

- 57 *The Anabasis* (with a preface for each book, but no general introduction)  
*Cyropaedia*  
*Hellenica*  
*Memorabilia*  
*Symposium*  
*Oeconomicus*  
*On Horsemanship*  
*On Hunting*  
*On the Duties of a Cavalry Commander*  
*Apology of Socrates*  
*On Revenues*  
*Hieron or On Tyranny*  
*Agésilas*  
*The Constitutions of Athens and Sparta*

The latter, according to Demetrius of Magnesia, is not by Xenophon. It is said that he also made famous the works of Thucydides, which had remained unknown until then, and which he could have appropriated for his own purposes.<sup>150</sup> For the sweetness of his style he was called the Attic Muse; hence he and Plato were jealous of each other, as will be mentioned in the chapter on Plato.<sup>151</sup>

- 58 My own epigram about him runs as follows:

Xenophon marched to Persia not only because of Cyrus,  
 But because he sought a path that would lead him to Zeus.  
 Well-taught, he narrated the Greek exploits,  
 And then recalled how fine was the wisdom of Socrates.

And another about how he died:

Xenophon, the citizens of Cranaus and Cecrops<sup>152</sup>  
 Condemned you to exile for your friendship with Cyrus;

149 Xenophon's corpus includes a treatise on hunting with dogs and another on the skills required of a cavalry commander.

150 Unique information about the reception of Thucydides' work. Xenophon conceived of his own *Hellenica* as a continuation of Thucydides' history past the point at which it had broken off.

151 See 3.34.

152 Mythological kings of early Athens.

But Corinth, hospitable to strangers, welcomed you,  
So fond were you of her delights, and there you chose to abide.

I have found in other accounts the statement that he flourished in the eighty-ninth Olympiad,<sup>153</sup> at the same time as the other Socratics; and Istrus says that he was banished by a decree of Eubulus, and was recalled by a decree of the same man. 59

There have been seven men named Xenophon: the first was our present subject; the second an Athenian (the brother of the Pythostratus who wrote the *Theseid*) who wrote, among other works, a biography of Epaminondas and Pelopidas;<sup>154</sup> the third a doctor from Cos; the fourth the author of a history of Hannibal; the fifth an authority on mythical marvels; the sixth a sculptor from Paros; and the seventh a poet of the Old Comedy.

## AESCHINES

Aeschines was the son of Charinus the sausage maker, though some say his father was Lysanias. He was an Athenian, and industrious from an early age; this was why he never left Socrates. Hence the latter used to say, “Only the son of the sausage maker knows how to honor me.” Idomeneus says that it was Aeschines, not Crito, who advised Socrates in the prison about his escape; and that Plato, because Aeschines was friendlier to Aristippus<sup>155</sup> than to himself, attributed Aeschines’ words to Crito. Aeschines was maliciously slandered, especially by Menedemus of Eretria,<sup>156</sup> who claimed that most of the dialogues Aeschines passed off as his own were by Socrates, and that he had obtained them from Xanthippe. Of these dialogues, some, the ones that are called “headless,”<sup>157</sup> are very slack and show none of the Socratic vigor; Peristratus of Ephesus denied that they were the work even of Aeschines. Persaeus says that most of the seven were written by Pasiphon 61

153 That is, in 424–421 BC, more likely the period of Xenophon’s birth than his acme.

154 Pelopidas was a Theban statesman and general of the 370s and 360s BC. He was a friend of Epaminondas and assisted him in the Theban victory at the Battle of Leuctra (371 BC) and in other campaigns against Sparta.

155 A follower of Socrates who founded the Cyrenaic school; Diogenes discusses his life and views at 2.65–104. It’s apparent from this passage and others (e.g., 2.65 and 3.36) that Aristippus was widely disliked by others in the Socratic circle.

156 A follower of Stilpo and Phaedo, Menedemus (c. 339–c. 265 BC) founded the Eretrian school. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 2.125–44.

157 Perhaps indicating that they lacked an opening frame (something many of Plato’s dialogues have).

of Eretria, who inserted them among the dialogues of Aeschines. Moreover, Aeschines claimed authorship of Antisthenes' *Little Cyrus*, *Lesser Heracles*, and *Alcibiades*,<sup>158</sup> as well as dialogues by other writers. As for the second category of dialogues by Aeschines, namely those that carry the stamp of the Socratic manner, they are seven in number: the first was the *Miltiades* (which for that reason is rather weak); *Callias*, *Axiochus*, *Aspasia*, *Alcibiades*, *Telauges*, and *Rhinon*.

62 They say that poverty drove him to Sicily, to the court of Dionysius, and that Plato ignored him, whereas Aristippus introduced him to Dionysius;<sup>159</sup> and that when he offered Dionysius some of his dialogues he received gifts from him. Later, when Aeschines returned to Athens, he did not venture to assume the profession of sophist, since at that period the associates of Plato and Aristippus were highly esteemed. But he took fees for his lectures<sup>160</sup> and later composed forensic speeches for victims of injustice, which is why Timon wrote:

. . . and the <vigorous> Aeschines might be persuaded to write.

When Aeschines was hard-pressed by poverty, it is said that Socrates told him he ought to borrow from himself by reducing his consumption of food. Even Aristippus cast doubt on the genuineness of his dialogues. At any rate it is said that one day, when Aeschines was reading one of them at Megara, Aristippus made fun of him by asking, "Where, thief, did you come by that?"

63 Polycritus of Mende, in the first book of his work *On Dionysius*, says that Aeschines lived with the tyrant until the man's banishment, and remained in Sicily until Dion returned to Syracuse;<sup>161</sup> he adds that Dion was accompanied by Carcinus the comic poet. There is a letter to Dionysius attributed to Aeschines.<sup>162</sup> He was well trained in rhetoric, as is clear from his defense of the father of Phaeax the general, and from the speeches in which he closely imitates Gorgias of Leontini. Moreover, Lysias wrote a speech against him that he entitled *On Dishonest Prosecution*. And from this too, it is clear that he

158 Antisthenes, whom Diogenes considered the founder of the Stoic and Cynic schools, is discussed at 6.1–19.

159 Dionysius II (c. 397–343 BC), the wealthy tyrant of Syracuse, had Plato and Aristippus attending on him at his court at this time (see 2.73, 2.78–79, 2.82, 3.18–23, and 3.36, as well as corresponding notes). Apparently Aristippus was more accommodating to Dionysius than Plato was.

160 Elsewhere (2.65), Diogenes claims that Aristippus, not Aeschines, was the first Socratic to take fees for his teaching.

161 Dion, the brother-in-law of Dionysius' father, served as the tyrant's chief minister for many years before being thrust into exile; he returned in 357 BC and took over Syracuse, exiling Dionysius in turn. It was Dion who principally sponsored Plato's visits to Syracuse.

162 No longer preserved.

was skilled in rhetoric. One disciple has been attributed to him: the Aristotle who was nicknamed Myth.<sup>163</sup>

Still, of all the Socratic dialogues, Panaetius thinks that those of Plato, Xenophon, Antisthenes, and Aeschines are genuine; he is in doubt about those of Phaedo and Euclides, and rejects all the others.

64

There have been eight men named Aeschines: the first was our present subject; the second an author of handbooks on rhetoric; the third the orator who opposed Demosthenes;<sup>164</sup> the fourth an Arcadian, a student of Isocrates; the fifth a Mytilenaeon whom they call “the rhetoricians’ scourge”; the sixth a Neapolitan, an Academic philosopher, a student and beloved of Melanthius of Rhodes; the seventh a Milesian, a political writer; and the eighth a sculptor.

## ARISTIPPUS

Aristippus was by family a citizen of Cyrene,<sup>165</sup> but he was drawn to Athens, as Aeschines says, by the fame of Socrates. Assuming the profession of sophist, according to Phantias, the Peripatetic of Eresus, he was the first of the followers of Socrates to charge a fee and to send money to his teacher. One day, after sending him twenty minas,<sup>166</sup> he received them back, Socrates claiming that his *daimonion*<sup>167</sup> did not permit him to accept them, finding the offer itself offensive. Xenophon was ill disposed to Aristippus. And this is why the discourse against pleasure that he has Socrates making is directed against Aristippus.<sup>168</sup> Theodorus also maligns him in his work *On the Philosophic Schools*, as does Plato in his work *On the Soul*, as we have mentioned elsewhere.<sup>169</sup>

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He was skillful at adapting himself to place and time and person, and at playing his role suitably under all circumstances; this is why he was more esteemed than anyone else by Dionysius,<sup>170</sup> for he always managed to make the best of any

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163 Nothing is known of this Aristotle, beyond this derogatory nickname (Muthos in the original).

164 This Aeschines (389–314 BC) was a politician and orator; many of his speeches survive.

165 An ancient Greek city on the Mediterranean coast of Africa.

166 The mina was equal to one hundred drachmas, and one drachma was the average daily wage of a skilled worker.

167 The *daimonion* of Socrates—an internal voice he regarded as divine—reportedly told him when he was doing something wrong (see 2.32).

168 Presumably the reference is to the opening of Book 2 of Xenophon’s *Memorabilia*, where Socrates interrogates Aristippus on the subject of pleasure.

169 The work here called *On the Soul* is known to us as *Phaedo*, the dialogue that describes the death of Socrates. Aristippus is there said to be absent while visiting Aegina (59d), a remark that is not in itself a slander; however, Diogenes explains in his later treatment of this passage (3.36) that Aegina was close to Athens, so the fact that Aristippus did not rush to Socrates’ deathbed was conspicuous.

170 Dionysius II of Syracuse; see 2.63.

situation. He derived pleasure from enjoyments that were present, and did not trouble himself to seek those that were not; hence Diogenes<sup>171</sup> used to call him the “royal dog.”<sup>172</sup> And Timon sneered at him for his luxuriousness in these words:

Such is the luxurious nature of Aristippus, who traffics in lies.

67 One day, it is said, Aristippus gave orders for a partridge to be purchased for fifty drachmas; and when someone reproached him for it he said, “Would you have bought it for an obol?” And when the man nodded assent, Aristippus said, “Well, fifty drachmas mean no more to me.”<sup>173</sup> One day when Dionysius told him to pick one of three courtesans, Aristippus took them all, saying, “It did Paris no good to prefer one to the others.”<sup>174</sup> But when he had brought them as far as his porch, he let them depart, so extreme were his preferences and his disdain. This is why Strato (or Plato, according to some) once said to him, “To you alone it has been granted to sport both a fine cloak and rags.” When Dionysius spat at him, he put up with it. And when someone faulted him for this, he said, “Well, the fishermen put up with being sprinkled by the sea in order to catch the sardine; so should I not put up with being sprinkled with spittle, that I may catch the anchovy?”<sup>175</sup>

68 One day when Aristippus was walking past him, Diogenes, who was washing lettuces, mocked him and said, “If you had learned to live on these, you would not be paying court to tyrants”; to which Aristippus replied, “And if you had learned to associate with men, you would not be washing lettuces.” When asked what he had gained from philosophy, he said, “To be able to consort confidently with everyone.” Reproached one day for living extravagantly, he said, “If this were wrong, it would not be done at the festivals of the gods.” When asked one day what advantage philosophers enjoyed, he said, “If all the laws are  
69 repealed, we will live just as we do now.” When asked by Dionysius why the philosophers go to the doors of rich men but rich men no longer go to philoso-

171 Diogenes of Sinope, also known as Diogenes the Cynic (c. 412/03–c. 324/21 BC), was famous for spurning all physical comforts. Diogenes Laertius discusses his life and views at 6.20–81.

172 The word for “cynic” (*kunikos*) is derived from that for “dog” (*kuōn*), and Cynics were often termed “dogs.” A “royal dog” however, being both spoiled and subservient, would be the opposite of the Cynic ideal.

173 An obol is a tiny amount, one sixth of a drachma. Aristippus seems to have become wealthy largely thanks to the patronage of Dionysius II (see 2.82).

174 Aristippus here alludes to the myth of the Judgment of Paris: the Trojan prince Paris (then being raised as a shepherd) was asked to choose which of three goddesses—Hera, Athena, or Aphrodite—was the fairest; he chose Aphrodite because she promised him Helen of Sparta as a wife. Paris’s choice led to the Trojan War.

175 The Greek word for “anchovy,” *blennos*, has the double meaning “drooler” (perhaps because of its slimy skin). So by an ingenious pun, Dionysius, the “fish” Aristippus hopes to catch, is made to seem a driveling fool, after spitting in Aristippus’ direction.



Statuette of a draped female figure, fourth to third century BC.

phers, he said, “Because the philosophers know what they need, while the rich do not.” When asked how the educated differ from the uneducated, he said, “Just as horses that have been tamed differ from untamed horses.” One day, as he was entering the house of a courtesan and one of the young men with him blushed, he said, “It’s not hard to go in; what’s hard is not being able to leave.”

To someone who presented him with a riddle and said, “Solve it,” he replied, “Why, fool, do you want to solve it, since even unsolved it gives us trouble?”<sup>176</sup> He said it was better to be a beggar than to be uneducated; for the former is in need of money, the latter of humanity. When reviled one day, he withdrew; and when the other man pursued him and asked, “Why do you run away?” he said, “Because you have the right to malign me, while I have the right not to listen.” When someone said that he always saw philosophers at the doors of rich men, he replied, “Yes, and doctors at doors of sick people; but no one would prefer being sick to being a doctor.”

70

176 The verb for “solve” also means “untie” or “release,” so what Aristippus said was “Why, fool, do you want to release it, since even when tied up it gives us trouble?”

- 71 One day, on a voyage to Corinth, he was overtaken by a storm and became distressed. To someone who said, “We ordinary folk are not afraid, but you philosophers are scared to death,” he said, “That’s because the souls concerned are not comparable.” To someone who plumed himself on his vast knowledge, he said, “Just as people who eat and exercise most are not healthier than those who eat and exercise only as much as they need, likewise it is those who read with an eye not to quantity but to usefulness who are virtuous.” To a speechwriter who, after arguing on his behalf and winning the case, asked him “What good did Socrates do you?” he replied, “Just this: that the speeches you made in my defense are true.”
- 72 He gave his daughter Arete<sup>177</sup> the best advice, training her to despise excess. When someone asked him in what way his son would be better off if educated, he replied, “If nothing else, at least in the theater he won’t sit like a stone upon stone.” When someone brought his son to him as a student, Aristippus asked him for five hundred drachmas; and when the man said, “For that much I can buy a slave,” he replied, “Buy one, then, and you’ll have two.” He said that he took money from his students not for his own use, but so that they might know on what their money should be spent. When reproached one day because he hired a speechwriter to handle his lawsuit, he said, “Well, when I give a dinner, I hire a chef.”
- 73 Compelled one day by Dionysius<sup>178</sup> to discuss some doctrine of philosophy, he said, “It would be absurd that you should learn from me *what* to say, and yet instruct me *when* to say it.” They say that Dionysius was offended at this and made Aristippus recline at the foot of the table. And Aristippus said, “You must have wanted to make the place more prestigious.” When someone boasted of being a good diver, he said, “Aren’t you ashamed to pride yourself on the feats of a dolphin?” When asked one day how the wise man differs from the unwise, he said, “Send both of them naked among strangers, and you will learn.”<sup>179</sup> When someone boasted that he could drink a great deal without getting drunk, he said, “So can a mule.”
- 74 When someone reproached him for living with a courtesan, he said, “Is there any difference between taking a house in which many once lived and taking one in which no one has lived?” When the man said, “No,” he asked, “Or between sailing in a ship in which countless people once sailed or in one in which nobody has?” “None.” “Then it makes no difference,” he said, “whether

177 The name means “Virtue.” Arete evidently passed on the philosophy of her father to her own son, Aristippus the Younger, who was thereafter nicknamed *Métrodidaktos*, “Mother-Taught” (see 2.85).

178 Aristippus was at the court of the Syracusan tyrant at the time this exchange with Dionysius II took place.

179 Presumably meaning that the sage will show no embarrassment.



Terra-cotta *kylix* (drinking-cup), attributed to the Painter of Bologna 417, c. 460–450 BC. The tondo, in which the girl on the left carries a pair of writing tablets and a stylus, provides evidence of the education of women in the mid-fifth century BC.

the woman you live with has lived with many or with nobody.” When someone blamed him for taking fees though he was a student of Socrates, he said, “So I do! And Socrates, when people sent him grain and wine, used to accept a little and send back the rest; that’s because he had the preeminent Athenians to supply his needs,<sup>180</sup> whereas I have only Eutyichides, my slave.” He consorted with Lais the courtesan, as Sotion says in the second book of his *Successions*. To those who faulted him for it, he said, “I possess Lais, but am not possessed by her. For it’s the height of virtue not to abstain from pleasures, but to conquer and not be mastered by them.” To someone who reproached him for his extravagant banquet, he said, “Wouldn’t you have bought this for three obols?”<sup>181</sup> And when the man assented, he said, “Then it’s not I who love pleasure, but you who love money.” One day when Simus, Dionysius’ steward (a Phrygian and a pest), was showing him the tyrant’s luxurious house and its mosaic floors, Aristippus

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180 Though he took no payments for his teaching, Socrates was well treated by wealthy friends and often dined at their houses.

181 Three obols (half a drachma) would have been a modest sum for an extravagant dinner.

coughed up phlegm and spat in his face; and when the man got angry, Aristippus said, “I couldn’t find a more appropriate place.”

- 76 When Charondas (or Phaedo, according to some) asked, “Who is it that has drenched himself with unguent?” he replied, “I am the unfortunate wretch, and the king of the Persians is even more unfortunate than me. But consider this: since none of the other animals would be worse off for being perfumed, the same might be true of man. And may those blasted catamites die miserable deaths, who make it shameful for us to use a fine scent!”<sup>182</sup> When Plato reproached him for living extravagantly, he said, “Do you regard Dionysius as a good man?” When Plato assented, Aristippus said, “And yet he lives more extravagantly than I do; so nothing prevents one from living both extravagantly and nobly.” When asked how Socrates died, he said, “As I myself would wish to die.”<sup>183</sup> Polyxenus the sophist paid him a visit one day, and when he noticed women and costly food, he reproached Aristippus. A few moments later, Aristippus asked, “Can you join us today?” And when the other accepted the invitation, Aristippus said, “Why, then, did you fault us? For you evidently object not to the food, but to the cost.” When his servant, in the course of a journey, was carrying money and was oppressed by the weight of it (as Bias reports in his *Lectures*), Aristippus said, “Pour away the greater part and carry only as much as you can.” On a voyage once, when he realized that the vessel was manned by pirates, he took his money and began counting it; then, as if unintentionally, he threw it into the sea, and made a show of bemoaning his loss. According to others, he remarked that it was better for the money to be lost because of Aristippus than for Aristippus to be lost because of the money. When Dionysius asked him one day what he had come for, he said he had come to offer what he had, and to obtain what he had not. But some say he replied, “When I needed wisdom, I went to Socrates; but now that I need money, I have come to you.” He disparaged the general run of men who, when purchasing pots, strike them to test their soundness, but judge haphazardly when adopting a way of life. (Others, however, attribute this observation to Diogenes.) Once at a drinking party, when Dionysius ordered each guest to put on purple clothes and dance, Plato declined, saying<sup>184</sup>
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I could not wear women’s clothing;

182 “Catamite” is used here for the Greek *kinaidos*, an untranslatable term denoting either a lewd homosexual or an effeminate and passive one. Aristippus’ complaint is that such men, by using perfume too liberally, have given it a bad reputation.

183 As depicted in Plato’s *Phaedo*, Socrates met death with serenity and even welcomed it as a kind of healing.

184 In what follows, the two philosophers quote aptly from Euripides’ *Bacchae*. Plato recites a line spoken by Pentheus (line 836) to describe his aversion to the transports brought by Dionysus, god of revelry and ecstasy, while Aristippus quotes Tiresias (lines 317–18), who has willingly embraced the Dionysiac rites.

Aristippus, on the other hand, took the clothes and, when about to dance, made the apt reply:

For at the Bacchic revelry,  
She who is modest will not be corrupted.

Once when he asked a favor of Dionysius on behalf of a friend, and failed to obtain it, he fell to the tyrant's feet. And to someone who mocked him he said, "I am not to blame, but Dionysius, who has ears in his feet." When residing in Asia, he was taken captive by Artaphernes the satrap;<sup>185</sup> and when someone asked him, "Can you be confident under these circumstances?" he replied, "When, fool, could I be more confident than now, since I am going to converse with Artaphernes?" He used to say that those who obtained a general education but were deprived of philosophy were like the suitors of Penelope; for they had their way with Melantho, Polydora, and the other serving women, and were able to do everything but marry the mistress herself.<sup>186</sup> Ariston makes a similar remark; for he says that Odysseus, when he went down to Hades, saw and encountered almost all the dead, but never set eyes on the queen herself.<sup>187</sup>

When Aristippus was asked what subjects talented boys should study, he said, "Those that will be useful to them when they've become men." To someone who reproached him for going from Socrates to Dionysius, he said, "Well, I went to Socrates for education (*paideia*), to Dionysius for amusement (*paidia*)." When he had made some money by teaching, Socrates asked him, "Where did you get so much?" to which Aristippus replied, "Where you got so little."

To a courtesan who said, "I am pregnant by you," he said, "You could be no more sure of it than if, after walking through a field of rushes, you claimed you'd been pricked by one particular thorn." When someone reproached him for rejecting his own son as if he were not his offspring, he replied, "We know that phlegm and lice spring from us, but since they are useless we throw them as far away as possible." When he had received money from Dionysius, whereas Plato had received a book, and someone reproached him, he replied, "Well, I need money, and Plato needs books." To someone who asked him why Dionysius reproached him, he replied, "For the same reason others do."<sup>188</sup>

185 There were several Persians of this name who held the important command of Sardis, Persia's westernmost satrapal seat.

186 In Homer's *Odyssey*, Penelope faithfully waits twenty years for her husband, all the while besieged by unwelcome suitors. These men abuse her hospitality, partly by sleeping with her serving women.

187 Odysseus travels to Hades in Book 11 of the *Odyssey*. There he speaks to a number of the dead, but does not encounter Persephone, queen of the underworld.

188 The point of the quip is obscure.

82 He asked Dionysius for money, and the tyrant replied, “But you said that the wise man would not be at a loss.” Taking him up, Aristippus said, “Give me some, and let us consider the question.” And when Dionysius had given him money he said, “Do you observe that I have not been at a loss?” And when Dionysius said to him:

He who traffics with a tyrant becomes his slave,  
Though he comes to him a free man;

Aristippus replied,

If free to come, he is no slave.<sup>189</sup>

This is reported by Diocles in his work *On the Lives of Philosophers*; others attribute the remark to Plato. Though incensed with Aeschines, Aristippus soon said, “Shall we not reconcile and give up talking nonsense, or will you wait until someone reconciles us over the wine-cup?” To this Aeschines replied, “I’d be glad to reconcile.” “Remember, then,” said Aristippus, “that I, though older, 83 approached you first.” And Aeschines said, “Well and rightly said, by Hera! Your venture was far better than mine; for I started a quarrel, you a friendship.” These are the remarks attributed to him.

There have been four men named Aristippus: the first was our present subject; the second the author of a book about Arcadia; the third, known as the Mother-Taught, was the grandson of the first Aristippus by his daughter; and the fourth a philosopher of the New Academy.

To the Cyrenaic philosopher are attributed a history of Libya in three books, sent to Dionysius, and a volume containing twenty-five dialogues, some written in Attic, others in Doric, including the following:

84 *Artabazus*  
*To the Shipwrecked*  
*To the Exiles*  
*To a Beggar*  
*To Lais*  
*To Prorus*  
*To Lais, about the Mirror*  
*Hermes*  
*A Dream*  
*To the Toastmaster*  
*Philomelus*  
*To His Friends*

189 These lines apparently come from a lost play of Sophocles.



Portrait of Aristippus in a roundel, from a 1692 edition of Diogenes Laertius published in Amsterdam.

*To Those Who Reproach Him for Acquiring Old Wine and Courtesans*

*To Those Who Reproach Him for Dining Extravagantly*

*A Letter to His Daughter Arete*

*To One in Training for the Olympic Games*

*A Question*

*Another Question*

*An Anecdote Addressed to Dionysius*

*Another, on the Statue*

*Another, on the Daughter of Dionysius*

*To One Who Considers Himself Dishonored*

*To One Who Undertakes to Offer Advice*

Some say that he wrote six books of essays; others, including Sosicrates of Rhodes, that he wrote none at all.

85 According to Sotion (in his second book) and Panaetius, his writings include the following:

*On Education*  
*On Virtue*  
*Exhortation*  
*Artabazus*  
*The Shipwrecked*  
*The Exiles*  
*Essay*, six books  
*Anecdotes*, three books  
*To Laïs*  
*To Prorus*  
*To Socrates*  
*On Fortune*

He declared the goal to be the smooth motion that results in sensation.

86 Since we have written his life, let us now go through the philosophers of the Cyrenaic school that started with him, although some call themselves Hegesiacs, some Annicerians, still others Theodoreans.<sup>190</sup> We should also go through the followers of Phaedo, whose leaders formed the Eretrian school.<sup>191</sup> The succession runs thus: Aristippus' disciples were his daughter Arete, Aethiops of Ptolemais, and Antipater of Cyrene. The student of Arete was Aristippus, nicknamed the Mother-Taught; Aristippus' student was Theodorus the Godless, later nicknamed God.<sup>192</sup> Antipater's student was Epitimides of Cyrene; Epitimides' was Paraebates; and Paraebates' were Hegesias, the "Death-Persuader,"<sup>193</sup> and Anniceris, who ransomed Plato.<sup>194</sup>

87 Those who followed the way of life of Aristippus and were called Cyrenaics held the following views. They supposed that there were two states, pain and pleasure, the latter being a smooth motion, the former a rough one.<sup>195</sup> Pleasure

190 The names are derived from three leaders of branches of the Cyrenaic school in the early third century BC: Hegesias of Cyrene, Anniceris, and Theodorus, widely known as "the Godless." The differing doctrines of the three branches are discussed at 2.93–104.

191 Founded by Menedemus of Eretria (c. 339–c. 265 BC), discussed at 2.125–44. Menedemus studied with Phaedo, a former follower of Socrates, at the latter's school in Elis (see 2.105).

192 An ironic nickname, since Theodorus was an atheist (see 2.97–103).

193 The Greek epithet Peisithanatos was given to Hegesias after he published a book extolling self-starvation.

194 Diogenes has confused two Cyrenaicans, both named Anniceris. Plato, reportedly sold into slavery by Dionysius II, was, according to Diogenes (see 3.19–20), ransomed by an Anniceris, but one who lived much earlier than the Anniceris mentioned here.

195 Aristippus and his followers described pain and pleasure as "motions" of the soul, a unique formulation.



Silver-gilt attachments, fourth to third century BC, Greek.  
It is believed that these heads—two of horned Pan, two of helmeted Athena—served as decorative elements to an object such as a vase.

does not differ from pleasure, nor is one thing a greater source of pleasure than another. Pleasure is agreeable and pain repulsive to all living beings. But bodily pleasure, which for them is the goal, as Panaetius says in his work *On the Philosophical Schools*, is not the sedate pleasure that follows from the removal of pains, or the sort of freedom from discomfort that Epicurus<sup>196</sup> accepts and claims is the goal. They also hold that their goal is different from happiness. For the goal is a particular kind of pleasure, whereas happiness is the sum total of the particular pleasures, among which they count both past and future pleasures.

The particular pleasure is to be chosen for its own sake, whereas happiness is not to be chosen for its own sake, but for the sake of the particular pleasures. The proof that pleasure is the goal is that from childhood we are instinctively drawn to it, and that when we obtain it we do not seek for anything more, and we avoid nothing so much as its opposite, pain. Pleasure is good even if it results from the most shameful conduct, as Hippobotus says in his work *On the Philosophical Schools*. For even if the action is inappropriate, the pleasure that results from it is to be chosen for its own sake and is good. But the removal of pain, which has been discussed in Epicurus, does not seem to the Cyrenaics to be pleasure; no more than the absence of pleasure seems to be pain. For they regard both pleasure and pain as consisting in motion, whereas absence of pain or absence of pleasure is not motion, since absence of pain is like the condition of one who is asleep. They maintain that some people, whose judgment has been perverted, are capable of *not* choosing pleasure. Not all mental pleasures and pains result from physical pleasures and pains. For example, one rejoices in the simple prosperity of one's country just as one does in one's own prosperity. But they hold that pleasure is not derived from memory or the expectation of good, which was a doctrine of Epicurus. For the motion of the soul is dissipated

196 In Book 10 Diogenes elaborates on the differences between Epicureans and Cyrenaics (see especially 10.136–37).

over time. They hold that pleasures do not result from merely seeing or hearing. At any rate, we listen with pleasure to those who imitate funeral dirges, but without pleasure to those who chant actual dirges. They called the absence of pleasure and the absence of pain the intermediate states. Yet they regard bodily pleasures as far superior to mental pleasures, and bodily pains as far worse than mental pains, which is why the guilty are punished with bodily pains. For they assume that pain is harder to bear, and that we find pleasure preferable. They therefore pay more attention to the body than to the mind. Hence, though pleasure is to be chosen for its own sake, they hold that the things that produce certain pleasures are often painful in nature, the very opposite of pleasure; so that the accumulating of pleasures that don't produce happiness seems to them exceedingly troublesome.

- 91 They do not assert that every wise man lives pleasantly, and every worthless man painfully, but that this is generally the case. It is sufficient to enjoy, one by one, the pleasures that come our way. They say that practical wisdom is a good, though it is not to be chosen for its own sake, but for its consequences; that a friend is a good by reason of the benefits he affords us, just as we cherish a part of the body as long as we have the use of it; that some of the virtues are found even in the foolish; that physical training helps one to acquire virtue; that the sage will not be susceptible to envy or lust or superstition, since these feelings spring from empty opinion. But he will experience pain and fear; for these feelings are natural. Wealth also produces pleasure, though it should not be chosen for its own sake. They hold that the affections are comprehensible. (They mean the affections themselves, not their causes.)
- 92 They eschewed the study of nature because of its apparent incomprehensibility, but applied themselves to logic for the sake of its usefulness. But Meleager, in the second book of his work *On Opinions*, and Clitomachus, in the first book of his work *On the Philosophical Schools*, say that the Cyrenaics regarded both natural philosophy and logic as useless. For once a man has learned the theory of good and evil, he is able to speak well, to be free of superstition, and to escape the fear of death. Nothing is just or beautiful or ugly by nature, but only by convention and custom. The man who is eager for the good will do nothing wrong, since he will be deterred by the prospect of punishments and disrepute; and he is the wise man. They allow for progress in philosophy and in other fields. They hold that one man's pain may exceed that of another, and that sensations are not always trustworthy.
- 93

The so-called Hegesiacs<sup>197</sup> gave their attention to the same objects, namely pleasure and pain. They held that there is no such thing as gratitude, friendship,

197 Diogenes here elaborates on the threefold division of the heirs of Aristippus that he laid out at 2.85.



Marble statue of a wounded Amazon, Roman copy of a Greek bronze of c. 450–425 BC.

or beneficence, since we do not choose these things for their own sake but for the advantages they afford us, apart from which these things do not exist. They held that happiness is wholly impossible, since the body is infected with many sufferings, and the soul shares the body's sufferings and is disturbed by them, and fortune disappoints many of our expectations; consequently, happiness has no actual existence. They held that both life and death may be equally desirable. They assumed that nothing is pleasant or unpleasant by nature. It is due to lack or novelty or surfeit that the same things are pleasant to some, unpleasant to others. Poverty and wealth count for nothing when it comes to pleasure, since

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the wealthy and the poor do not experience pleasure differently. Slavery and freedom are equally irrelevant when it comes to measuring pleasure, noble birth  
 95 is as irrelevant as low birth, good reputation as irrelevant as disrepute. To the fool life is advantageous; to the wise it is a matter of indifference. The wise man will do everything with an eye to his own interests, since he regards no one else as equally deserving. For even if he appears to reap the greatest advantages from someone else, these do not compare with what he himself contributes. They also rejected sense perceptions, because they do not yield accurate knowledge. They held that one should do everything that appears reasonable and that faults should be pardoned, since no one errs willingly, but only under the constraint of some passion; and that we should not hate others, but rather teach them better. The wise man will not have as great an advantage in his choice of goods as he will in his ability to avoid evils, since he makes it his goal to live without  
 96 pain or grief. This is the advantage enjoyed by those who remain indifferent with regard to the sources of pleasure.

The Annicerians agreed with them in all other respects, but allowed for friendship, gratitude, respect for parents, and duty on behalf of one's country. Hence, if the wise man suffers torments, he will be no less happy, even if only a few pleasures accrue to him. The happiness of a friend is not preferable in itself, since it is imperceptible to his neighbor. Reason is not sufficient to instill self-confidence or to render us superior to the opinion of the multitude. One must form habits, taking into account the bad predispositions that have  
 97 been cultivated in us over the years. One should cherish a friend not only for his usefulness (for if that fails, we would not associate with him), but for the goodwill for the sake of which we will even endure hardships. Yet though we make pleasure our goal and are vexed when deprived of it, nevertheless we willingly endure this out of affection for our friend.

The so-called Theodoreans derived their name from Theodorus, whom we wrote of earlier, and adhered to his doctrines. Theodorus utterly rejected beliefs about the gods. We came across his book *On the Gods*, which is not easy to despise.<sup>198</sup> It is from this book, they say, that Epicurus borrowed most of what he said on the subject.<sup>199</sup>

98 Theodorus also studied with Anniceris and Dionysius the dialectician, as Antisthenes of Rhodes says in his *Successions of Philosophers*. He considered joy and grief to be ends, the former of wisdom, the latter of folly. He regarded

198 Diogenes' wording here suggests that he had expected to find such a book, with its dismissal of the existence of the gods, contemptible.

199 Epicureans were not in fact atheistic, although they criticized popular conceptions of the gods; see 10.123–24.

wisdom and justice as goods, their opposites as evils, and pleasure and pain as intermediate states. He rejected friendship because it exists neither among the foolish nor among the wise. In the former case, when the need disappears, so does the friendship; as for the wise, they are so self-sufficient that they have no need of friends. He says that it is reasonable for the earnest man not to destroy himself for his country, since he would not throw away his wisdom to benefit the foolish.

He said that the world was his native land; and that theft, adultery, and sacrilege were permissible on occasion, since none of these is shameful by nature, once the conventional views about them (which exist only to constrain the foolish) are dispelled. Openly, and without any embarrassment, the wise man will engage in sexual relations with those he loves.<sup>200</sup> This was why he advanced some of his arguments by interrogations of this kind: “Would a woman skilled in grammar be useful insofar as she is skilled in grammar?” “Yes.” “And would a boy or a young man <skilled in grammar> be useful insofar as he is skilled in grammar?” “Yes.” “And would a beautiful woman be useful insofar as she is beautiful? And would a boy or a youth who is beautiful be useful insofar as he is beautiful?” “Yes.” “So a boy or a youth who is beautiful would be useful insofar as he is beautiful?” “Yes.” “So is he useful for sexual relations?” Once these points were admitted, he would press on. “So if anyone has sexual relations, insofar as this is useful, he does no wrong; nor, if he uses beauty, insofar as it is useful, will he do wrong.” It was with interrogations of this kind that he fortified his discourse. 99 100

He seems to have been called God after the following exchange with Stilpo:<sup>201</sup> “So are you, Theodorus, what you claim to be?” And when Theodorus nodded assent, Stilpo said, “And do you claim that you are god?”<sup>202</sup> When Theodorus assented, Stilpo said, “Then you are god.” When Theodorus gladly admitted as much, Stilpo laughed and said, “But by this argument, poor fellow, you would acknowledge that you are a jackdaw and ten thousand other things.”

One day, when Theodorus was sitting beside Euryclides the hierophant,<sup>203</sup> he said, “Tell me, Euryclides, who are they who violate the Mysteries.” And when the man replied, “Those who reveal them to the uninitiated,” Theodorus 101

200 In the Greek text, the gender of *erōmenois* (“those he loves”) is masculine, and the word itself is used frequently in the context of pederastic relationships, so perhaps that is the primary referent here.

201 A philosopher of the Megarian school; Diogenes discusses his life and views at 2.113–20.

202 The question, in Greek, can be interpreted in two very different ways. Theodorus understood Stilpo to be asking “So you do claim that god exists?” a possible meaning of his words, but Stilpo takes Theodorus to be answering the question “So you do claim to be a god?”—an equally possible meaning. The untranslatable ambiguity explains Stilpo’s quip.

203 The hierophant was the chief priest of the Eleusinian Mysteries, rites in honor of the goddess Demeter and her daughter Persephone. The nature of the rites was kept strictly secret from the uninitiated.

said, “Then you violate them too, since you explain them to the uninitiated.”<sup>204</sup> And yet he would hardly have escaped being brought before the Areopagus if Demetrius of Phalerum had not protected him.<sup>205</sup> Amphykrates, in his work *On Illustrious Men*, says that Theodorus was condemned to drink hemlock.

102 Residing for a time at the court of Ptolemy, son of Lagus, Theodorus was once sent by Ptolemy as an ambassador to Lysimachus.<sup>206</sup> When he expressed himself with great frankness, Lysimachus said, “Tell me, aren’t you the Theodorus who was banished from Athens?” Theodorus replied, “You have been well informed; for when Athens could not bear me, she expelled me, just as Semele expelled Dionysus.”<sup>207</sup> When Lysimachus replied, “Take care not to come here again,” Theodorus said, “I won’t, unless Ptolemy sends me.” When Mithras, Lysimachus’ minister, who was standing nearby, said, “It seems that you ignore not only gods, but kings as well,” Theodorus replied, “How can I ignore the gods, when I consider you their enemy?” They say that one day in Corinth, when Theodorus was walking by with a number of students, Metrocles the Cynic,<sup>208</sup> who was washing wild chervil, said, “Hey there, sophist! You would not have needed so many students had you washed lettuces.” To which Theodorus replied, “And had you learned to associate with men, you would not  
103 have needed to occupy yourself with those lettuces.” The same remark has been attributed, as was mentioned earlier, to both Diogenes and Aristippus.<sup>209</sup>

Such was Theodorus’ character and his discourse. Finally he returned to Cyrene, lived with Magas,<sup>210</sup> and continued to be accorded every honor. The first time he was expelled from Cyrene he is said to have made a charming remark; for he said, “You do well, men of Cyrene, to banish me from Libya to Greece.”

There have been twenty men named Theodorus. The first was a Samian, the son of Rhoecus. It was he who advised laying charcoal under the foundation of the temple in Ephesus; for the site was very damp, and he said that

204 The point of the quip is that the hierophant inevitably reveals the secret rites of Eleusis to the uninitiated at the moment he initiates them.

205 The Areopagus (literally, “the rock of Ares”) was the site of an Athenian high court. It’s unclear on what capital charge Theodorus was tried there, but impiety is the most likely possibility. On Demetrius of Phalerum, who administered Athenian affairs between 317 and 307 BC, see 5.75–85.

206 Ptolemy and Lysimachus were both among Alexander the Great’s Successors, the officers who controlled parts of the Macedonian Empire after Alexander’s death. Ptolemy ruled Egypt, while Lysimachus had his base of power in Thrace. The Successors negotiated with one another constantly and so required frequent diplomatic communications, often using sages as their envoys.

207 Semele, daughter of King Cadmus of Thebes, was made pregnant by Zeus; after Zeus scorched her to death by appearing to her in his true form, as the lightning bolt, the fetal Dionysus was rescued from her ashes and sewed into Zeus’ thigh to complete his gestation.

208 Diogenes discusses the life of Metrocles at 6.94–95.

209 See 2.68 and 6.58.

210 Magas, adoptive son of Ptolemy, was governor of Cyrenaica, in eastern North Africa. The name Magas has been supplied by editors in place of the obscure “Marius” in the manuscripts.



Pedagogue and boy, third to second century BC, Greek.

once the charcoal had lost its woody part, the solid part would be impermeable to moisture. The second Theodorus was a Cyrenaean geometer whose lectures Plato attended; the third our present subject; the fourth the writer of an excellent book on exercising the voice; the fifth an authority on composers of music, beginning with Terpander;<sup>211</sup> the sixth a Stoic; the seventh a writer on the Romans; the eighth a Syracusan author on tactics; the ninth a man from Byzantium known for his political speeches, as was the tenth, whom Aristotle mentions in his epitome of orators; the eleventh was a Theban sculptor; the twelfth a painter mentioned by Polemon; the thirteenth an Athenian painter of whom Menodotus writes; the fourteenth an Ephesian painter mentioned by Theophranes in his work *On Painting*; the fifteenth a poet who wrote epigrams; the sixteenth a writer on poets; the seventeenth a doctor, a student of Athenaeus; the eighteenth a Stoic philosopher from Chios; the nineteenth a Milesian, also a Stoic philosopher; and the twentieth an author of tragedies.

104

211 A seventh-century BC musician credited with a number of accomplishments, including the invention of a seven-string lyre.

## PHAEDO

105 Phaedo of Elis, of the Eupatridae,<sup>212</sup> was taken prisoner when his native land was conquered, and was forced to stay in a brothel. But he would close its door and take part in conversations with Socrates, until the latter induced Alcibiades or Crito to buy his freedom. From then on he studied philosophy as a free man. Hieronymus, in his work *On Suspension of Judgment*, attacks Phaedo and calls him a slave. Of the dialogues attributed to him the *Zopyrus* and *Simon* are genuine; the *Nicias* is doubtful; the *Medius* is attributed by some to Aeschines, by others to Polyaenus; *Antimachus*, or *The Elder*, is also doubtful; and the cobbler's dialogues<sup>213</sup> are attributed by some to Aeschines.

He was succeeded by Plistanus of Elis, and in the third generation by Menedemus of Eretria and Asclepiades of Phlius, both of whom had left the school of Stilpo. Until then, it was known as the Elian school, but after Menedemus it was called the Eretrian school. We will speak later<sup>214</sup> of Menedemus, because he too founded a school.

## EUCLIDES

106 Euclides was a native of Megara on the Isthmus of Corinth, or according to some, of Gela, as Alexander says in his *Successions*. He devoted himself to the study of Parmenides' works,<sup>215</sup> and his successors were called Megarians, then Eristics, and later Dialecticians, a name they were first given by Dionysius of Chalcedon because they framed their discourses in the form of question and answer. Hermodorus says that Plato and the other philosophers came to Euclides after the death of Socrates because they feared the cruelty of tyrants. He declared that the good is one, though it is called by many names: sometimes wisdom, sometimes god, sometimes mind, and so forth. He rejected what is opposed to the good, claiming that it does not exist.

107 When he faulted logical demonstrations, it was not their premises that he attacked, but the conclusion. And he rejected argument by analogy, saying that the argument must be based either on similar or dissimilar terms. If it

212 Eupatridae means "of good fathers." It can refer to aristocratic descent generally or can be an actual family name.

213 Simon, the subject of the eponymous dialogue mentioned just above, was a cobbler who followed Socrates and was employed as an interlocutor in certain lost Socratic dialogues. See 2.122–24.

214 At 2.125–44.

215 Parmenides of Elea (fl. early fifth century BC) wrote a philosophical poem, *On Nature*, that examined the nature of reality. His life and views are discussed at 9.21–23.

is based on similar terms, then it would be better to argue from the things themselves, not from things that are similar to them; and if it is based on dissimilar terms, then the juxtaposition is superfluous. Hence Timon, in the course of sniping at the other Socratics, speaks of him as follows:

But I care not for these babblers,  
nor for anyone else, nor for Phaedo, whoever he is, nor  
[the wrangler Euclides,  
who has infected the Megarians with a rage for disputation.

He wrote six dialogues: *Lamprias*, *Aeschines*, *Phoenix*, *Crito*, *Alcibiades*, and *On Love*. One of Euclides' successors was Eubulides of Miletus, who wrote many dialectical arguments in the interrogatory form, including the liar, the concealed, Electra, the veiled man, the sorites, the horns, and the bald head.<sup>216</sup> One of the comic writers says of him: 108

The Eristic Eubulides, who conducted interrogations about horns,  
And confounded the orators with lying, boastful arguments,  
Has departed with the empty bragging of Demosthenes.

It seems that Demosthenes<sup>217</sup> had also been his student and with his help had overcome an inability to pronounce the letter R. Eubulides was at variance with Aristotle and often sought to discredit his doctrines.<sup>218</sup> 109

Among Eubulides' other successors was Alexinus of Elis, an exceedingly contentious man, which is why he was nicknamed Elenxinus.<sup>219</sup> He was particularly at variance with Zeno.<sup>220</sup> Hermippus says of him that after he had departed Elis<sup>221</sup> for Olympia, it was there that he pursued philosophy. When his students asked him why he settled there, he replied that he wanted to found a school that would be called the Olympian school.<sup>222</sup> But since their provisions ran low and they judged the place unhealthy, they returned, and Alexinus spent the rest of his life in solitude with only one servant. Later on, while swimming in the river Alpheus, he was pierced by the point of a reed and died of his wound.

216 These arguments were various philosophical puzzles and paradoxes that were widely discussed in antiquity. For example, the Horns argument is based on the statement: "If you have not lost something, you have it." It seems to follow that if a man has not lost horns, he has them.

217 The famous orator of fourth-century Athens, many of whose speeches survive.

218 Some fragments survive of a work by Eubulides criticizing Aristotle.

219 A pun on the name Alexinus; the nickname means Wrangler or Arguer.

220 Zeno of Citium (335–263 BC) was the founder of the Stoic school; his life and views are discussed at 7.1–160.

221 A city-state in western Greece, in the Peloponnese.

222 "Olympian" in Greek was nearly equivalent to "divine," since Mount Olympus (in a very different part of Greece than the city Olympia) was the home of the gods.

110 My own verses about him run as follows:

It was no idle tale  
That an unlucky man,  
While diving pierced his foot with a nail.  
Since that august man, Alexinus,  
Before he could cross the Alpheus,  
Was pricked by a reed and died.

He wrote not only a reply to Zeno, but many other books as well, including one against Ephorus the historian.

One of Eubulides' students was Euphantus of Olynthus, who wrote a history of his own times. He was also the author of several tragedies, for which he was highly esteemed at the competitions. He was also the teacher of King Antigonus,<sup>223</sup> to whom he dedicated a treatise, *On Kingship*, that was very popular. He died of old age.

111 Eubulides had other students, including Apollonius Cronus, of whom Diodorus, son of Ameinias of Iasus, who was also nicknamed Cronus,<sup>224</sup> was a student. It was of him that Callimachus in his epigrams says,

Momus himself  
Wrote on the walls, "Cronus is wise."<sup>225</sup>

Diodorus was also a dialectician and was thought by some to have invented the Veiled Man and Horns arguments. When residing at the court of Ptolemy Soter,<sup>226</sup> he had certain dialectical questions posed to him by Stilpo. Unable to solve them on the spot, he was reproached by the king; among  
112 other things, by way of a joke, he was nicknamed Cronus. After leaving the drinking party and writing an account of the problem, he killed himself in despair. My own verses about him run as follows:

Diodorus Cronus, which of the gods  
Plunged you into such wretched despair  
That you threw yourself into Tartarus  
When you failed to solve Stilpo's riddle?

223 Probably Antigonus II Gonatas, king of Macedonia, is meant, rather than his grandfather Antigonus I Monophthalmus ("One-Eyed"). Both men ruled over portions of Alexander's empire.

224 Diodorus Cronus (d. c. 284 BC) was a prominent dialectician and a teacher of Zeno, the founder of Stoicism. Cronus was the ruler of the gods before being overthrown by Zeus, his son. As a nickname, Cronus seems to refer to the confusion of advanced old age (see below).

225 Momus ("Blame") was the god of mockery and ridicule. The point of the joke here may be that Momus inverts ordinary hierarchies by calling a foolish man wise.

226 Ptolemy I (c. 367–282 BC), king of Egypt, who also kept Theodorus at his court (see 2.102).

You have indeed shown yourself a “Cronus,”  
Without the R and without the C.<sup>227</sup>

Euclides’ successors include Ichthyas, son of Mettalus, a man of noble character, to whom Diogenes the Cynic<sup>228</sup> addressed a dialogue; Clinomachus of Thurii, who was the first to write about propositions, predicates, and the like; and Stilpo of Megara, a highly distinguished philosopher, of whom we must speak.

## STILPO

Stilpo, a citizen of Megara in Greece, studied with some of Euclides’ successors; others say that he studied with Euclides himself, but also, according to Heraclides, with Thrasymachus of Corinth, who was a student of Ichthyas. He so far surpassed the rest in ingenuity and subtlety that nearly all of Greece looked to him and started to “Megarize.”<sup>229</sup> About him Philip the Megarian says, and I quote, “For from Theophrastus<sup>230</sup> he drew away Metrodorus the theorist, and Timagoras of Gela; from Aristotle of Cyrene, Clitarchus and Simmias; and from the dialecticians he drew Paeonius from Aristides. And he made Diphilus of the Bosphorus, son of Euphantus, and Myrmex, son of Exaenetus, who had both come to refute him, his zealous admirers.” Besides these, he won over Phrasidemus the Peripatetic, an expert in natural philosophy, and the rhetorician Alcinus, the foremost among the Greek orators; he also captivated Crates and a great many others; along with these, he even carried off Zeno the Phoenician.<sup>231</sup> He was also exceedingly well versed in politics.

He had a wife, and he lived with a courtesan, Nicarete, as Onetor has somewhere said. He had a dissolute daughter, who was married to one of his friends, Simmias of Syracuse. And when she did not live according to custom, someone told Stilpo that she had ruined his reputation. But he replied, “No more than I have burnished hers.”

227 Cronos (the Greek spelling of Cronus) minus the C and the R becomes “onos,” the ancient Greek word for “donkey” or “ass.”

228 The life and views of Diogenes the Cynic (c. 413/03–c. 324/21 BC) are discussed at 6.20–81.

229 In this case, “Megarize” would mean something like “to follow the teachings of Stilpo of Megara.” The Greeks ordinarily used such formulations in the context of political alliances; to “Medize” meant to favor the Persians, or Medes, in the Greco-Persian wars.

230 Theophrastus became head of the Lyceum after Aristotle, in the late fourth century BC. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 5.36–57.

231 Crates is discussed at 6.85–93, Zeno at 7.1–160. The other figures in this list of Stilpo’s converts are largely unknown.

115 He was received, they say, by Ptolemy Soter.<sup>232</sup> And when Ptolemy took possession of Megara, he gave Stilpo a gift of money and invited him to sail back to Egypt with him. Stilpo accepted a moderate sum, but declined the journey and removed to Aegina until Ptolemy sailed. Furthermore, when Demetrius, son of Antigonus, seized Megara, he saw to it that Stilpo's house was preserved and all his plundered property returned. It was then that Demetrius requested a list of his lost property, and Stilpo said that nothing that truly belonged to him had been lost; for no one had taken away his education, and he retained his reason and his knowledge.

116 When Stilpo spoke to Demetrius about benevolence to one's fellow men, he argued so effectively that Demetrius paid heed to him. They say that Stilpo once proposed some such argument about the Athena of Phidias:<sup>233</sup> "Isn't Athena, daughter of Zeus, a god?" When the other said, "Yes," Stilpo said, "Yet this is not by Zeus, but by Phidias." When the other agreed, Stilpo said, "Then this is not a god." For this he was summoned to the Areopagus,<sup>234</sup> where he did not deny what he had said, but claimed that his reasoning was correct; for Athena was not a god, but a goddess; it was the males who were gods. The Areopagites nevertheless ordered him to leave the city at once. It was then that Theodorus, who was nicknamed God,<sup>235</sup> made the mocking remark, "How does Stilpo know this? Did he pull up her dress and see her bush?"<sup>236</sup> Theodorus was indeed quite brazen, but Stilpo quite ingenious.

117 When Crates asked him whether the gods enjoy obeisance and prayers, they say that Stilpo replied, "Don't inquire about these things, foolish fellow, on the street, but when we are alone." This is the same answer Bion<sup>237</sup> made when he was asked whether gods exist:

Won't you scatter the crowd from me, you long-suffering elder?<sup>238</sup>

232 Ptolemy, though based in Egypt, extended his realm northward as far as Megara, for which city he contested with Demetrius Poliorcetes, king of Macedonia, in the last decade of the fourth century BC.

233 Phidias was the most famous Greek sculptor of the fifth century BC. He created the statue of Zeus at Olympia (one of the Seven Wonders of the World) as well as the statue of Athena in the Parthenon.

234 The location of the Athenian high court.

235 Because Theodorus was well-known for his rejection of the deities, the nickname is ironic. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 2.97–103.

236 The Greek word translated here, *kēpos*, means "garden" but can also refer to female genitalia.

237 Bion of Borysthenes (c. 335–c. 245 BC) was a philosopher at the court of Antigonus II, in Macedonia. His life and views are discussed at 4.46–58.

238 The point of the comment, delivered in the meter and diction of epic poetry, is obscure, but perhaps Bion refers to the danger of discussing such questions in public.

The “Varvakeion” Athena, a miniature from AD 200–250 from the original by Phidias. Found in 1880 in Athens, near the Varvakeion school, this statuette is the most faithful and best preserved copy of the original, which was erected in the Parthenon in 438 BC. The face and arms are plated with ivory, and the rest of the statue is faced with leaves of gold.



Stilpo was plain and unaffected and at ease with the ordinary man. At any rate, when Crates the Cynic did not answer the question put to him, but merely broke wind, Stilpo said, “I knew you would utter anything but what you should.” One day when Crates offered him a fig while posing a question, Stilpo took the fig and ate it; and when Crates said, “O Heracles, I have lost the fig,” Stilpo said, “Not only the fig, but also the question of which the fig was the security deposit.”<sup>239</sup> Another time, catching sight of Crates suffering in the winter cold, he said, “Crates, you seem to me to need a new coat” (that is, to need sense as well as a coat).<sup>240</sup> Offended, Crates parodied him as follows:

118

And I saw Stilpo enduring grievous ills  
 In Megara, where they say the bed of Typhoeus<sup>241</sup> is.  
 And there he would wrangle, surrounded by many companions;  
 They would pass their time chasing virtue by transposing letters.

239 It seems that Stilpo jokingly treats the fig as a down payment on the answer to Crates’ question; rather than answering, he eats the fig, thus getting the better of Crates.

240 The Greek word for “new” (in the phrase “new coat”) is *kainou*, which, if divided into two words, forms the phrase *kai nou*, meaning “and a mind” or “and intelligence.” The same quip recurs at 6.3.

241 Typhoeus (also called Typhon) was a mythical storm-giant who fought against Zeus in the war with the Titans and personified the destructive power of storms.

119 It is said that at Athens he attracted so much attention that men would run together from their workshops to see him. And when someone remarked, “They marvel at you, Stilpo, as if you were a strange beast,” he replied, “Not at all, but as if I were a genuine man.” Exceptionally clever at disputation, he rejected even the Ideas,<sup>242</sup> to the point where he would say that when someone says “man” he does not mean any man in particular; for he means neither this man nor that. For why should he mean this one more than that? Hence he does not mean this particular man. Again: “vegetable” is not this vegetable that someone shows me; for vegetable existed ten thousand years ago. Hence it is not this vegetable. They say that right in the middle of a conversation with Crates he rushed off to buy some fish; and when Crates tried to detain him and said, “Are you leaving the argument?” he replied, “Not at all. The argument I’m keeping; it’s you I’m leaving. For the argument abides, but the fish is going to be sold.”

120 Nine dialogues, lifeless in style, are attributed to him: *Moschus*, *Aristippus* or *Callias*, *Ptolemy*, *Chaerecrates*, *Metrocles*, *Anaximenes*, *Epigenes*, *To His Daughter*, and *Aristotle*. Heraclides says that Zeno, the founder of the Stoic school, was his student. Hermippus says that he died at an advanced age, after taking wine in order to hasten his end.

My own verses about him run as follows:

Surely you know Stilpo the Megarian,  
Whom old age overtook, and then disease, an unconquerable pair.  
But he found in wine a charioteer more powerful  
Than that evil team, since after drinking he outstripped them.

He was also mocked by Sophilus the comic poet in his drama *The Wedding*:

The reasoning of Charinus is simply stoppers for Stilpo.<sup>243</sup>

## CRITO

121 Crito was a native Athenian. He was exceedingly fond of Socrates, and took such care of him that he never left any of his needs unmet.<sup>244</sup> And his sons also studied with Socrates: Critobulus, Hermogenes, Epigenes, and Ctesippus. Crito wrote a single book containing seventeen dialogues under the following titles:

242 That is, the theory of the Forms elaborated in a number of Plato’s dialogues.

243 “Stoppers,” or bungs, might be used to plug someone’s mouth, so the point may be that the logic of Charinus could be wielded by Stilpo to silence his opponents.

244 In Plato’s dialogue *Crito*, Crito offers to help Socrates escape from prison and to introduce him to friends in Thessaly who will protect him.

*That Men Are Not Made Good as the Result of Instruction*  
*On Greed*  
*What Is Appropriate or The Statesman*  
*On the Beautiful*  
*On Wickedness*  
*On Good Management*  
*On Law*  
*On the Divine*  
*On the Arts*  
*On Associating with a Teacher*  
*On Wisdom*  
*Protagoras or The Statesman*  
*On Letters*  
*On the Art of Poetry*  
*On the Beautiful*<sup>245</sup>  
*On Learning*  
*On Knowing or On Knowledge*  
*What Is Knowledge*

## SIMON

Simon was an Athenian and a cobbler. When Socrates visited his workshop and conversed on any subject, Simon made notes of all he could remember, which is why they call his works the cobbler's dialogues. There are thirty-three<sup>246</sup> in a single volume:

122

*On the Gods*  
*On the Good*  
*On the Beautiful*  
*What Is the Beautiful*  
*On Justice*, two dialogues  
*On Virtue, That It Cannot Be Taught*  
*On Courage*, three dialogues  
*On Law*  
*On Leadership*  
*On Honor*

245 This repetition of a title already given in the list probably arose through an error, either of Diogenes or his copyists; this would explain why Diogenes gives the number of works here as seventeen when there are eighteen listed.

246 The list below includes only thirty titles, with three (*What Is the Beautiful*, *On Poetry*, and *On the Beautiful*) repeating. Diogenes was probably counting separately the two dialogues cited under *On Justice* and the three under *On Courage* to make his tally of thirty-three.

*On Poetry*  
*On Comfort*  
*On Love*  
*On Philosophy*  
*On Knowledge*  
*On Music*  
 123 *On Poetry*  
*What Is the Beautiful*  
*On Teaching*  
*On Conversing*  
*On Judging*  
*On Reality*  
*On Number*  
*On Diligence*  
*On Work*  
*On Greed*  
*On Pretentiousness*  
*On the Beautiful*

Others are:

*On Deliberation*  
*On Reason or On What Is Appropriate*  
*On Wickedness*

He was the first, they say, to use Socratic arguments in conversation. When Pericles promised to support him and urged him to come to him, Simon said that his freedom of speech was not for sale.

There was another Simon, a writer of handbooks on rhetoric; another who was a doctor at the time of Seleucus Nicator;<sup>247</sup> and another who was a sculptor.

## GLAUCON

124 Glaucou<sup>248</sup> was an Athenian. Nine of his dialogues are contained in a single volume:

*Phidylus*  
*Euripides*  
*Amyntichus*

<sup>247</sup> That is, in the late fourth or early third century BC, when Seleucus ruled the Asian portion of Alexander's empire.

<sup>248</sup> Plato's brother. Together with a third brother, Adeimantus, he is one of Socrates' principal interlocutors in Plato's *Republic*.

*Euthias*  
*Lysithides*  
*Aristophanes*  
*Cephalus*  
*Anaxiphemus*  
*Menexenus*

There are thirty-two others, but they are considered spurious.

## SIMMIAS

Simmias<sup>249</sup> was a Theban. Twenty-three of his dialogues are contained in a single volume:

*On Wisdom*  
*On Reasoning*  
*On Music*  
*On Epic Poetry*  
*On Courage*  
*On Philosophy*  
*On Truth*  
*On Letters*  
*On Teaching*  
*On Art*  
*On Governing*  
*On Propriety*  
*On What to Choose and What to Avoid*  
*On Friendship*  
*On Knowing*  
*On the Soul*  
*On Living a Good Life*  
*On What Is Possible*  
*On Wealth*  
*On Life*  
*What Is the Beautiful*  
*On Diligence*  
*On Love*

249 Simmias of Thebes (a different person than the Simmias of Syracuse mentioned at 2.113–14) was a member of Socrates' inner circle and a student of Philolaus of Croton (see 8.84–85). Along with his countryman Cebes (see 2.125), he is depicted conversing with Socrates on the day of his death in Plato's *Phaedo*.

## CEBES

- 125 Cebes<sup>250</sup> was a Theban. Three of his dialogues survive:  
*The Tablet*  
*The Seventh Day*  
*Phrynichus*

## MENEDEMUS

- 126 Menedemus, <a native of Eretria,> belonged to Phaedo's school. He was the son of Clisthenes, a member of the family called the Theopropidae, of noble birth, but a builder and a poor man. Some say that he was also a scenery painter and that Menedemus learned both trades. Hence when Menedemus had proposed a certain decree, a disciple of Alexinus<sup>251</sup> attacked him, saying that a sage should design neither a scene nor a decree. When Menedemus had been sent as a garrison commander to Megara, he visited Plato at the Academy and was so captivated that he relinquished his command.<sup>252</sup> Asclepiades of Phlius drew him away, and both men lived in Megara with Stilpo<sup>253</sup> and attended his lectures. From there they sailed to Elis, where they joined Anchipylus and Moschus,<sup>254</sup> who belonged to the school of Phaedo. Before their time, as was mentioned in the chapter on Phaedo,<sup>255</sup> the philosophers of this school were called Elians; they were later called the Eretrian school, after the native city of our present subject.

Menedemus appears to have been quite pompous; hence Crates<sup>256</sup> pokes fun at him, saying,

Asclepiades of Phlius and the Eretrian bull;

as does Timon in this verse:

After flushing out [. . .],<sup>257</sup> a supercilious, puffing fellow.

250 Like his compatriot Simmias, Cebes was a follower of Socrates and a student of Philolaus of Croton.

251 A follower of Eubulides, Alexinus is mentioned at 2.109 and 2.135.

252 There is a problem with the chronology of this story, in that Menedemus was born c. 339 BC, after Plato's death.

253 On Stilpo, see 2.113–20.

254 Anchipylus is otherwise unknown. Moschus may be the figure portrayed in Stilpo's dialogue *Moschus*.

255 2.105.

256 Crates of Thebes (c. 368/65–288/85 BC), also known as Crates the Cynic. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 6.85–93.

257 The text of the manuscripts is corrupt here, and no convincing solutions have been proposed.

Menedemus was so high-minded that when Eurylochus of Casandrea was invited to the court of Antigonus<sup>258</sup> with Cleippides of Cyzicus, he declined, as he was afraid that Menedemus would hear of it; for the latter was sarcastic and outspoken. At any rate, one day when a young man was speaking too boldly, Menedemus said nothing; but he picked up a twig and traced on the ground the figure of a young man being penetrated, and continued until everyone saw it, at which point the young man understood the insult and departed. Hierocles, who was in command of the Piraeus,<sup>259</sup> was walking up and down with Menedemus in the sanctuary of Amphiarus and talking about the capture of Eretria. Without saying anything else, Menedemus asked him what Antigonus hoped to gain by screwing him.<sup>260</sup> 127

To the adulterer who prided himself on his exploits he said, “Don’t you know that it’s not only the cabbage that has good juice, but the radish as well?”<sup>261</sup> To a young man who was being noisy he said, “Take care not to let everyone know you’ve got something up your ass.” When Antigonus was consulting him as to whether he should attend a drinking party, Menedemus replied that Antigonus should say nothing else except that he was the son of a king.<sup>262</sup> When an inconsiderate fellow was telling him a pointless story, Menedemus asked him whether he had a farm; and when the man replied that he also had a great many flocks and herds, Menedemus said, “Go, then, and attend to them, so they’re not ruined along with an ordinary fellow who’s amusing himself with subtleties.” To a man who asked whether the serious man should marry, he replied, “Do I seem serious to you or not?” When the man declared that he thought him serious, he said, “Well, I am married.” When someone said there were many good things, Menedemus asked how many, and whether there were more than a hundred. Unable to curb the extravagance of one of the men who used to invite him to dinner, he spoke not a word when invited, but reproached his host silently by eating nothing but olives.<sup>263</sup> 128  
129

258 Antigonus II Gonatas was king of Macedonia during the middle portion of the third century BC. Like many Hellenistic dynasts, he sought to fill his court with philosophers, poets, and intellectuals.

259 The port of Athens.

260 Menedemus, as a native of Eretria, makes the point that he feels “violated” by the Macedonian occupation.

261 A reference to *rhapnidosís*, a form of punishment inflicted on adulterous men in Athens (and perhaps other Greek cities as well). The punishment involved inserting a radish in the rectum of the guilty man.

262 This version of the story is based on the textual emendation proposed by Michel Patillon. By this reading, Menedemus’ point is that a king’s son has no need to RSVP.

263 Olives were regarded as a frugal form of nourishment (see 6.50).



Menedemus, Roman fresco from Boscoreale, first century BC.

But because of his outspokenness he found himself in danger in Cyprus, when he and his friend Asclepiades were staying at the court of Nicocreon.<sup>264</sup> For when the king held a monthly festival and invited these two, along with the other philosophers, Menedemus is reported to have said that if the meeting of such men were a good thing, then the festival should be held every day; if not, it was superfluous even on the present occasion.

130 When the tyrant replied that on this day he had the leisure to listen to philosophers, Menedemus persisted even more stubbornly, declaring, right in the middle of the feast, that one should listen to philosophers on every occasion. And consequently, if a certain flute player had not intervened,

<sup>264</sup> Nicocreon was king of Salamis, in Cyprus, in the early fourth century BC.

the two men<sup>265</sup> would have perished. Hence when they were overtaken by a storm on their vessel, Asclepiades is reported to have said that though the art of the flute player had saved them, the frankness of Menedemus had destroyed them.<sup>266</sup>

Menedemus shirked his duties, they say, and was indifferent to the affairs of his school; at any rate, there was no visible order at his lectures, nor were benches arrayed in a circle, but each of his students would listen from wherever he happened to be walking about or sitting,<sup>267</sup> and Menedemus himself behaved in the same way. But he was a nervous person, they say, and so eager for glory that early on, when he and Asclepiades were building a house with a carpenter, and Asclepiades appeared nude on the roof,<sup>268</sup> carrying the mortar, Menedemus would hide himself if he saw anyone coming. And when he entered public life, he was so nervous that when offering frankincense he would miss the censer.<sup>269</sup> And one day when Crates cornered him and attacked him for engaging in politics, he ordered certain men to throw Crates into prison; but Crates remained on the lookout for him whenever he passed by and, standing on tiptoe, would call him “little Agamemnon” and “Hegesipolis.”<sup>270</sup> 131

He was also rather superstitious. At any rate, one day when he was at an inn with Asclepiades and had unknowingly eaten meat that had been thrown away, he grew nauseated and pale, until Asclepiades reproached him, saying that it was not the meat that bothered him, but his suspicion about it. In all other respects he was magnanimous and liberal. As for his physical condition, even when elderly he was as firm and suntanned in appearance as an athlete, and remained robust and fit. In stature he was well proportioned, as is clear from the small statue in the old racetrack at Eretria. The figure, by design, is half naked, allowing one to see most of his body. 132

He was also fond of entertaining, and because Eretria was unhealthy he organized numerous drinking parties.<sup>271</sup> Among these there would be gath- 133

265 Meaning Menedemus and his companion Asclepiades.

266 The implication is that the outspokenness of the philosopher had gotten the pair precipitously exiled from Cyprus and forced onto the sea in bad weather.

267 This passage offers interesting insight into what school decorum was supposed to be like in this era. It's not clear from Diogenes' language whether the lectures took place in Menedemus' home.

268 The translation is literal, but Asclepiades may have bared only his torso, to stay cool as he worked.

269 The burning of aromatic frankincense must have been part of a public ceremony, attended by many. We learn at 2.143 that Menedemus was a *proboulos* at Eretria, a magistracy that included religious duties.

270 Agamemnon, leader of the Greek army at Troy, is portrayed in Homer's *Iliad* as a vain and pompous king. The name Hegesipolis is not known elsewhere but translates as “leader of the city,” and here implies excessive ambition.

271 Wine drinking was thought by the Greeks to help prevent certain diseases.

erings of poets and musicians. He welcomed Aratus, Lycophron, the writer of tragedies, and Antagoras of Rhodes;<sup>272</sup> but he devoted himself principally to Homer, then to the lyric poets, then to Sophocles and also to Achaeus, to whom he awarded second place among the writers of satyr plays, giving first place to Aeschylus.<sup>273</sup> And that is why, against his political opponents, he would quote these verses:

Thus the swift is overtaken by the weak,  
And the eagle by the tortoise in a twinkling.

134 These verses are from *Omphalos*, Achaeus' satyr play. Thus those writers err who say that Menedemus had read nothing except the *Medea* of Euripides, which some say is the work of Neophron of Sicyon.<sup>274</sup>

Among the teachers of philosophy, he despised those of the school of Plato and Xenocrates,<sup>275</sup> as well as Paraebates of Cyrene;<sup>276</sup> but he admired Stilpo. Once when he was asked about him, Menedemus contented himself with saying that he was a man of great liberality. Menedemus was hard to understand, and when elaborating an argument he proved a formidable adversary. He would twist and turn in all directions and was ingenious at inventing loopholes. He was exceptionally contentious, as Antisthenes says in his *Successions*. And he made a habit of posing the following argument: “Of two things, is one different from the other?” “Yes.” “And is conferring benefits different from the good?” “Yes.” “Then to confer benefits is not good.”

135 He rejected, they say, the negative propositions, admitting only the affirmative ones, and of these he accepted the simple but rejected the nonsimple, by which I mean the hypothetical and compound propositions. Heraclides says that in his doctrines he was a Platonist but that he made fun of dialectic. Thus, one day when Alexinus asked him whether he had stopped beating his father, Menedemus replied, “In fact, I have never beaten him, nor have I stopped beating him.” When Alexinus retorted that he should have cleared up the

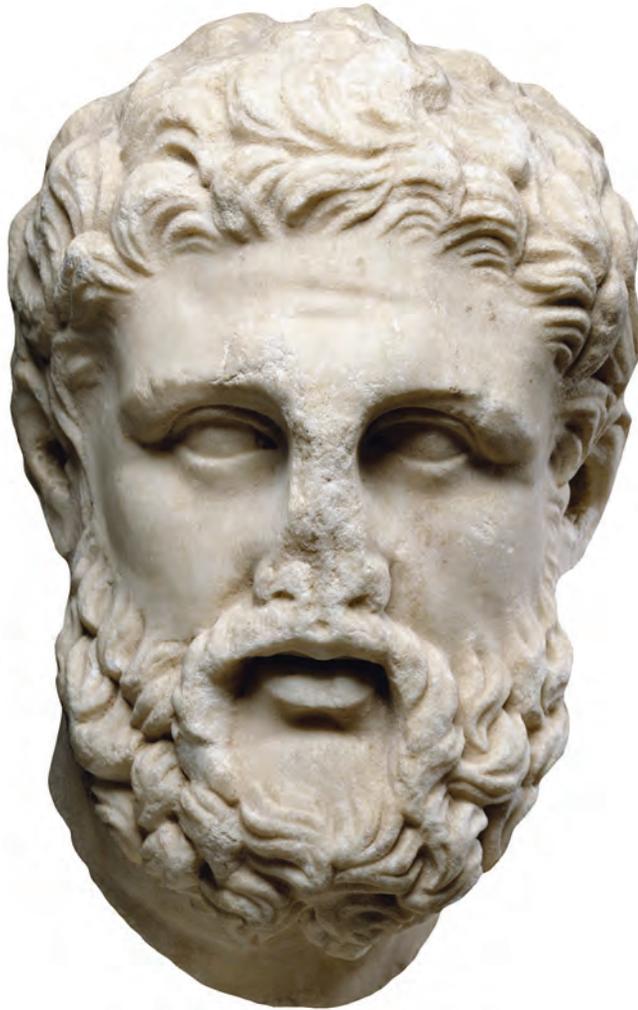
272 Of these three poets of the third century BC, two are still read today: Aratus of Soli (c. 315–before 240 BC) is famous for his *Phaenomena*, a didactic poem about the constellations that survives intact, while Lycophron of Chalcis is likely the author of a prophetic poem called *Alexandra* (the authorship is disputed). The work of Antagoras of Rhodes, including an epic poem titled *Thebais*, has entirely perished.

273 Satyr plays, featuring choruses of randy satyrs, were burlesque dramas performed at the end of each full day of tragedies at the Athenian tragic festival. Achaeus was a tragic poet who hailed from Menedemus' native Eretria.

274 There was widespread suspicion in antiquity, almost certainly unfounded, that the *Medea* attributed to Euripides was actually by another playwright, Neophron, or relied substantially on Neophron's work.

275 One of Plato's successors as head of the Academy. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 4.6–15.

276 A Cyrenaic philosopher, the teacher of Hegesias and Anniceris (see 2.86).



Head of a man, c. 320 BC, Greek. This marble belongs to a type of Athenian grave monument in which life-size images of family members were presented within a stagelike setting.

ambiguity by answering “yes” or “no,” Menedemus said, “It would be absurd for me to obey your rules when I can stop you at the doorstep.” And when Bion applied himself to discrediting the soothsayers, Menedemus would say that he was merely slaughtering corpses.<sup>277</sup>

<sup>277</sup> A proverbial expression for superfluous activity, like our “beating a dead horse.”

136 One day when he heard someone say that the greatest good was to obtain everything one desired, Menedemus said, “It’s much better to desire what you need.” Antigonus of Carystus says that Menedemus never wrote or composed anything, and therefore did not support any doctrine. In his debates, he says, Menedemus was so pugnacious that he would leave with his eyes blackened. Yet, though violent in debate, in his conduct he was exceedingly gentle. At any rate, though he often mocked Alexinus and ridiculed him mercilessly, he nevertheless assisted him; for when Alexinus’ wife was afraid she might be attacked and robbed in the course of her journey, he provided her with an escort from Delphi to Chalcis.<sup>278</sup>

137 He was a devoted friend, as is clear from his dedication to Asclepiades, which was no different from the tender affection shown by Pylades.<sup>279</sup> But as Asclepiades was the elder, it was said that *he* was the playwright, Menedemus the actor. There is a story that once, when Archipolis sent them a promissory note for three thousand drachmas, they wrangled so about who had the lesser claim that neither of them took the money. It is said that they took as wives a mother and daughter, Asclepiades marrying the daughter, Menedemus the mother; and that when Asclepiades’ wife died, he took Menedemus’ wife;<sup>280</sup> and that Menedemus, when he entered politics, married a wealthy woman. Nevertheless, since the two men shared a single abode, Menedemus entrusted its management to his first wife. It was Asclepiades who died first at an advanced age at Eretria, having lived frugally with Menedemus, though they were well off. Some time later, when a beloved of Asclepiades came to a drinking party and the servants would not let him in, Menedemus told them to admit him, saying that Asclepiades, though under the ground, was opening the door to him.<sup>281</sup> The two men were subsidized by Hipponicus the Macedonian and Agetor of Lamia, the latter giving each of them thirty minas,<sup>282</sup> the former giving Menedemus two thousand drachmas to provide dowries for his daughters. He had three, according to Heraclides, by a wife who came from Oropus.

138 He used to conduct his drinking parties in the following manner. He would take a meal beforehand with two or three friends until it was late

278 The trip would have required several days of travel on both land and sea. Chalcis, the chief town of Euboea, lay at the narrowest part of the Euripus Strait.

279 In mythology, Pylades was the closest companion of Orestes, son of Agamemnon. Their bond was often cited in the ancient world as a model of perfect friendship.

280 That is, after Menedemus had divorced her, apparently so as to give her to Asclepiades.

281 It seems the remark was meant as an obscene pun, following a pattern Menedemus displayed elsewhere (see 2.127–28).

282 The equivalent of three thousand drachmas each.

in the day; then someone would summon the guests who had also already dined. So if anyone came too early, he would walk up and down and inquire of those who came out what was being served and what time it was. If there were only vegetables or salt fish, they would depart; but if there was meat, they would go in. In summer a rush mat would be placed on the couches, in winter a sheepskin; each guest had to bring his own cushion. The cup that was passed around was no larger than a half-pint; dessert consisted of lupine seeds or beans, sometimes also of seasonal fruit such as pears, pomegranates, peas, or even, by Zeus, dried figs. All these details are mentioned in the satyr play written in his honor by Lycophron, which he entitled *Menedemus* and composed as a tribute to the philosopher. To it belong the following verses:

140

And after a brief meal, the small drinking-cup  
Was passed around with moderation, and the dessert  
Was a temperate discourse for those who cared to listen.

At first he was despised by the Eretrians and called a dog<sup>283</sup> and a babbler; but later he was so admired that he was entrusted with the city's affairs. Sent as an ambassador to Ptolemy and Lysimachus,<sup>284</sup> he was honored wherever he went; he was even sent to Demetrius,<sup>285</sup> and succeeded in reducing by fifty talents the tribute of two hundred talents that the city was paying that year to the king. When accused to Demetrius of intending to hand over the city to Ptolemy,<sup>286</sup> he defended himself in a letter that begins as follows: "Menedemus to King Demetrius, greetings. I hear that you have received a report about us." There is a story that it was Aeschylus,<sup>287</sup> one of his political opponents, who had slandered him. He appears to have served with great dignity in the embassy to Demetrius on behalf of Oropus,<sup>288</sup> as Euphantus mentions in his *Histories*. Antigonus too was fond of him and proclaimed himself his student. And when the king defeated the barbarians near Lysimachia,<sup>289</sup> Menedemus wrote a decree

141

283 The term "dog" was often used for "Cynic philosopher," on the basis of the ascetic lifestyle and combative methods of the Cynic sect; here though it seems a simple insult.

284 Two of the dynasts who controlled various parts of Alexander's former empire. The Ptolemy referred to here might be either Ptolemy I Soter, who played host to Theodorus and Stilpo, or that ruler's son, Ptolemy II Philadelphus. Lysimachus, king of Thrace and, at times, Macedonia, died in 281 BC.

285 Demetrius Poliorcetes, another post-Alexander dynast, controlled various parts of Asia and Europe during the late fourth and early third centuries BC.

286 In 288 BC, Ptolemy Soter was competing with Demetrius for control of mainland Greece.

287 Clearly not the great tragic poet but a later namesake.

288 The date and circumstances are not clear. Oropus was the hometown of one of Menedemus' wives (2.137).

289 A city on the northwest shore of the Sea of Marmara. Antigonus defeated an army of Gauls there in 278 BC.

142 in his honor, simple and free of flattery, that begins: “The generals and delegates have declared: ‘Whereas King Antigonus, after defeating the barbarians in battle, is returning to his own country, and whereas in all his undertakings his judgment is sound, the senate and the people have decided. . . .’”

It was because of this, and also because of his friendship with Antigonus in other matters, that Menedemus was suspected of betraying the city to him, and he emigrated when falsely denounced by Aristodemus.<sup>290</sup> He resided in Oropus in the sanctuary of Amphiaraus; and when some golden drinking-cups went missing, as Hermippus says, Menedemus was ordered to depart by a common decree of the Boeotians. At that point, in despair, he secretly slipped into his native city, took with him his wife and daughters, and proceeded to the court of Antigonus, where he died of sorrow.

143 But Heraclides gives a wholly different account, namely that Menedemus, when made a delegate of the Eretrians, often liberated his city from tyrants by calling in Demetrius<sup>291</sup> (in which case he would not have betrayed the city to Antigonus, but must have been falsely accused); that he went to Antigonus and wished to free his native land; and that when Antigonus would not yield, Menedemus, in despair, abstained from food for seven days and died. The same account is given by Antigonus of Carystus. It was only with Persaeus<sup>292</sup> that Menedemus was openly at war; for it was thought that when Antigonus was willing to restore the Eretrians’ democracy for Menedemus’ sake, Persaeus prevented him. This is why one day at a drinking party Menedemus refuted Persaeus in argument and said, among other things, “He’s certainly a philosopher; but as a man he’s the worst of all who exist or are yet to be born.”

144

According to Heraclides, Menedemus died at the age of eighty-four. My own verses about him run as follows:

I heard of your fate, Menedemus, how of your own free will  
 You died by eating nothing for seven days.  
 An act worthy of an Eretrian,<sup>293</sup> but unworthy of a man;  
 For the guide who led you on was your own faintheartedness.

290 It is unclear which of several Aristodemuses Diogenes refers to.

291 In the power struggles over control of Greece, in the early third century BC, various dynasts, including Demetrius, helped install democracies in the principal Greek cities in exchange for the support of the populace.

292 A disciple of Zeno, Persaeus of Citium resided at the court of Antigonus II along with Menedemus (see 7.6).

293 The connection between Eretria and weeklong fasting is obscure, but the reference to a “guide” in the following line may be a hit at the notorious betrayal of the Greeks by an Eretrian in 480 BC. When Greek forces were attempting to hold the pass at Thermopylae against Persian invaders, an Eretrian “guide” showed the Persians a secret path that allowed them to turn the Greek position.



Terra-cotta head of a woman with a veil, fourth century BC.

These then were the followers of Socrates and their students. We must turn to Plato, the founder of the Academy, and to those of his successors who won renown.



# BOOK 3

PLATO  
C. 429–347 BC

## PLATO

1 Plato, son of Ariston and Perictione—or Potone—was an Athenian, his mother tracing her descent back to Solon.<sup>1</sup> For Solon’s brother was Dropides, and Dropides was the father of Critias, who was the father of Callaeschrus, who was the father of Critias (one of the Thirty<sup>2</sup>) and of Glaucon, who was the father of Charmides and Perictione, by whom Ariston fathered Plato. Thus Plato was in the sixth generation from Solon. Solon himself traced his descent to Neleus<sup>3</sup> and Poseidon, and his father is said to have traced his descent to Codrus,<sup>4</sup> son of Melanthus; both, according to Thrasylus, trace their descent to Poseidon.

2 Speusippus in *Plato’s Funeral Feast*, and Clearchus in his *Encomium on Plato*, and Anaxilaides in his second book *On Philosophy* say that there was a story in Athens that Ariston tried to force himself on Perictione, who was then in the bloom of youth, and was rebuffed; and that when he ceased resorting to force, he saw a vision of the god Apollo, after which he abstained from conjugal relations until Perictione gave birth.<sup>5</sup>

3 Plato was born, as Apollodorus says in his *Chronicles*, in the eighty-eighth Olympiad, on the seventh day of the month of Thargelion,<sup>6</sup> on the day on which Apollo was born, according to the Delians.<sup>7</sup> He died—at a wedding feast, according to Hermippus—in the first year of the 108th Olympiad<sup>8</sup> at the age of eighty-one. Neanthes, however, says that Plato died at the age of eighty-

1 Athenian statesman of the sixth century BC and one of the Seven Sages, known for the reforms he championed in Athens. His life and works are discussed by Diogenes at 1.45–67.

2 After Sparta’s defeat of Athens in the Peloponnesian War (404 BC), a small group of pro-Spartan Athenians, known as the Thirty Tyrants (or the Thirty), abolished the democracy and established an oligarchy. The regime lasted only a year before it was overthrown and democracy was restored by Thrasylus and an army of exiles.

3 Neleus was a legendary king of Pylos and the son of the sea-god Poseidon. He was also the father of Nestor, the wise counselor in Homer’s *Iliad*.

4 A mythical king of Athens.

5 The story suggests that Apollo was responsible for Plato’s conception, since Perictione, though married to Ariston, had thus far remained a virgin (or so the phrase here translated “in the bloom of youth” implies).

6 This Olympiad began in 428 BC; Thargelion began in May and extended into June. Plato must have been born in the first year of this Olympiad to have reached eighty-one, the age Diogenes assigns him at the time of his death in 347.

7 The island of Delos was said to be the birthplace of Apollo and Artemis.

8 This Olympiad began in 348 BC.



Multiple views of a marble portrait head of Plato, c. third century AD, Roman.

four. (He was therefore six years younger than Isocrates.<sup>9</sup> For the latter was born during the archonship of Lysimachus, the former during that of Ameinas, the year Pericles died.)<sup>10</sup> He was of the deme of Collytus, as Antileon says in the second book of his work *Chronology*. He was born, according to some, in Aegina—in the house of Phidiades, son of Thales,<sup>11</sup> as Favorinus says in his *Miscellaneous History*. For Plato's father had been sent there with others as a settler, but returned to Athens when the Athenians were expelled by the Spartans who came to aid the Aeginetans. As Apollodorus says in the eighth book of his *Discourses*, Plato was also a *choregos*<sup>12</sup> at Athens, Dion<sup>13</sup> defraying his expenses. Plato had two brothers, Adeimantus and Glaucon,<sup>14</sup> and a sister, Potone, who was the mother of Speusippus.<sup>15</sup>

4

He was taught letters at the school of Dionysius,<sup>16</sup> whom he mentions in *Rivals in Love*. He studied gymnastics with Ariston the Argive wrestler, from whom he received the name Plato because of his robust constitution.<sup>17</sup> (He was originally named Aristocles, after his grandfather, as Alexander says in his *Successions*.) But some say he was given this name because of the breadth of his style, or because his face was broad, as Neanthes claims. There are also some who say that he wrestled at the Isthmian games, as Dicaearchus states in the first book of his work *On Lives*, and that he applied himself to painting and writing poems—first dithyrambs, then lyric poetry and tragedies. He is said to have been weak-voiced, as

5

9 A famously long-lived Athenian orator and teacher of rhetoric.

10 These dates correspond to 436–435 BC and 428–427 BC, respectively. In fact Isocrates died in 338 BC, at the age of eighty-eight or eighty-nine.

11 A different Thales than the sage discussed at 1.22–44.

12 The role of a *choregos* at Athens was to subsidize one of the three productions of tragic drama at the annual Festival of Dionysus. It was a voluntary role taken on by wealthy citizens.

13 Dion (c. 408–353 BC), a follower of Plato, was an adviser to two tyrants of Syracuse, Dionysius I, his brother-in-law, and Dionysius II, his nephew. He introduced Plato to the court (see 2.18–19 and 21–22 below), hoping that the city's constitution could be refashioned along philosophic lines.

14 Both appear as characters in Plato's works. Glaucon serves as Socrates' principal interlocutor in the *Republic*, a dialogue that also includes Adeimantus. Glaucon is also a part of the frame narrative that surrounds the *Symposium*.

15 On the life and work of Speusippus, to whom Plato bequeathed leadership of the Academy, see 4.1–5.

16 Not the tyrant of Syracuse with whom Plato later became embroiled, but an Athenian orator.

17 The name Plato is derived from the Greek word *platos*, meaning “broad.”

Timotheus the Athenian says in his work *On Lives*. Socrates is said to have dreamt that he had a newborn swan<sup>18</sup> in his lap, and that the bird suddenly sprouted feathers and flew up with a sweet cry. And the next day Plato was introduced to him, and Socrates realized that the young man was the bird of the dream.

Plato studied philosophy at first in the Academy,<sup>19</sup> then in the garden at Colonus<sup>20</sup> (as Alexander says in his *Successions*), where he read the works of Heraclitus.<sup>21</sup> Later, when he was about to compete for a prize in tragedy, he listened to Socrates in front of the theater of Dionysus, after which he burned his poems, saying

Come hither, Hephaestus; Plato needs you now.<sup>22</sup>

- 6 From then on, they say, having reached the age of twenty, he became a disciple of Socrates. After Socrates died, he attached himself to Cratylus the Heraclitean and Hermogenes, who professed the philosophy of Parmenides.<sup>23</sup> Then, at the age of twenty-eight, according to Hermodorus, he withdrew to Megara to be with Euclides,<sup>24</sup> along with a number of Socrates' disciples. Later he went to Cyrene to visit Theodorus the mathematician.<sup>25</sup> And from there he departed for Italy to meet the Pythagoreans Philolaus and Erytus.<sup>26</sup> Then he traveled to Egypt to see the priests. It is said that Euripides accompanied him.<sup>27</sup> Falling ill there, he was cured by the priests, who treated him with seawater; this may have inspired the line:

The sea washes away all human ills.<sup>28</sup>

18 In the ancient world swans were admired for their beautiful voices.

19 The name can refer either to the grove sacred to the hero Academus, as it does here, or to the school Plato later founded there.

20 A small deme of Athens, a little over a mile from the Acropolis.

21 On Heraclitus, see 9.1–17.

22 The verse is adapted from the *Iliad* 18.392, where Achilles' mother, Thetis, asks Hephaestus to make her son a new set of armor. There is a complex irony in having Plato quote epic verse even while burning his own poetry in disdain. In the *Republic* Plato has Socrates ban virtually all poetry from the education of his ideal city's governing class.

23 Parmenides of Elea (fl. early fifth century BC) founded the Eleatic school. His life and views are discussed at 9.21–23. Little is known about either Cratylus or Hermogenes (a different person than the son of Crito mentioned at 2.121).

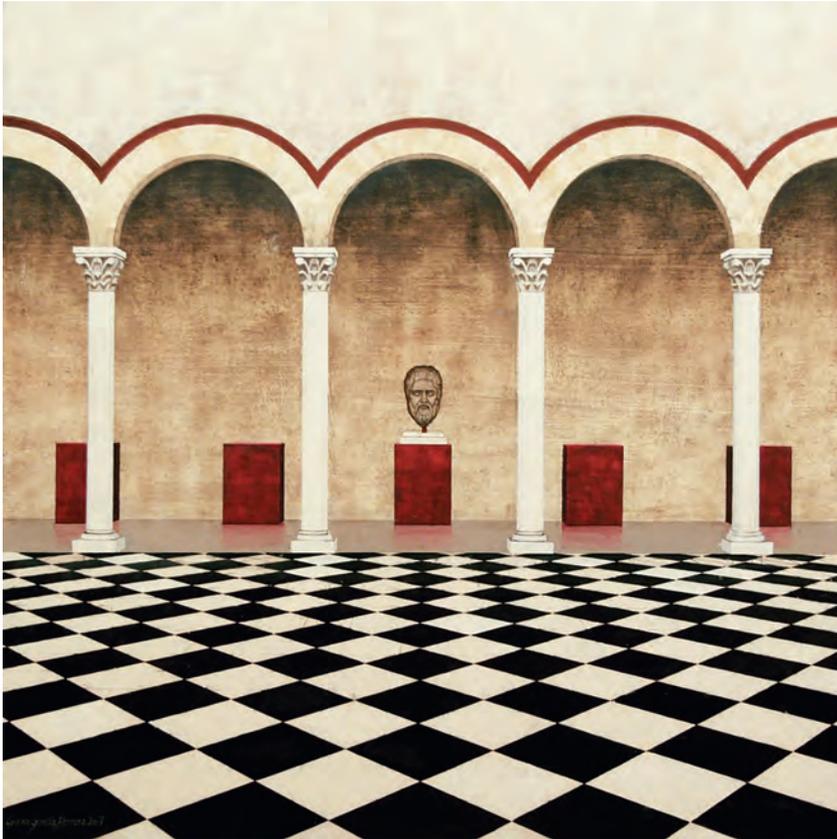
24 Euclides of Megara (c. 450–380 BC), the Socratic philosopher whose life and views Diogenes discusses at 2.106–12.

25 Not the Theodorus profiled at 2.98–103, but one of his many namesakes, the second of those listed at 2.104.

26 Philolaus of Croton or Tarentum (c. 470–390 BC) was a Pythagorean and a contemporary of Socrates; his life and views are discussed at 8.84–85. Erytus was one of Philolaus' followers. On Pythagoras himself, see 8.1–50.

27 Euripides, who died when Plato was in his twenties, is not otherwise known to have visited Egypt.

28 The quote is from Euripides' *Iphigenia in Tauris*, line 1193.



*I Am Plato*, by Gorka Garcia, 2016. Oil on wood, 45 × 45 cm.

He also declared that according to Homer the Egyptians surpass all mankind as healers.<sup>29</sup> Plato was then planning to meet with the Magi,<sup>30</sup> but departed because of the wars in Asia. On his return to Athens, he resided at the Academy, a gymnasium on the outskirts of the city in a woodland named after a hero, one Hecademus,<sup>31</sup> as is stated by Eupolis<sup>32</sup> in his *Shirkers*:

7

In the shady walks of divine Hecademus.

29 The reference is to *Odyssey* 4.229–32, where Menelaus, who had visited Egypt on his way home from Troy, praises the medicines he had found and states that “every man is a healer there.”

30 The priestly caste of Persia, reputed to possess supernatural powers.

31 An obscure mythological hero (also known as Academus) who gave his name to the Academy.

32 One of the greatest poets of Old Comedy (fifth century BC).

And Timon says of Plato:

Broadest,<sup>33</sup> he led all; a sweet-voiced speaker,  
Musical as the cicadas who, perching on a tree  
Of Hecademus, send forth their gentle voices.

8 Originally, because of the syllable “he” in the hero’s name, the place was called Hecademia.

The philosopher was a friend of Isocrates.<sup>34</sup> And Praxiphanes describes a conversation of theirs about poets that was held at the country estate where Isocrates was Plato’s guest. Aristoxenus says that Plato served in three military campaigns: the first time at Tanagra, the second at Corinth, and the third at Delium,<sup>35</sup> where he also won the prize of valor. He created a synthesis of the doctrines of Heraclitus, Pythagoras, and Socrates: about perceptible things he agreed with Heraclitus, about objects of thought with Pythagoras, and about political philosophy with Socrates.

9 Some, including Satyrus, say that Plato wrote to Dion in Sicily instructing him to purchase from Philolaus three books about the doctrines of Pythagoras for one hundred minas.<sup>36</sup> For they say he was well provided for, having received more than eighty talents from Dionysius,<sup>37</sup> as Onetor says in the essay where he addresses the question “Whether the wise man will make money.” He also derived considerable assistance from Epicharmus the comic poet, having edited a great many of his writings, as Alcimus says in his work *To Amyntas*, which consists of four books.<sup>38</sup> In the first of these he writes as follows:

Plato appears to draw heavily on the words of Epicharmus. Just consider. Plato says that the object of sense is that which never remains fixed

33 The word forms a pun on Plato’s name.

34 An influential Athenian orator and teacher of rhetoric (436–338 BC).

35 Diogenes seems to refer to three engagements of the Peloponnesian War, all of which Plato was far too young to take part in. Athens conducted operations at Tanagra in 426 BC, at Corinth in 425, and at Delium in 424. Aristoxenus may have confused Plato’s military career with that of the much older Socrates, who did fight at Delium.

36 A substantial sum of money: a skilled worker earned approximately one drachma a day; a mina was worth one hundred drachmas.

37 Diogenes could mean either Dionysius I, tyrant of Syracuse, or his son, Dionysius II.

38 Alcimus, a Sicilian rhetorician and historian, argued to his eponymous addressee that Plato had stolen some of his ideas from Epicharmus. Since Epicharmus was also Sicilian, the book *To Amyntas* might have sought to claim Plato’s ideas for Sicily, or there may be some connection between Alcimus and Dionysius II of Syracuse, who had reasons to discredit Plato. Whatever his motive, Alcimus gets a remarkably sympathetic hearing from Diogenes Laertius, who quotes his argument at great length in what follows, including long passages where Alcimus quotes Epicharmus’ comedies to prove his point. Diogenes’ own discussion of Plato resumes at 3.18.



Two of the gods as they were rendered in marble during Plato's lifetime.  
*Left:* The elaborate hairstyle of this herm head, c. 450 BC, is often found on images of Zeus or Poseidon. *Right:* Persephone and Hygeia were often represented with hair separated into thick coils pulled back to the top of the head and tied loosely in a knot, as on this carved head from the fourth century BC.

in quality or quantity, but is always changing and in flux, the assumption  
 being that the things from which one may take away number are no longer  
 equal or determinate, nor do they have quantity or quality. These are things  
 that are always engaged in becoming, but never in being.<sup>39</sup> The object of  
 thought, on the other hand, is something from which nothing is subtracted,  
 and to which nothing is added. This is the nature of eternal things, the char-  
 acter of which is to be always alike and the same. And indeed Epicharmus  
 has expressed himself clearly about objects of sense and objects of thought:

A. But gods always existed and were never lacking,  
 While things in our world are always the same and always arise from the  
 [same cause.

B. But it is said that Chaos was the first of the gods.

A. How so, if there was nothing out of which or into which it could come first?

B. Then did nothing come first? A. No, by Zeus, nor second either  
 [of the things that we are now talking about.

A. If someone adds one to an odd or even number of pebbles,  
 Whichever you like, or takes one away from an existing quantity,  
 Do you think we have the same number? B. By no means.

A. Or if one wants to add a cubit to another length,

39 See Plato, *Timaeus* 27d–29a.

Or cut one from an existing length,  
 Would the original length remain? B. Of course not. A. So now consider  
 Mankind in this same way. For one man grows, the other wastes away,  
 But all are changing all the time.  
 Well, a thing that is naturally changing and never remaining the same  
 Would always be different from the thing that has undergone the change.  
 And even you and I were different yesterday, and we're different today,  
 And will be different tomorrow, and will never remain ourselves,  
 [according to this argument.]

12 Alcimus goes on to say: “The wise maintain that the soul senses some things  
 through the body, for example when it hears and sees, but senses other things by  
 itself, without the body.<sup>40</sup> This is why, among existing things, some are objects of  
 sense, some of thought.<sup>41</sup> Hence Plato says that those who wish to understand  
 the principles of the universe must first distinguish the ideas by themselves, for  
 example, similarity, unity, quantity, magnitude, rest, and motion; second, one  
 must assume the existence, in and of itself, of beauty, goodness, justice, and other  
 13 such things;<sup>42</sup> and third, one must understand how many of the ideas relate to one  
 another, as do knowledge, or magnitude, or ownership, bearing in mind that the  
 things we experience have the same names as these ideas because they partake of  
 them, by which I mean that all that partakes of justice is just, and all that partakes  
 of beauty is beautiful.<sup>43</sup> Each of these ideas is eternal; it is a concept that does not  
 admit of change. Hence he says that in nature the ideas stand like archetypes, and  
 that all other things resemble these archetypes because they are copies of them.<sup>44</sup>  
 And here are the words of Epicharmus about the good and about the ideas:

14 A. Is flute playing a thing? B. By all means.  
 A. Is man, then, flute playing? B. Certainly not.  
 A. Let me see, then. What is a flute player? Who do you think he is?  
 A man, or not? B. A man, of course. A. Then, don't you think  
 The same would be the case with the good? The good is in itself a  
 [thing, and the man  
 Who has learned that thing and knows it becomes good.  
 For just as one becomes a flute player when he has learned flute playing,  
 Or a dancer when he has learned dancing, or a plaiter when he has learn plaiting,

40 See Plato, *Phaedo* 79c, and *Sophist* 246b.

41 See Plato, *Phaedo* 92a ff.

42 See Plato, *Theaetetus* 181d; *Sophist* 250a, 251d; *Parmenides* 129e, 130b; *Phaedo* 265d; and  
*Laws* XII, 965b ff.

43 See Plato, *Parmenides* 133c ff.; *Phaedo* 100c–103b; and *Timaeus* 52a; see also Aristotle, *Meta-  
 physics* II 2, 997b5 ff., and XI 6, 1071b14 ff.; and *Eudemian Ethics* I 1218a10 ff.

44 See Plato, *Theaetetus* 176e, and *Timaeus* 51a.



*One and Three Chairs*, by Joseph Kosuth, 1965.  
Wood folding chair, mounted photograph of a chair,  
and mounted photographic enlargement of a dictionary definition of “chair.”

And likewise in all such instances, whichever you like,  
The man himself would not be the craft, but the craftsman.

“Plato, in developing his theory of ideas, says: If in fact there is memory, then the ideas must be present in things, because memory is of something stable and permanent, but nothing is permanent except the ideas. ‘For how,’ he asks, ‘would animals have survived unless they grasped ideas and had been endowed by nature with the intelligence to do so? As it is, they remember similarities and what their food is like, which proves that the ability to register similarity is innate in all animals; hence they also recognize their own kind.’<sup>45</sup> Well, how does Epicarmus put it?

15

Wisdom, Eumaeus, does not belong to one kind only,  
But all living creatures alike have understanding.  
For if you will diligently study the female among poultry,  
She does not bear her young alive,  
But broods upon her eggs and breathes life into them.

16

<sup>45</sup> Plato, *Phaedo* 96b.

As for her wisdom, Nature alone comprehends it;  
For the hen has learned it from her.

“And again:

It is not surprising that we speak this way  
And are pleased with ourselves and think ourselves  
So fine; for a dog appears the finest thing  
To a dog, an ox to an ox,  
An ass to an ass, and a pig to a pig.”

- 17 Noting these and other such instances throughout his four books, Alcimus draws attention to the assistance Plato derived from Epicharmus. That Epicharmus himself was not unaware of his own wisdom one can learn from the verses in which he envisions his emulator:

And as I think—for that which I think I know full well—  
The memory of my words will survive.  
Someone, taking and divesting them of the meter they now possess,  
Will clothe them in a purple robe embroidered with fine phrases;  
A man hard to wrestle with, he will make everyone else seem easy to pin.

- 18 Plato, it seems, was the first to bring to Athens the works of Sophron,<sup>46</sup> the writer of mimes, which had been neglected, and to imitate his manner of drawing characters. His works were even found under Plato’s pillow. He sailed three times to Sicily, the first time to see the island and the craters of the volcano. It was then that Dionysius, the son of Hermocrates,<sup>47</sup> the reigning tyrant, forced Plato to associate with him. When Plato was conversing about tyranny, and declared that the advantage of the ruler is not of value for its own sake unless he is preeminently virtuous, he offended his host. In his anger Dionysius said, “You talk like an old fart,” to which Plato replied, “And you like a tyrant.” Vexed at this, the tyrant was at first eager to have Plato put to death; then, dissuaded by Dion and Aristomenes, he did not go that far but entrusted Plato to Pollis the Spartan, who had just arrived on an embassy, with orders to sell him into slavery.<sup>48</sup> And Pollis took him to Aegina, where he put him up
- 19

<sup>46</sup> Sophron of Syracuse (fl. fifth century BC) wrote comic dialogues.

<sup>47</sup> Dionysius I (c. 430–367 BC), for many years ruler of Syracuse. A feared tyrant who dismantled what had been a democratic city-state, he also organized a large army of mercenaries, thereby making Syracuse the most powerful of the western Greek colonies. On his death, his power passed to his son, Dionysius II.

<sup>48</sup> The account of the trips to Sicily given by Diogenes does not entirely square with the account given by Plato himself in his *Seventh Letter* (which a majority of modern scholars regard as



*Alexander Visits the Sage Plato in His Mountain Cave* (detail), folio from a Khamsa (Quintet) of Amir Khusrau Dihlavi, attributed to Basawan, Indian, 1597–1598.

for sale. Then Charmandrus, son of Charmandrides, indicted him on a capital charge in accordance with the law that had been enacted among the Aeginetans to the effect that any Athenian who set foot on the island should be put to death without trial. It was Charmandrus himself who had passed the law, as Favorinus says in his *Miscellaneous History*. But when someone declared, in jest, that the transgressor was a philosopher, they acquitted him. Some say that when Plato was brought into court and found himself under close scrutiny he spoke not a word, but calmly awaited the outcome. The assembly decided not to put him to death but to sell him as though he were a prisoner of war.

Anniceris<sup>49</sup> of Cyrene, who chanced to be present, ransomed Plato for twenty minas (some say he paid thirty) and sent him to Athens to his friends, who promptly remitted the money. But Anniceris refused to accept it, saying that the Athenians were not the only men who deserved to look after Plato. Others say that Dion sent the money and that Anniceris did not keep it, but bought Plato a little garden in the Academy. And it is reported that Pollis was

20

genuine). Plato does refer there (326c–327a) to a voyage to Syracuse during the reign of Dionysius I, but says nothing of any confrontations with the tyrant nor of a subsequent captivity.

49 Not the Cyrenaic philosopher profiled in Book 2, but perhaps that man's grandfather.

defeated by Chabrias<sup>50</sup> and thereafter drowned at Helice, having incurred the gods' wrath on behalf of the philosopher, as Favorinus says in the first book of his *Reminiscences*. Dionysius himself could not rest easy. On learning what  
 21 had happened, he wrote asking Plato not to speak ill of him. And Plato wrote back that he had no leisure to think about Dionysius.

On his second visit<sup>51</sup> Plato asked the younger Dionysius for a territory and men who would live in accordance with his plan for a republic. But though Dionysius gave his promise, he did not keep it. Some say that Plato found himself in danger for having encouraged Dion and Theodotas to try to liberate the island.<sup>52</sup> It was then that Archytas the Pythagorean, writing a letter to Dionysius, interceded for Plato and had him brought safely to Athens.<sup>53</sup> Archytus' letter runs as follows:

22 Archytus wishes Dionysius good health.  
 We, all of us being friends of Plato, have sent Lamiscus and Photidas to you, that we may receive the philosopher in accordance with the agreement made with you. You would do well to recall the zeal with which you urged us all to secure his coming, resolved as you were to persuade him and to undertake, among other things, responsibility for his safety while he remained with you and on his return journey. Remember also that you made much of his coming, and from then on esteemed him more than anyone at court. But if some animosity has arisen, it is incumbent upon you to behave humanely and restore the man to us unharmed. You will thereby do what is just and at the same time earn our gratitude.

23 Plato sailed to Sicily a third time in the hope of reconciling Dion and Dionysius;<sup>54</sup> but on failing to gain his end, he returned to his own country. There he did not engage in public life, though it is clear from his writings that he was

50 An Athenian mercenary commander in the first half of the fourth century BC. The battle in which he defeated Pollis, a Spartan commander, probably took place at Naxos in 376. Plato seems to have been an ally of Chabrias (see 3.24), making the outcome of the battle all the more meaningful.

51 Plato's second visit to Syracuse, probably in 366 BC (more than two decades after his first), is described in the *Seventh Letter*, 328d–330b.

52 After it was clear that Dionysius II was a vicious and corrupt ruler (as his father had been), Dion, a key adviser and the young tyrant's uncle, became estranged from the court. Plato, as Dion's close ally, was naturally suspected of collusion in Dion's plans, which did include an ouster of Dionysius (later achieved); but according to the *Seventh Letter*, Plato held aloof from all such conspiracies.

53 In the *Seventh Letter* the philosopher Archytas (whose life and views are discussed at 8.79–83) plays a very different role, attempting to persuade Plato to return to Syracuse a third time (338c–d). Modern scholars consider the letter just below to be spurious.

54 At this point—361 BC, about five years after Plato's last visit to Sicily—Dion was in exile, and Dionysius was in control of his estates; according to the account in the *Seventh Letter*, Plato tried to get Dionysius to release the proceeds of the estates to Dion (345c–350b). Plato himself quickly fell from Dionysius' favor and was detained in Syracuse, against his own wishes, until Archytas intervened and secured permission for Plato to leave, in 360 BC.

a statesman. The reason was that by then the people had become accustomed to policies at odds with his own.<sup>55</sup> Pamphila, in the twenty-fifth book of her *Reminiscences*, says that the Arcadians and Thebans, when they were founding Megalópolis,<sup>56</sup> invited him to be their lawgiver; but when he learned that they were opposed to equality of possessions, he would not go. There is a story that he pleaded for Chabrias when the general was on trial for his life, though none of the other citizens was willing to do so.<sup>57</sup> And as Plato was going up to the Acropolis with Chabrias, Crobylus the informer met him and said, “Have you come to plead for the defendant? Do you not know that the hemlock of Socrates awaits you?” To this Plato replied, “Just as I ran risks when defending my country, so I’ll run them now in fulfilling my duty to a friend.” 24

He was the first to introduce argument by question and answer (as Favorinus says in the eighth book of his *Miscellaneous History*) and the first to explain to Leodamas of Thasos<sup>58</sup> the analytic method of inquiry. He was also the first, in philosophical discourse, to use the terms “antipodes,” “element,” “dialectic,” “quality,” “oblong” (for number), “planar surface” (for limits), and “divine providence.”

He was the first philosopher to rebut the speech of Lysias, son of Cephalus, quoting it verbatim in the *Phaedrus*.<sup>59</sup> He was the first to recognize the importance of scholarship. And as he was the first to attack the views of almost all his predecessors, one wonders why he failed to mention Democritus.<sup>60</sup> Neanthes of Cyzicus says that when Plato went to Olympia, the eyes of all the Greeks were turned toward him. It was then that he met Dion, who was about to launch a military campaign against Dionysius.<sup>61</sup> In the first book of Favorinus’ *Reminiscences*, it says that Mithridates the Persian<sup>62</sup> dedicated a statue of Plato in the Academy and had it inscribed with the words “Mithridates the Persian, son of Orontobates, dedicated to the Muses a likeness of Plato fashioned by Silanion.”<sup>63</sup> 25

55 In the *Seventh Letter*, Plato (if he is indeed the author) discusses his disillusionment with the Athenian government, which had executed his teacher Socrates, and his rejection of a political path (324b–326d).

56 Megalópolis was founded by Thebes as a home for liberated Messenians, formerly enslaved to the Spartan warrior caste, in 368 BC.

57 Chabrias’s trial seems to have resulted from suspicions of treachery in a recent military action.

58 A mathematician who was associated with the Academy.

59 In this dialogue, Phaedrus encounters Socrates just after listening to a speech on erotic love by Lysias, a contemporary orator. He repeats the speech for the benefit of Socrates, who proceeds to refute its premises (230e–235e).

60 Democritus of Abdera (b. 460/57 BC) is jointly credited, along with his teacher Leucippus, with originating the atomic theory. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 9.34–49.

61 At the Olympic games of 360 BC, Plato, by his own testimony, held a colloquy with Dion, who was then gathering an army for an invasion of Syracuse (*Seventh Letter* 350b–351e).

62 Otherwise unknown.

63 A Greek sculptor who flourished in the fourth century BC. He is best known for his sculptures of Plato and Sappho; copies of these survive.

26 Heraclides says that as a young man Plato was so reserved and decorous that he was never seen laughing immoderately. Yet he too was ridiculed by the comic poets. At any rate, Theopompus says in his comedy *Sweet Tooth*:

Nothing is truly one;  
Even the number two is scarcely one, as Plato says.

And Anaxandrides,<sup>64</sup> in his comedy *Theseus*, says:

Since he was munching olives just like Plato<sup>65</sup>

And even Timon makes a pun on Plato's name:

As imagined by Plato, who made astonishing discoveries.<sup>66</sup>

27 Alexis<sup>67</sup> in his *Merops*:

You've come in the nick of time. In my perplexity,  
Walking up and down just like Plato,  
I've found no wise plan, but only tired my legs.

And in the *Ancylion*:

You don't know what you're talking about! Run about with Plato,  
And you'll know all about soap and onions.

Amphis, in his *Amphicrates*:

A. As for the good—whatever it may be—that you're likely to get on her  
[account, I know even less about it,  
Master, than I do about the good of Plato. B. Just listen!

28 In the *Dexidemides*:

O Plato,  
All you know is how to frown,  
Lifting your haughty eyebrows like a snail.

Cratinus in *The False Changeling*:

A. Are you a man? B. Clearly. A. And have you a soul?  
B. As Plato would say, I don't know for sure, but I suspect I have.

64 A fourth-century poet of Middle Comedy who won several dramatic competitions at the major Athenian festivals.

65 The point of the quip may be Plato's acceptance of largesse from Dionysius II of Syracuse (see 6.25).

66 The Greek twice echoes the sound of Plato's name, in the verb *aneplasse* ("made") and in *peplasmena* (which isn't literally translated here but forms part of "astonishing discoveries").

67 This may be the same Alexis to whom Plato addressed his erotic epigram (see 3.31).



*Sacred and Profane Love*, by Titian, c. 1514.

Alexis in *Olympiodorus*:

My mortal body withered away,  
But my immortal part soared into the air.  
B. Isn't this a lecture of Plato's?

And in *The Parasite*:

Or, with Plato, to chatter on alone.

Anaxilas also makes fun of him in his *Botrylion*, and in *Circe* and in *Wealthy Women*.

Aristippus,<sup>68</sup> in the fourth book of his work *On the Luxuriousness of the Ancients*, says that Plato fell in love with a young man named Aster, who joined him in the study of astronomy, and with the above-mentioned Dion, and, as some say, with Phaedrus<sup>69</sup> too. His passion is evident in the following epigrams, which he is said to have addressed to them:

You gaze at the stars, my Aster; would that I were heaven,  
That I might gaze at you with many eyes!<sup>70</sup>

68 Not the philosopher Aristippus of Cyrene discussed at 2.65–104, but a later author who assumed that name (and is often referred to as Pseudo-Aristippus), presumably to give his work greater credibility.

69 Probably both here and at 3.31, a different Phaedrus is meant than the figure in Plato's eponymous dialogue; that Phaedrus was much older than Plato.

70 In this epigram and the next, Plato puns on Aster's name, which is the Greek word for "star." In saying here that Aster gazes at the stars, Plato indicates that he is lying in his grave.

And another:

You shone once, Aster, Morning Star, among the living,  
And now in death, Evening Star, among the dead.

30 And this to Dion:<sup>71</sup>

Tears to Hecuba and the women of Troy  
From their birth the Fates allotted.  
But on you, Dion, who have set up a trophy of noble deeds,  
The gods showered prosperous hopes.  
You lie in your wide country, honored by your countrymen.  
You drove my spirit mad with love, O Dion.

This, it is said, was actually inscribed on Dion's tomb in Syracuse.

31 And they say that when he fell in love with Alexis and Phaedrus, as I mentioned earlier, he wrote the following verses:

Now I have only to say of Alexis, "He is beautiful,"  
And everyone, everywhere, turns to gaze at him.  
Why, my heart, do you show the dogs a bone,  
And live to regret it? Wasn't this how we lost Phaedrus?<sup>72</sup>

He also had a passion for Archeanassa,<sup>73</sup> of whom he wrote as follows:

I have a mistress, Archeanassa of Colophon,  
Whose very wrinkles inspire the keenest passion.  
O wretches who met such beauty on its  
Maiden voyage, what fire you braved!

32 And also to Agathon:<sup>74</sup>

While kissing Agathon, my soul rushed to my lips,  
As if, unhappy wretch, it would pass over to him.

71 Plato's relationship with Dion, the chief adviser to both Dionysiuses and Plato's sponsor at their court in Syracuse, is not described as erotic in the *Seventh Letter*, nor does other evidence outside this epigram indicate it was so. Scholars are skeptical about the Platonic authorship of this and the other epigrams quoted here (see "Corporeal Humor in Diogenes Laertius," page 567).

72 "Lost" here refers not to death but to the transfer of Phaedrus' affections away from Plato.

73 An otherwise unknown woman. The epigram describes her as a *hetaira*, or courtesan.

74 This may be the tragedian who appears as a character in Plato's *Symposium*.



Terra-cotta statuette of Eros on a lion, late fourth or third century BC.

And another:

I throw you an apple;<sup>75</sup> and if you consent to love me,  
 Accept it and in exchange give me your virginity.  
 But if you're otherwise inclined, then take this very apple,  
 And see how fleeting is the bloom of youth.

And another:

An apple am I, tossed by one who loves you. Only consent,  
 Xanthippe!<sup>76</sup> For you and I are ripening on the vine.

They say that the epigram about the Eretrians<sup>77</sup> who were swept from  
 their country was written by him: 33

We are Eretrian by race, from Euboea, and lie dead near Susa.  
 How far, alas, from our native land!<sup>78</sup>

75 The tossing of an apple was a gesture demonstrating erotic interest. In Greek it is clear that the addressee is a woman.

76 Otherwise unknown (clearly not the wife of Socrates).

77 The epigram refers to Eretrians who were captured in 490 BC by invading Persians and taken as prisoners to what is now Iran.

78 Susa, a city on a tributary of the Tigris, was the winter capital of the Achaemenid kings of Persia, beginning with Darius I.

And this:

Cypris<sup>79</sup> to the Muses: “Maidens, honor Aphrodite,  
Or I’ll arm Eros<sup>80</sup> against you.”  
The Muses to Cypris: “Save your chatter for Ares;  
The lad doesn’t fly this way.”<sup>81</sup>

And another:<sup>82</sup>

A man found some gold and left a noose in its place.  
The owner, finding his treasure gone, donned the noose.

34 Molon, being hostile to Plato, said, “What is surprising is not that Dionysius should be in Corinth,<sup>83</sup> but that Plato should be in Sicily.” And it seems that Xenophon<sup>84</sup> was not on good terms with Plato. They have written similar works, at any rate, as if out of rivalry with each other—a *Symposium*, an *Apology of Socrates*, and memoirs that deal with ethical matters. And one of them wrote a *Republic*, the other an *Education of Cyrus*.<sup>85</sup> In his *Laws* Plato says that Xenophon’s account of Cyrus’ education is a fiction, for the real Cyrus did not resemble the man portrayed by Xenophon.<sup>86</sup> They both make mention of Socrates, but nowhere do they refer to each other except for Xenophon’s mention of Plato in the third book of his *Memorabilia*.<sup>87</sup> It is said that when Antisthenes<sup>88</sup> was about to read one of his own works in public he invited Plato to attend. And when Plato asked what he was planning to read, Antisthenes said, “A work on the impossibility of contradiction,” to which Plato replied, “But how can you write on this subject?” And because Plato had showed that the argument against contradiction was self-contradictory, Antisthenes wrote a dialogue against Plato entitled *Sathon*.<sup>89</sup> From then on

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79 Another name for Aphrodite.

80 The son of Aphrodite, Eros was the god of sexual desire.

81 The Muses were famously chaste. Ares, god of war, was one of Aphrodite’s lovers.

82 The epigram that follows is attributed elsewhere to a certain Statyllius Flaccus.

83 Apollonius Molon was a first-century BC orator. Corinth, originally the mother city that founded Syracuse, gave refuge to Dionysius II when he was driven from power by Dion.

84 Xenophon (c. 430–c. 354 BC) was a historian, essayist, and follower of Socrates; his life and views are discussed at 2.48–59.

85 Xenophon’s idealized biography of Cyrus the Great, founder of the Persian Empire in the sixth century BC, was probably not intended to answer Plato, as Diogenes implies, but does hold up a vision of idealized monarchy differing from that of the *Republic*.

86 *Laws* 694c–e, where Xenophon is not in fact mentioned explicitly.

87 3.6.1, an incidental reference.

88 A student of Gorgias the orator and then a follower of Socrates. Diogenes discusses the life and views of Antisthenes at 6.1–19.

89 This title, slang for penis in ancient Greek, implies some sort of crude attack on Plato.

they continued to be on bad terms with each other. They say that when Socrates heard Plato reading the *Lysis*, he said, “By Heracles, how many lies the young man is telling about me.” For Plato has included in the dialogue quite a few things that Socrates did not say.

Plato was also ill disposed to Aristippus.<sup>90</sup> At any rate, in his dialogue *On the Soul*<sup>91</sup> he disparages him, saying that he was not present when Socrates died, but was in Aegina, right nearby. They say that he also vied with Aeschines because the latter was highly esteemed by Dionysius, and that when Aeschines arrived at the court he was spurned by Plato because of his poverty, while Aristippus supported him.<sup>92</sup> And Idomeneus claims that the arguments Plato has Crito make in the prison, advising Socrates to escape, were actually advanced by Aeschines, and that Plato attributed them to Crito out of spite.<sup>93</sup> 36

Plato nowhere mentions himself in his writings except in the dialogue *On the Soul* and in the *Apology*.<sup>94</sup> Aristotle says that the style of the dialogues is somewhere between poetry and prose.<sup>95</sup> Favorinus says that Aristotle alone stayed to listen when Plato was reading *On the Soul*, though the rest of the audience got up and left. Some say that Philip of Opus transcribed Plato’s *Laws*, which were preserved on wax tablets.<sup>96</sup> They also maintain that Philip was the author of *Epinomis*.<sup>97</sup> Euphorion and Panaetius have said that several revisions of the opening of the *Republic* have been discovered. Aristoxenus says that almost the entire *Republic* was included in Protagoras’ *Disputations*.<sup>98</sup> It is said that the first dialogue he wrote was the *Phaedrus*. For the undertaking has a fresh and youthful feeling. Dicaearchus, however, disparages its whole style as vulgar. 37

It is said that Plato, after watching someone playing at dice, admonished

90 Aristippus of Cyrene (c. 435–350 BC) was a follower of Socrates; Diogenes discusses his life and views at 2.65–104.

91 *On the Soul* is known today by the title *Phaedo*. The passage referred to (59d) contains no explicit disparagement, but merely lists Aristippus as one of two absentees from Socrates’ deathbed.

92 As seen earlier (2.61), rivalries were intense among the philosophers at the court of Dionysius II in Syracuse.

93 The same charge is leveled at 2.60. The dialogue *Crito* survives intact.

94 The passages referred to are *Phaedo* 59b and *Apology* 34a and 38b.

95 This remark is not found in the surviving works of Aristotle.

96 Wax tablets were used for notes and impermanent writing in the ancient Greek world, and perhaps, as Diogenes implies here, for early drafts of works intended for revision. But the *Laws* is far too long a work to have been recorded in this medium.

97 The dialogue *Epinomis*, a continuation of the discussion in the *Laws*, is included in the traditional Platonic corpus but is generally regarded as spurious today.

98 Protagoras (c. 490–420 BC) was one of the most successful of the sophists in Athens; Diogenes discusses his life and views at 9.50–56. The charge here attributed to Aristoxenus is repeated at 3.57 but assigned to Favorinus. 38

him. And when the man said that he played for an insignificant stake, Plato replied, “But the habit is not insignificant.” When asked if there would be memoirs of him as there were of his predecessors, he replied, “One must first make one’s name, and the memoirs will follow.” One day, when Xenocrates<sup>99</sup> had come by, Plato told him to flog his slave, since he himself was too enraged to do so. He is also reported to have said to one of his slaves, “I would have flogged you, had I not been so enraged.” Being seated on horseback, he quickly dismounted, saying he had to take care not to be corrupted by horse-pride.<sup>100</sup> He advised those who were drunk to look at themselves in the mirror; for they would then abstain from such unseemly conduct. To drink to excess he said was nowhere becoming except at feasts of the god who gave us wine. He also disapproved of sleeping too much. In the *Laws*, at any rate, he says, “No one who is sleeping is good for anything.”<sup>101</sup> He said that the truth is the pleasantest thing to hear. According to others, he said it was the pleasantest thing to speak. In the *Laws* he says this about truth: “Truth, my friend, is beautiful and steadfast. But it is not easy to persuade men of this.”<sup>102</sup> He also thought it right to leave a memorial of himself behind, either in the hearts of friends or in books. He spent most of his time in seclusion, according to some writers.

He died, in the manner we have related, in the thirteenth year of Philip’s reign,<sup>103</sup> as Favorinus says in the third book of his *Reminiscences*. Theopompus says that Plato was accorded honors by Philip. Myronianus in his *Parallels* says that Philo<sup>104</sup> mentions some proverbs about Plato’s lice, implying that this was the cause of his death. He was buried in the Academy, where he had passed most of his life in the study of philosophy. Hence the school he founded was called the Academic school. And the entire population of Athens joined in the funeral procession from the Academy. His will runs as follows:

This property has been left, and these dispositions made by Plato: the estate in Iphistiadae, bounded on the north by the road from the temple of Cephisia, on the south by the temple of Heracles of Iphistiadae, on the east by the property of Archestratus of Phrearrhi, and on the west by that

99 Xenocrates of Chalcedon was a disciple of Plato and head of the Academy from 339 to 314 BC. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 4.6–15.

100 The quip evokes the literal meaning of the word *hippotaphia*, derived from *hippos* (horse) and *taphos* (pride or vanity) but used more generally of high self-regard.

101 *Laws* VII, 807e–808c.

102 *Ibid.*, II, 663e.

103 Philip II of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great. The thirteenth year of his reign fell in 348–347 BC.

104 There are many ancient writers by this name, and it’s not clear which one is meant here.



*Plato's Symposium*, by Anselm Feuerbach, 1873.

of Philip of Chollidae; let no one be permitted to sell or transfer it, but let it be the property of young Adeimantus<sup>105</sup> for all intents and purposes; the estate in Eiresidae, which I bought from Callimachus, bounded on the north by the property of Eurymedon of Nyrhinus, on the south by that of Demostratus of Xypete, on the east by that of Eurymedon of Myrrhinus, and on the west by the Cephisus; three minas of silver; a silver bowl weighing 165 drachmas; a small cup weighing 45 drachmas; a gold signet ring and gold earring, both together weighing four drachmas and three obols. Euclides the mason owes me three minas. I grant Artemis<sup>106</sup> her freedom. I leave four servants: Tychon, Bictas, Apollonides, and Dionysius. Household furniture, as set down in the inventory, a copy of which is in Demetrius' possession. I owe no one anything. My executors are Leosthenes, Speusippus, Demetrius, Hegias, Eurymedon, Callimachus, and Thrasippus.<sup>107</sup>

42

43

105 Not Plato's younger brother, but probably that man's grandson, Plato's grandnephew. Plato had no children of his own.

106 Presumably one of Plato's household slaves, named for the goddess.

107 Speusippus was the son of Plato's sister Potone; Eurymedon was Speusippus' father. The other executors are unknown, although Callimachus and Demetrius of Amphipolis are mentioned previously in the will.

Such was his will. The following epitaphs were inscribed on his tomb.  
The first:

Excelling among mortals for temperance and justice,  
Here lies divine Aristocles.<sup>108</sup>  
If anyone ever won great praise for wisdom,  
He won the greatest, and without arousing envy.

44 Next:

Earth hides Plato's body in her bosom,  
But his soul has an immortal station with the blessed.  
Ariston's son, whom every good man, though living far off,  
Honors for glimpsing the divine life.

And a third that is more recent:

Eagle, why do you swoop over this tomb? Tell me,  
Do you gaze at the starry house of one of the gods?  
—I am an image of the soul of Plato, which has flown to Olympus,  
While his earth-born body lies in Attic soil.

45 There is also my own, which runs thus:

And how could Phoebus,<sup>109</sup> unless he brought Plato to life in Greece,  
Have healed the souls of men by letters?  
For Asclepius, the god's son, is a healer of the body,  
While Plato heals the immortal soul.

And another, on how he died:

Phoebus gave mortals Asclepius and Plato,  
The one to save the soul, the other the body.  
After a wedding feast, Plato departed to that city  
He had built for himself, and resided in the abode of Zeus.

These are his epitaphs.

46 His students were Speusippus of Athens, Xenocrates of Chalcedon, Aristotle of Stagira, Philip of Opus, Hestiaeus of Perinthus, Dion of Syracuse, Amyclus of Heraclea, Erastus and Coriscus of Scepsus, Timolaus of Cyzicus, Euaeon of Lampsacus, Python and Heraclides of Aenus, Hippothales and Callippus of Athens, Demetrius of Amphipolis, Heraclides of Ponticus, and many

108 Plato's given name, Aristocles, was taken from his paternal grandfather (see 3.4).

109 Another name for Apollo, god of light, music, and healing.

more, including two women, Lastheneia of Mantinea and Axiothea of Phlius, who is reported by Dicaearchus to have worn men's clothes. Some say that Theophrastus<sup>110</sup> also attended Plato's lectures. Chamaeleon includes Hyperides the orator and Lycurgus,<sup>111</sup> as does Polemon. Sabinus adds Demosthenes,<sup>112</sup> citing Mnesistratus of Thason as his authority in the fourth book of his *Collected Meditations*. And this is likely. 47

Now for you<sup>113</sup> who are rightly fond of Plato and eager to examine his philosophical doctrines in preference to those of anyone else, I have considered it necessary to sketch the nature of his discourses, the classification of his dialogues, and the method of his argument by induction, in as elementary a way as possible and in summary form, in order that the information I have gathered about his life may not be found to omit his doctrines. For it would be like carrying owls to Athens,<sup>114</sup> as the saying goes, were I to provide you with a highly detailed account.

It is said that Zeno of Elea<sup>115</sup> was the first to write dialogues. But Aristotle, in the first book of his work *On Poets*, declares that Alexamenus<sup>116</sup> of Styra (or of Teos, as Favorinus says in his *Reminiscences*) was the first. It seems to me, however, that Plato, who perfected the form, ought in fairness to be awarded the prize for its discovery as well as for its elaboration. A dialogue is a conversation consisting of questions and answers on some philosophical or political topic, with careful attention to the characters of the persons introduced and their way of speaking. Dialectic is the art of discourse by which we either refute or establish some proposition by means of the interlocutors' questions and answers. 48

Of the Platonic dialogues there are two principal types, one adapted for instruction, the other for inquiry. The instructional type is itself divided into two types, the theoretical and the practical. The theoretical is divided into the physical and logical, the practical into the ethical and political. The type concerned with inquiry is also divided into two types, one fostering dialectical skill, the 49

110 Theophrastus (c. 370–288/85 BC) was a follower of Aristotle and became head of the Lyceum after Aristotle's death. His life and views are discussed at 5.36–57.

111 Hyperides and Lycurgus were both prominent in Athenian politics in the second half of the fourth century BC.

112 The most famous orator of his age (384–322 BC) and a prominent Athenian statesman.

113 A rare form of direct address, used only one other time by Diogenes in *Lives* (see 10.29).

114 Owls were the symbol of the goddess Athena, and therefore of her patron city, Athens. Both Athena and her owl were prominently stamped on the Athenian silver tetradrachms (coins equal in value to four drachmas), which were widely used in the ancient Greek world and informally known as "owls."

115 A member of the Eleatic school founded by Parmenides, Zeno (fl. early fifth century BC) is best known for his paradoxes. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 9.25–29.

116 Otherwise unknown.

other skill in debate. The type concerned with skill in dialectic has two subdivisions, one maieutic,<sup>117</sup> the other peirastic.<sup>118</sup> And the type concerned with skill in debate can also be divided into two types, the probative and the refutative.

50 We are not unaware that some writers classify the dialogues differently; for they say that some are dramatic, others narrative, and still others a combination of the two. But they classify the dialogues in a manner more appropriate for tragedy than for philosophy. Physics is covered in the *Timaeus*, logic in the *Statesman*, *Cratylus*, *Parmenides*, and the *Sophist*; ethics in the *Apology*, *Crito*, *Phaedo*, *Phaedrus*, and the *Symposium*, as well as in the *Menexenus*, *Clitophon*, *Letters*, *Philebus*, *Hipparchus*,<sup>119</sup> and the *Rivals in Love*; and politics in the *Republic*,  
51 the *Laws*, *Minos*, *Epinomis*, and *Atlantis*.<sup>120</sup> The maieutic category includes *Alcibiades*, *Theages*, *Lysis*, and *Laches*; the peirastic category, *Euthyphro*, *Meno*, *Ion*, *Charmides*, and *Theaetetus*; the probative, *Protagoras*, and the refutative, *Euthydemus*, *Gorgias*, and the two dialogues entitled *Hippias*. <So much> for the subject of dialogue, its definition, and its varieties.

Since there is considerable disagreement between those who claim that Plato lays down positive views and those who disagree, let me make a determination concerning this question. A dogmatist lays down dogmas just as a legislator lays down laws; and “dogma” has two meanings, namely the thing that is opined, and the opinion itself.

52 The former of these is a proposition, the latter a conception. Now, where he comprehends the subject matter, Plato declares his own view and refutes the false one; but when discoursing about what is unclear he holds back. He presents his own views through four characters: Socrates, Timaeus, the Athenian stranger, and the Elean stranger. The strangers are not, as some assume, Plato and Parmenides, but anonymous fictional characters; and even when Socrates and Timaeus are speaking, it is Plato’s views that are being laid down. And to indicate which views are false, he introduces characters who are refuted, such as Thrasymachus, Callicles, Polus, Gorgias, and Protagoras, as well as Hippias, Euthydemus, and the like.

53 In constructing his proofs he primarily uses induction, not always in the same way, but in two forms. For induction is an argument that, by means of certain true propositions, properly infers the truth of a proposition that resem-

117 The Greek word *maieusis* means “midwifery.” Socrates claimed that his proper role was as a midwife of knowledge, meaning that though he was barren of doctrines, he could help others give birth to their own views and then examine their soundness.

118 The Greek word *peirasis* means a “trial” or “attempt.” Thus peirastic dialogues are those concerned with trying out an opinion or putting it to the test.

119 Generally considered spurious by modern scholars, as are the *Rivals in Love*, *Minos*, *Epinomis*, and *Theages*.

120 Apparently an alternative title of Plato’s *Critias*.



*Logic (or Philosophy)*, by Luca della Robbia, c. 1437.

Georgio Vasari identified the figures as Plato and Aristotle. Philosophy is represented here solely by the activity of its protagonists: the philosophical discourse.

bles them. There are two methods of induction: one proceeds by contradiction, the other by agreement. In the kind that proceeds by contradiction, the answer offered to every question will be the opposite of the interlocutor's position, as for example, "My father is either other than or the same as your father.<sup>121</sup> So if your father is other than my father, then, being other, he would not be my father. But if he is the same as my father, then, being the same, he would be my father." And again: "If man is not an animal, he would either be a stone or a stick. But he is not a stone or a stick; for he is animate and self-moving; hence

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<sup>121</sup> *Euthydemus* 297e-298c.

he is an animal. But if he is an animal, and if a dog or an ox is also an animal, then man, by being an animal, would also be a dog or an ox.”<sup>122</sup> This is an instance of induction by contradiction and opposition, which Plato used not for laying down positive views, but for refutation. Induction by agreement has two forms; one proves the particular proposition under investigation from a particular, the other proves the universal {from a particular}. The former is employed in rhetoric, the latter in dialectic. For example, under the first form one seeks to know whether So-and-so has committed a murder. The proof is that at the time of the murder the man was found to be covered with blood. This is the rhetorical form of induction, since rhetoric is concerned with particulars and not universals. For it does not investigate justice in the abstract, but particular instances of justice. The other form, where the universal is first established by reference to particulars, is dialectical. For example, the question is asked whether the soul is immortal and whether the living come back from the dead. This is proved in the dialogue *On the Soul*<sup>123</sup> by means of a certain general proposition, namely that opposites come from opposites. But the universal proposition itself is established from particular instances: for example, that sleep comes from waking and vice versa, and the greater from the smaller and vice versa. This is the form of induction that Plato used to establish his own views.

Just as long ago in tragedy the chorus was at first the only actor, and later Thespis devised a single actor in order to let the chorus catch its breath, and Aeschylus a second, and Sophocles a third, and thus tragedy was perfected, so too with philosophy. For at first its discourse concerned one subject only, namely physics, then Socrates added ethics, and Plato dialectics, and so brought philosophy to its perfection. Thrasyllus says that Plato, like the tragic poets, published his dialogues in tetralogies. The tragic poets competed with four dramas at the Dionysia, the Lenaea, the Panathenaea, and the festival of the Chytri.<sup>124</sup> Of the four plays, the last was a satire. And the four dramas were called a tetralogy.<sup>125</sup>

122 Ibid., 298c–299a.

123 *Phaedo* 70d–72a.

124 Each of these were major Athenian festivals. The first, the Dionysia (also known as the City Dionysia), was celebrated at the end of March in honor of the god Dionysus. Along with parades and sacrifices, the main event was a dramatic competition for both tragic and comic playwrights. The Lenaea, celebrated in late January–early February, also in honor of Dionysus, had similar, though smaller, theatrical contests. The Panathenaea was an important summer festival held in honor of the city’s patron goddess, Athena, sometimes featuring athletic and musical contests. The Pot-Feast (*Chytri*), in late February, celebrated the maturation of the previous year’s wine. Earthen pots were offered to the dead and to the god Hermes in his capacity as guide of souls to the underworld.

125 The dramatic tetralogies consisted of three linked tragedies and a satyr play that often spoofed the tragic material. We have no tetralogy intact and only one of the tragic trilogies, Aeschylus’ *Oresteia*; the satyr play that accompanied it (*Proteus*) is lost except for a single fragment.

Accordingly, says Thrasylus, there are fifty-six genuine dialogues, provided that the *Republic* is divided into ten (though Favorinus, in the second book of his *Miscellaneous History*, says that almost the entire *Republic* was found in Protagoras's *Disputations*) and the *Laws* into twelve. This makes nine tetralogies, if the *Republic* counts as a single book, and the *Laws* as another. He gives the dialogues of the first tetralogy a common subject. For he wishes to describe what the life of the philosopher should be. He gives each book a two-part title, the first part taken from the name of the interlocutor, the second from the subject.<sup>126</sup> The first tetralogy begins with *Euthyphro* or *On Piety*, a peirastic dialogue; the second is the *Apology of Socrates*, an ethical dialogue; the third is *Crito* or *On What Is to Be Done*, ethical; the fourth is *Phaedo* or *On the Soul*, ethical. The second tetralogy begins with *Cratylus* or *On Correctness of Names*, a logical dialogue, which is followed by *Theaetetus* or *On Knowledge*, a peirastic dialogue, the *Sophist* or *On Being*, a logical dialogue, and the *Statesman* or *On Monarchy*, also logical. The third begins with *Parmenides* or *On Ideas*, logical, which is followed by *Philebus* or *On Pleasure*, ethical, the *Symposium* or *On the Good*, ethical, and *Phaedrus* or *On Love*, ethical. The fourth begins with *Alcibiades*<sup>127</sup> or *On the Nature of Man*, a maieutic dialogue, which is followed by a second *Alcibiades*<sup>128</sup> or *On Prayer*, also maieutic, *Hipparchus* or *The Lover of Gain*, ethical, and the *Rivals in Love* or *On Philosophy*, ethical. The fifth begins with *Theages* or *On Philosophy*, maieutic, which is followed by *Charmides* or *On Temperance*, a peirastic dialogue, *Laches* or *On Courage*, maieutic, and *Lysis* or *On Friendship*, maieutic. The sixth begins with *Euthydemus* or the *Eristic*, refutative, which is followed by *Protagoras* or the *Sophists*, probative, *Gorgias* or *On Rhetoric*, refutative, and *Meno* or *On Virtue*, a peirastic dialogue. The seventh begins with two dialogues entitled *Hippias*—the first *On Beauty*,<sup>129</sup> the second *On Falsehood*<sup>130</sup>—both refutative, which are followed by *Ion* or *On the Iliad*, peirastic, and *Menexenus* or *The Funeral Oration*, ethical. The eighth begins with *Clitophon* or *Hortatory*, ethical, which is followed by the *Republic* or *On Justice*, political, *Timaeus* or *On Nature*, physical, and *Critias* or *The Story of Atlantis*, ethical. The ninth begins with *Minos* or *On Law*, political, which is followed by the *Laws* or *On Legislation*, political, *Epinomis* or *Night Meeting* or *Philosopher*, political, and finally the thirteen letters<sup>131</sup> (ethical), in which he uses the salutation “Fare well,” as Epicurus used “Live well,”

126 It seems that Plato himself used only the interlocutor's name when assigning titles to his dialogues.

127 Commonly referred to as the *First* or *Greater Alcibiades*.

128 Generally considered spurious by modern scholars.

129 Commonly known as the *Hippias Major*.

130 Known as the *Hippias Minor*.

131 Scholars disagree about the authenticity of these letters.

and Cleon<sup>132</sup> “Be of good cheer.” There is one letter to Aristodemus,<sup>133</sup> two to Archytas, four to Dionysius, one to Hermias, Erastus, and Coriscus, one each to Leodamas, Dion, and Perdicas, and two to Dion’s friends. This is how Thrasyllus and some others classify Plato’s works.

62 Some, however, including Aristophanes the grammarian,<sup>134</sup> group the dialogues in trilogies. In the first they place the *Republic*, *Timaeus*, and *Critias*; in the second the *Sophist*, the *Statesman*, and *Cratylus*; in the third the *Laws*, *Minos*, and *Epinomis*; in the fourth *Theaetetus*, *Euthyphro*, and the *Apology*; in the fifth *Crito*, *Phaedo*, and the *Letters*. The rest are single works in no particular order. Some writers, as has been mentioned, put the *Republic* first, others start with the *Greater Alcibiades*; others with *Theages*; some with *Euthyphro*; others with *Clitophon*; some with *Timaeus*; some with *Phaedrus*; others with *Theaetetus*; many put the *Apology* first. By common consent, the following dialogues are considered spurious: *Midon* or *Horsebreeder*, the *Eryxias* or *Erasistratus*, *Alcyon*, the *Acephali* or *Sisyphus*, *Axiochus*, the *Phaeacians*, *Demodocus*, *Chelidon*, the *Seventh Day*, and *Epimenides*. Of these the *Alcyon* is thought to be the work of a certain Leon, as Favorinus says in the fifth book of his *Reminiscences*.

63 He has used a variety of terms in order to make his system less intelligible to the ignorant. He considers wisdom, in its most specific sense, to be the knowledge of those things that are intelligible and that truly exist, the science which, he declares, is concerned with god and the soul when separated from the body. In a particular sense, he also calls wisdom “philosophy,” which is a longing for divine wisdom. And in a general sense, “wisdom” is used by him to refer to any form of skill, as when he calls an artisan wise. And he uses the same words in a number of different senses. At any rate, he uses the word *phaulos*<sup>135</sup> in the sense of *haplous*,<sup>136</sup> as does Euripides in *Lycymnius* when referring to Heracles in the following passage:

Simple, rude, perfectly honest,  
Reserving all his wisdom for action,  
Unskilled in speech.

132 Presumably Cleon the Pythagorean, whose spurious letters circulated in antiquity.

133 No such letter exists, though Diogenes may have in mind the *Tenth Letter*, which is addressed to an otherwise unknown Aristodorus.

134 Aristophanes of Byzantium was a grammarian and head of the Library of Alexandria (c. 257–180 BC). A versatile scholar and researcher, he was best known for his editions of the works of the great poets, including Homer, Hesiod, and Pindar.

135 The Greek word *phaulos* means “poor” or “common.” It generally has a pejorative sense, but can be used to denote simplicity in a positive sense, as in the lines quoted below.

136 *Haplous* means “simple.”



*The Tablet of Cebes (or The Journey of Human Life)*, anonymous, 1573.

An allegorical representation of life as a passage through concentric rings to the temple of happiness on a mountain in the middle, based on a dialogue attributed to Cebes of Thebes (c. 430–350 BC), a follower of Socrates. Cebes is one of the speakers in Plato’s *Phaedo* and is also mentioned in the *Crito* and the *Thirteenth Letter*.

Sometimes Plato uses the same word to mean “bad” and at other times “small.” He often uses different words to express the same thing. He calls the idea “form,” “species,” “model,” “principle,” and “cause.” He also uses contrary expressions for the same thing. At any rate, he calls the sensible object “that which is and is not”: “that which is” because it comes into being, and “that which is not” because it is constantly changing. And he says that the idea is neither in motion nor at rest; that the selfsame thing is both one and many. And it is his habit to do this in many instances.

64

The interpretation of his dialogues includes three things. First, one must explain the meaning of what is being said in each case; then, one must determine its purpose, whether it is making an indispensable point or merely serving as an illustration, and whether it is establishing doctrines or refuting the interlocutor; and third, one must consider whether what has been said is correct.

65

Since various critical marks are found in his works, let us say something about them here. A *chi* (X)<sup>137</sup> is understood to indicate expressions, figures of

137 The Greek letter X, in this context short for *chrēsthai*, “customary usage.”

- 66 speech, and, in general, any idiom of Platonic usage. The *diple* (>) indicates Plato's doctrines and opinions. The dotted *chi* (X) draws attention to quotations and elegancies of style. The dotted *diple* (≧) indicates the corrections of certain editors; the dotted *obelus* (÷), passages suspected for no good reason; the dotted reversed *sigma* (Ϸ), repetitions and possible transpositions; the *ceraunium* (T),<sup>138</sup> passages requiring philosophical clarification; the asterisk (\*), an agreement of doctrine; and the *obelus* (–), a spurious passage. So much for the critical marks and his works. As Antigonus of Carystus says in his work *On Zeno*, when the edited works were first published, anyone who wished to read them had to pay a fee to their owners.
- 67 These were his approved doctrines. He held that the soul is immortal, that it clothes itself in a succession of different bodies,<sup>139</sup> and that it has a numerical first principle, whereas the body's first principle is geometrical.<sup>140</sup> He defined soul as a form of breath diffused in all directions, and held that it is self-moving and tripartite. Its rational part is seated in the region of the head, the spirited part in the region of the heart, while the appetitive part is constructed in the region of the navel and the liver.<sup>141</sup>
- 68 The soul encloses the body on all sides, from the center outward, in a circle, and is composed of elements. Divided at harmonic intervals, it forms two circles that meet each other at two points; and the inner circle, being slit six times, makes seven circles in all. The inner circle moves on a diagonal to the left, the outer to the right. And because it is single, the outer circle dominates; for the inner circle has been divided. The outer is the circle of the Same, the inner ones those of the Other, by which he means that the motion of the soul is that of the universe together with the revolutions of the planets.<sup>142</sup>
- 69 Divided in this way and harmonized from the center to the extremities, the soul recognizes the realities and harmonizes them because its own elements are harmoniously proportioned. When the circle of the Other revolves correctly, the result is opinion, whereas when the circle of the Same does so the result is knowledge. Plato posits two universal principles, god and matter, and he calls god mind and cause. He held that matter is formless and unlimited, and that composite things arise out of it.<sup>143</sup> He says that though it once moved in a disorderly manner, it was brought together in one place by god, since he preferred

138 The Greek word *keraunion* means "lightning bolt."

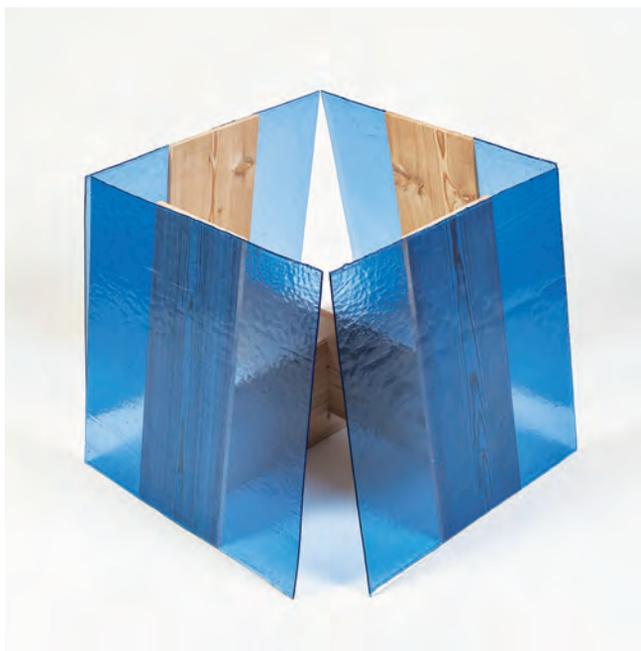
139 See *Timaeus* 42b and 90e.

140 *Ibid.*, 54a.

141 *Ibid.*, 69c and 89e.

142 *Ibid.*, 36d–37c.

143 *Ibid.*, 50d–e and 51a.



*Terra Platónica*, by Francisco Tropa, 2013.  
Murano colored glass plates, Macacauba wood unique, 60 × 60 × 60 cm.

order to disorder.<sup>144</sup> This substance was converted into the four elements: fire, water, air, and earth; and from these the universe itself and all it contains are generated. He says that earth is the only unchangeable element, and holds that this is due to the peculiarity of its constituent shapes. For he says that the shapes that constitute the others are of the same kind (all are made of identical scalene triangles), whereas the shape that constitutes earth is peculiar. The element of fire is a pyramid, of air an octahedron, of water an icosahedron, of earth a cube; hence earth is not converted into any of them, nor are they converted into earth.

70

The elements are not separated, each into its own region, because the motion of the universe, which exerts pressure on them and draws them toward the center, aggregates the small particles and separates the large. Hence as they change their shapes, the elements also change their positions.<sup>145</sup>

71

There exists one universe, created,<sup>146</sup> since it is perceptible, which has been made by god. It is animate because what is animate is better than what

144 Ibid., 30a and 69b.

145 Ibid., 58a–c.

146 Ibid., 31a–b, 33a, 55c–d, and 92c.

is inanimate.<sup>147</sup> And this piece of workmanship is assumed to have come from the best of causes.<sup>148</sup> It was made one and not unlimited because the model  
 72 from which god made it was one. It is spherical because such is the shape of its creator. For that creator encompasses the other living things, and this universe the shapes of them all.<sup>149</sup> It is smooth and has no surrounding organ because it has no need of organs. Furthermore, the universe remains indestructible because it is not dissolved into the deity.<sup>150</sup> The creation as a whole is caused by god because the good is by nature beneficent,<sup>151</sup> and the creation of the universe has the good as its cause. For the most beautiful of created things has the best of intelligible causes.<sup>152</sup> Accordingly, since god is of this nature, and the universe, being supremely beautiful, resembles the best, it would resemble god rather than any of the created things.

73 The universe is composed of fire, water, air, and earth: of fire, that it may be visible; of earth, that it may be solid; of water and air, that it may be proportional.<sup>153</sup> For the solids are found to be proportionate with the aid of two means, so that the whole may constitute a unity. And the universe was made up of all the elements so that it would be complete and indestructible.

Time is an image of eternity. And while eternity remains always at rest, time is a function of the motion of the universe. For night, day, month, and all such intervals are parts of time. Hence time does not exist apart from the nature of the universe. But as soon as the universe exists, so does time.<sup>154</sup>

74 In order that time might exist, the sun, moon, and planets were created. And in order that the number of the seasons might be definite, and living things might possess number, god kindled the light of the sun. The moon is in the circle directly above earth, the sun in the next above that, and the planets in the circles beyond. The universe is wholly animate because it is bound in animate motion.<sup>155</sup> And in order that the universe, which had been created in the likeness of the intelligible being, might be complete, the nature of all the other animals was created. Since its pattern contains them, the universe must also contain them. And thus it has gods, which are primarily fiery in nature, and

147 Ibid., 30b.

148 Ibid., 30a–b and 55c–d.

149 Ibid., an adaptation of 33b.

150 Ibid., 33a–d, 34b, 32c, and 63a.

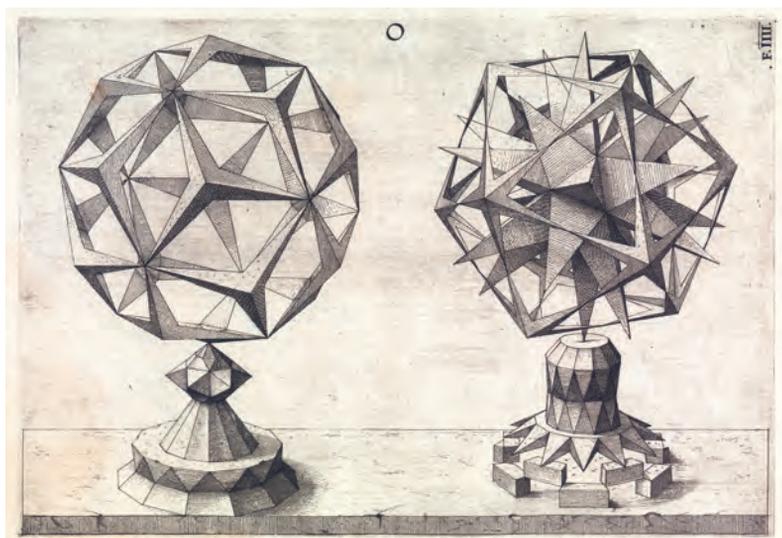
151 Ibid., 32c, 33a, 38b, 41a, and 43d.

152 Ibid., 29e–30a and 42e.

153 Ibid., 31b–33a.

154 Ibid., 37d–38b.

155 Ibid., 38c–39d.



A page from *Perspectiva Corporum Regularium* (*Perspective of the Regular Bodies*), by Wenzel Jamnitzer, 1568. Engraving by Jost Amman. A compendium of perspectival geometry based on the five Platonic solids, or “regular bodies”—the tetrahedron, cube, octahedron, dodecahedron, and icosahedron—the book is comprised of five sections, each including twenty-four polyhedral variants.

three other kinds of creatures: the winged, the aquatic, and the terrestrial.<sup>156</sup> Earth is the oldest of the gods in heaven, and it was created to make night and day. And being central it revolves around the center.<sup>157</sup> Now given that there are two causes, it must be affirmed, according to Plato, that some things are due to reason, while others have a necessary cause,<sup>158</sup> the latter being air, fire, earth, and water, which, though not elements in the strict sense of the term, are their receptacles.<sup>159</sup> They are composed of triangles, and resolve into triangles. The scalene and the isosceles triangle are their constituent elements.<sup>160</sup>

75

Thus the principles and causes of the things of which there is a model are the two mentioned above: god and matter. Matter is necessarily formless, as is also the case for the other entities that receive form. Of these there is necessarily a cause. Receiving the ideas in one way or another, matter generates substances, and it moves because its power is variable; and because it is in motion it causes

76

156 Ibid., 30c–31b, 39c–40a, and 41b–c.

157 Ibid., 40b–c.

158 Ibid., 46d–e, 47e, 48a, 68e, and 69a.

159 Ibid., 49a, 50b–51b, and 52a–b.

160 Ibid., 53c–55c.

77 those things that are generated from it to move in turn. At first these entities moved in an irrational and irregular manner, but when they began to constitute the universe, insofar it was possible they were made symmetrical and orderly by god. For the two causes existed before the creation of the world—and becoming came third; they were not distinct, however, but only existed in the form of traces and were in no sort of order. When the world came into being, they too acquired order;<sup>161</sup> and from all the existing bodies the universe was created. Plato holds that god, like the soul, is incorporeal. For this renders him immune to decay and death. Plato assumes, as has been mentioned, that the ideas are causes and principles whereby the world of natural objects is what it is.

78 About good and evil he had this to say. He maintained that the goal of human life is assimilation to god, and that virtue is sufficient for happiness.<sup>162</sup> But it also requires instruments that confer bodily advantages such as strength, health, a keen sensibility, and so forth.<sup>163</sup> It also needs external advantages such as wealth, good birth, and reputation. Yet the wise man will be no less happy if these are not present. Moreover, he will engage in public life, marry,<sup>164</sup> and refrain from breaking the existing laws.<sup>165</sup> To the extent circumstances permit, he will legislate for his own country, unless he sees that the political situation is utterly irremediable owing to excessive partisanship. He believes that gods oversee human affairs<sup>166</sup> and that semi-divine beings exist.<sup>167</sup> He was the first to define the notion of good as that which is linked to whatever is praiseworthy, rational, useful, becoming, and appropriate, all of which are linked to that which is consistent and in harmony with nature.

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80 He also discoursed on the correctness of names,<sup>168</sup> and was thus the first to develop a science for correctly asking and answering questions, a science of which he made excessive use. In the dialogues he conceived justice to be the law of god because it is a more effective incitement to do right, lest we be punished, even after death, as evildoers.<sup>169</sup> For this he has been felt by some to be overly devoted to myths;<sup>170</sup> he intersperses these tales throughout his works in order

161 Ibid., 52d, 53b, 57c, and 69b–c.

162 See *Thaetetus* 176a ff.; *Phaedrus* 248a and 253a; *Republic* X 612a–b and 613a; *Timaeus* 90d; and *Gorgias* 470e and 506b.

163 *Philebus* 63d ff.; *Euthydemus* 281d; *Menexenus* 246e–f; and *Republic* VI, 491c.

164 See *Laws* VI, 772d–e.

165 See *Apology* 31e, and *Crito* 49a–54d.

166 See *Sophist* 265c–d; *Philebus* 28d ff.; *Timaeus* 30b, 44c; and *Laws* V, 709b, and X, 899d ff.

167 See *Apology* 27c ff.; *Cratylus* 397e ff.; *Symposium* 202e; *Republic* III, 392a; *Timaeus* 40d; and *Laws* IV, 713a and 717b.

168 The subtitle of *Cratylus*.

169 See *Gorgias* 523a; *Republic* II, 364b, and X, 613a; *Timaeus* 42b; and *Laws* IV, 716a, and X, 904b.

170 For Plato's use of myths regarding the afterlife, see *Phaedo* 107d–e and 113d; *Thaetetus* 177a; *Phaedrus* 249a–b; *Gorgias* 523a ff.; *Republic* X, 614a ff.; and *Laws* X, 903–5d.

to deter men from wicked deeds by reminding them that they are ignorant of what awaits them after death.<sup>171</sup> These, then, are the doctrines he approved.

Plato divided things, according to Aristotle, in the following manner.<sup>172</sup> Among good things, some are in the mind, some in the body, and some are external. For example, justice, wisdom, courage, temperance, and so forth are in the mind; beauty, a good constitution, health, and strength are in the body; while friends, a good reputation, the prosperity of one's country, and wealth are external. Thus there are three kinds of goods: goods of the mind, goods of the body, and external goods. 81

There are three kinds of friendship:<sup>173</sup> one is natural, another social, and another hospitable. By natural friendship we mean that which parents have for their offspring and kinsmen for one another; the other animals have also inherited this form. By social friendship we mean that which arises from intimacy and has nothing to do with kinship; for example, that of Pylades for Orestes.<sup>174</sup> The friendship between host and guest comes about between strangers as the result of an introduction or letters of recommendation. Thus friendship is natural, social, or hospitable. Some add a fourth kind, namely, erotic.

There are five forms of government: one is democratic, another is aristocratic, a third oligarchic, a fourth monarchic, and a fifth tyrannical. The democratic form is that in which the people wield power and choose their magistrates and laws. The aristocratic form is that in which power is exercised not by the rich or the poor or the illustrious, but by the best citizens. An oligarchy exists whenever offices are held by those who meet property qualifications; for the wealthy are fewer than the poor. Monarchy is regulated either by law or by heredity. In Carthage it is regulated by law, for there the sovereignty is for sale.<sup>175</sup> In Lacedaemon and Macedonia it is hereditary; for 82 83

171 See *Phaedrus* 245c–56c; *Phaedo* 107c–8c; *Republic* X, 614b–21d; and *Gorgias* 523a–27c.

172 Starting here and continuing through ch. 109, Diogenes relies heavily on a work not actually by Aristotle—the so-called *Divisiones Aristoteleae* (*Aristotelian Divisions*). (The earliest sources sometimes credit the “Divisions” to Plato himself or to Xenocrates. It may be the text was a teaching tool, perhaps used even in the Academy, to help aspiring students of philosophy master various techniques of classification.) Large parts of *Divisiones Aristoteleae* survive in three different manuscripts, suggesting that it was relatively well-known in the ancient world. Although some of the classificatory schemes reported by Diogenes can be identified in Plato's corpus, others cannot. The notes do not attempt to trace all the possible allusions to specific passages in Plato.

173 The Greek term *philia* has a broader meaning than the English word “friendship” and can refer to any form of relationship involving intimacy and affection.

174 In mythology, Pylades was the closest companion of Orestes, son of Agamemnon, and helped incite Orestes to murder his mother, Clytemnestra, in order to avenge his father's death. Their bond was often cited in the ancient world as a model of perfect friendship.

175 The second-century BC historian Polybius refers to magistrates in Carthage “giving gifts” in order to attain office, though no other details of the practice are known.

there they select the king from a certain family. Tyrannical government is that in which the people, subjugated by either fraud or force, are governed by an individual. Thus government is either democratic, aristocratic, oligarchic, monarchic, or tyrannical.

There are three kinds of justice: one is concerned with gods, another with men, and another with the departed. For those who sacrifice according to the laws and take care of the temples clearly revere the gods. And those who repay loans and return deposits act honestly toward men. And those who take care of tombs clearly show respect for the departed. Thus there is justice toward gods, toward men, and toward the departed.

84 There are three kinds of knowledge: practical, productive, and theoretical. Architecture and shipbuilding are productive; for the work produced by them can be seen. Politics, flute playing, harp playing, and so forth are practical; for they produce nothing visible, but they perform something: in one case a man plays the flute, in another the harp, and in another he engages in politics. Geometry and harmonics and astronomy are theoretical; for they neither perform nor produce anything. But the geometer examines how lines relate to one another; the student of harmonics investigates sounds; and the astronomer studies the stars and the universe. Thus some knowledge is theoretical, some practical, and some productive.

85 There are five kinds of medicine: pharmacological, surgical, dietetic, diagnostic, and palliative. Pharmacological medicine cures sickness by administering drugs; surgical medicine heals by cutting and cauterizing; dietetic medicine alleviates illness by altering the diet; diagnostic medicine determines the nature of sickness; and palliative medicine provides immediate relief from pain. Thus the branches of medicine are pharmacological, surgical, dietetic, diagnostic, and palliative.

86 There are two kinds of law, the written and the unwritten. The law that governs how we live in cities is written; that which arises by custom is called unwritten law; for example, the prohibition against walking naked in the marketplace or wearing women's clothes. There is no specific law forbidding this, but we are prohibited from such conduct by an unwritten law. Thus law is either written or unwritten.

87 There are five kinds of speech. One is the kind politicians use in the assembly; this is called political speech. Another kind is that which the orators use in their written compositions, whether for praise, censure, accusation, or defense. This is called rhetorical speech. The third kind is that which private citizens use for conversing with one another; this is called private speech. Another kind is that used by those who engage in an exchange of short questions and answers. This is called dialectical speech. The fifth kind is that which



*Plato's Cave*, by Marcel Dzama, 2015. Watercolor, gouache, and graphite, four parts; 71.1 x 55.9 cm overall, each part 35.6 x 27.9 cm.

craftsmen use for discussing their own subjects; this is called technical speech. Thus speech is political, rhetorical, private, dialectical, or technical.

There are three kinds of music. One employs only the mouth, like singing. The second employs both the mouth and the hands, as when the harp player sings to his own accompaniment. The third employs only the hands, as in harp playing. Thus music may employ either the mouth alone, or both the mouth and the hands, or only the hands.

There are four kinds of nobility. First, if the ancestors are handsome, gentle, and righteous, their descendants are said to be noble. Secondly, if the

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*Plato as a Musician*, Indian (Mughal Empire), c. 1600.

89 ancestors have been princes or magistrates, their descendants are said to be noble. Thirdly, if the ancestors are renowned, either for military leadership or athletic success, we call their descendants noble. Fourthly, if a man proves generous and magnanimous, he too is said to be noble. And this is the highest form of nobility. Thus nobility depends on ancestors who are excellent, powerful, or renowned, or on one's personal integrity.

There are three kinds of beauty. The first is the kind that elicits praise, for example a form that pleases the eye. Another is the kind that provides something useful; thus an instrument, a house, and the like are beautiful because of their utility. Lastly, laws and practices and so forth are beautiful because they are beneficial. Thus one kind of beauty is concerned with praise, another with utility, and another with procuring benefits.

The soul is divided into three parts. One part of it is rational, another appetitive, and a third aggressive. The rational part is the cause of deliberation, reasoning, understanding, and so forth. The appetitive part is the cause of the desire to eat, to have sexual relations, and so forth. The aggressive part is the cause of boldness, pleasure, pain, and anger. Thus one part of the soul is rational, another appetitive, and a third aggressive. 90

There are four kinds of perfect virtue: wisdom, justice, courage, and temperance. Of these, wisdom is the cause of correct conduct, justice of honest dealing in partnerships and transactions. Courage enables a man not to abandon his post, but to stand firm in dangers and emergencies. Temperance imparts mastery over desires, so that we are not enslaved by any pleasure, but lead an orderly life. Virtue thus includes wisdom, justice, courage, and temperance. 91

Rule has five divisions. One is rule according to law, another according to nature, a third according to custom, a fourth by heredity, and a fifth by force. When those who govern cities are elected by the citizens, they rule by law. Those who rule by nature are the males, not only among human beings but in the animal world as well; for everywhere the males generally dominate the females. Rule by custom is that which caretakers exercise over children, and teachers over their students. Rule by heredity is what is said to prevail among the Lacedemonians; for the office there belongs to a certain family. This is also the case in Macedonia; for there too the office is hereditary. Others, who have obtained power by force or fraud, govern the citizens against their will. This is called rule by force. Thus rule is either by law, by nature, by custom, by heredity, or by force. 92

There are six kinds of rhetoric. When orators exhort the people to make war or to form an alliance with someone, that kind of rhetoric is called persuasion. When they demand that the people *not* fight or form an alliance, but remain at peace, it is called dissuasion. A third kind is used when a speaker declares that he has been injured by someone whom he claims has done him great harm; this kind is called an accusation. A fourth kind is used when a speaker declares that he has done nothing wrong and that his conduct is not at all objectionable; this kind is called a defense. A fifth kind is used when a speaker speaks well of another and declares him to be noble and honorable; this is called an encomium. A sixth kind is used when the speaker declares someone to be unworthy; this is called a censure. Thus the forms of rhetoric include encomium, censure, persuasion, dissuasion, accusation, and defense. 93

Effective speaking has four aspects: what one should say, at what length one should speak, to whom one should speak, and at what moment one should speak. As for what one should say, it is that which will be expedient for the speaker and the hearer. The length at which one should speak is that 94 95

which is neither more nor less than sufficient. To whom one should speak: if one is addressing older persons, one's discourse must be tailored to older listeners; if addressing the young, it must be tailored to the young. As for the moment at which one should speak, it should be neither too early nor too late; otherwise the speaker will miss the mark and his speech will not succeed.

96 There are four ways of conferring benefits. One may benefit another with money, physical assistance, knowledge, or speech. Financial assistance to one who is in need eases his plight. Personal assistance is given whenever one comes to the aid of those who are being beaten. Those who educate, practice medicine, and offer instruction in something valuable confer benefits by means of knowledge. Whenever a man appears in court to defend another and speaks effectively on his behalf, he is conferring a benefit by means of speech. Thus one can benefit another with money, physical help, knowledge, or speech.

97 There are four ways in which things are accomplished and completed. Things may be accomplished by legal action, as occurs when a decree is passed and is confirmed by law. Things may be completed in accordance with nature, as the day, the year, and the seasons are completed. Things may be completed by art, for example by the builder's art, by which a house is completed; or by the shipbuilder's art, by which vessels are completed. Things may be accomplished by chance when matters turn out otherwise than one expects. Thus things may be accomplished and completed in four ways: by law, by nature, by art, or by chance.

There are four kinds of ability. First, whatever we are able to do with the mind, namely to reason and understand. Second, whatever we are able to do by means of the body; for example, to march, to give, to take, and so forth. Thirdly, whatever we are able to do with a multitude of soldiers or a great deal of money; hence a king is said to have great ability. Fourthly, there is the ability to do and suffer good and evil; for example, we are able to fall ill, and to be educated, and to regain health, and so forth. Thus ability may be in the mind, the body, in armies and resources, or in acting and suffering.

98 There are three kinds of benevolence. One is by way of greetings, as when certain people address everyone they meet and extend a welcoming hand. Another is seen when someone comes to the aid of every person in distress. Another is that which makes certain people fond of hosting dinners. Thus benevolence is expressed by greetings, by conferring benefits, or by hosting dinners and entertainments.

Happiness has five aspects. One aspect of it is sound judgment, a second keen sensibility and physical health, a third success in one's undertakings, a fourth a good reputation among men, a fifth an abundance of



Three views of a bronze statue of an aristocratic boy, Roman, 27 BC–AD 14. This life-size statue was found on the island of Rhodes. The youth wears a Greek cloak (*himation*), rather than a Roman toga—a token of Roman admiration for Greek ways.

money and worldly goods. Sound judgment is the result of education and broad experience. Keen sensibility depends on our physical organs: that is, if someone sees with his eyes, hears with his ears, and if his nose and mouth correctly register the appropriate objects. Such is keen sensibility. Success is achieved whenever a man attains his ends in the right way, as befits a good man. A man has achieved a good reputation when he is well spoken of. A man is prosperous when he is so amply supplied with the necessities of life that he can afford to benefit his friends and discharge his public obligations handsomely. A man who possesses all these things is perfectly happy. Thus the aspects of happiness are sound judgment, keen sensibility and physical health, good fortune, a good reputation, and prosperity. 99

Of the arts there are three kinds. The first includes mining and forestry; for these provide materials. The second includes metal-working and carpentry, which transform the materials; for the smith makes weapons out of iron, while the carpenter uses timber to make flutes and lyres. The third division puts what is made to use; horsemanship, for example, uses bridles, warfare uses weapons, and music uses flutes and the lyre. Thus of art there are three kinds: the first, the second, and the third. 100

Good is divided into four kinds. One is the possessor of virtue, whom we declare is individually good. Another is virtue itself and justice, which we declare are good. A third includes such things as food, suitable exercise, and medicines. The fourth kind that we declare is good includes such things as the art of flute playing, acting, and the poetic art. Thus there are four kinds 101

of good: first, the possession of virtue; second, virtue itself; third, food and beneficial exercise; and fourth, flute playing, acting, and the art of poetry.

102 Whatever exists is bad, good, or indifferent. We call bad that which can always do harm; for example, poor judgment, folly, injustice, and so forth. The opposites of these are good. As for the things that sometimes benefit, but sometimes harm—for example, walking and sitting and eating—or which are wholly unable to benefit or harm, these things are neither good nor bad. Thus all things that exist are good, bad, or neither good nor bad.

103 There are three kinds of good civic order. First, we call the civic order good if the laws are good. Secondly, we also call it good if the citizens abide by the existing laws. Thirdly, if in the absence of laws the citizens live well in accordance with their customs and practices, we also call this good order. Thus there is good civic order if the laws are good; secondly, if the citizens are law-abiding; and thirdly, if the citizens live in accordance with good customs and practices.

104 There are three kinds of lawlessness. The first arises if the laws that affect both strangers and citizens are bad; the second, if the citizens do not obey the existing laws; the third, if there is no law at all. Thus lawlessness exists if the laws are bad; secondly, if the laws are not obeyed; and thirdly, if there is no law.

There are three kinds of contraries. For example, we say that goods are contrary to evils, as justice is contrary to injustice, wisdom to folly, and so forth. Furthermore, evils are contrary to evils; for example, prodigality is contrary to stinginess, and to be tortured unjustly is the contrary of being tortured justly, and so forth. Finally, heavy is contrary to light, swift to slow, black to white, pairs of contraries in which neither element is good or evil.

105 Among the contraries, then, there are some that oppose goods to evils, others that oppose evils to evils, and still others that oppose things neither good nor evil to things neither good nor evil.

There are three kinds of goods: those that can be possessed, those that can be partaken of, and those that simply exist. The goods that can be possessed include such things as justice and health. The goods that can be partaken of include all the things that cannot be possessed but of which one can partake; for example, the absolute good cannot be possessed, but one can partake of it. The third kind includes the goods that simply exist, though we can neither partake of them nor possess them. For example, the mere existence of excellence and justice is a good; and these things can neither be possessed nor partaken of, but must simply exist. Among the goods, then, there are those that one possesses, those that one partakes of, and those that simply exist.

106 There are three kinds of advice. One is taken from the past, one from the future, and one from the present. Advice taken from the past consists of ex-

amples; for instance, what the Lacedemonians suffered by trusting others.<sup>176</sup> Advice taken from the present is meant to show, for example, that walls are weak, men cowardly, or food scanty. Advice from the future is, for example, not to undermine embassies by suspicions, lest Greece lose her good name. Thus advice is taken either from the past, the present, or the future.

Voice is of two kinds, animate and inanimate. The voice of living things is animate, while noises and sounds are inanimate. Of the voice of living things, part is articulate, part inarticulate. The voice of human beings is articulate, that of animals inarticulate. Thus voice is either animate or inanimate. 107

Whatever exists is either divisible or indivisible. Among divisible things, some are homogeneous, others not. The indivisible things are those that cannot be divided and are not composed of elements; for example, the unit, the point, and the musical note; whereas those that have constituent parts, for example, syllables, musical chords, animals, water, and gold, are divisible. Things that are composed of similar parts, so that the whole does not differ from the part except in mass, like water, gold, and all that is fusible, and so forth, are called homogeneous. But things that are composed of dissimilar parts, for example a house and the like, are called heterogeneous. Thus existent things are either divisible or indivisible; and among divisible things, some are homogeneous, others heterogeneous. 108

Among existing things, some are absolute and some are called relative. The things said to be absolute are those that require no explanation, like man, horse, and the other animals. For none of these things gains by explanation. The things said to be relative are those that do require some explanation; for example, that which is greater than something, or faster than something, or more beautiful, and so forth. For the greater implies a lesser, the faster a slower. Among existing things, then, some are said to be absolute, some relative. These were Plato's primary divisions, according to Aristotle. 109

There was another Plato, a philosopher of Rhodes, who was a pupil of Panaetius, as Seleucus the grammarian says in his first book *On Philosophy*; another a Peripatetic, a student of Aristotle; another, a student of Praxiphanes; and another, a poet of the Old Comedy.

176 Perhaps some historical episode in which the Spartans were betrayed by their allies is being referred to.



# BOOK 4

SPEUSIPPUS

C. 407-339 BC

XENOCRATES

4TH CENT. BC

POLEMON

FL. 314-270 BC

CRATES

3RD CENT. BC

CRANTOR

C. 335-275 BC

ARCESILAUS

316/15-242/41 BC

BION

C. 335-C. 245 BC

LACYDES

D. 206/05 BC

CARNEADES

214/13-129/28 BC

CLITOMACHUS

187/86-110/09 BC

## SPEUSIPPUS

- 1 The preceding account of Plato is the best we were able to assemble after diligently examining what is reported about him. He was succeeded by Speusippus, son of Eurymedon, an Athenian who belonged to the deme of Myrrhinus and was the son of Plato's sister Potone.<sup>1</sup> He was head of the school for eight years beginning in the 108th Olympiad.<sup>2</sup> He dedicated statues of the Graces in the shrine of the Muses that Plato built in the Academy. He adhered to the same doctrines as Plato but was unlike him in character. For he was irascible and liable to be dominated by pleasures. It is reported, at any rate, that in a fit of anger he threw a puppy into a well, and that merely for pleasure he traveled to Macedonia to attend Cassander's wedding.<sup>3</sup>
- 2 It is said that two women, Lestheneia of Mantinea and Axiothea of Phlius, had also studied with Plato.<sup>4</sup> It was then that Dionysius,<sup>5</sup> in a letter to Speusippus, mockingly remarked, "From the Arcadian woman who is your student one can grasp your wisdom. Plato demanded no fees from those who came to him; but *you* subject them to tribute and collect it from the willing and unwilling alike." Speusippus was the first, according to Diodorus in the first book of his *Reminiscences*, to discern the common element in studies and to relate them to one another as far as that was possible.<sup>6</sup> He was also the first to divulge Isocrates' so-called secret doctrines, as Caineus says.<sup>7</sup> He was also
- 3

1 It's unclear how or why Speusippus was chosen to succeed Plato as head, or scholarch, of the Academy, over Xenocrates and Aristotle, who were also deemed to have great promise. Plato may have made the choice himself (Diogenes specifies at 5.2 that Aristotle left Athens while Plato was still living, and it's likely that he did so after being passed over for the scholarchate).

2 This Olympiad began in 348 BC; Plato died the following year.

3 Cassander, the son of Macedonian nobleman Antipater, married Thessalonica, daughter of King Philip II, in 316 BC—long after Speusippus had died. Diogenes may be mistaken, or Cassander may have had an otherwise unknown first marriage.

4 These women were mentioned by Diogenes as students of Plato, at 3.46. Lestheneia is the "Arcadian woman" referred to below.

5 Dionysius II of Syracuse. Speusippus had accompanied Plato on his last visit to this man's court, in 361 BC.

6 An ambitious project, but no evidence survives of its contents.

7 Isocrates, an influential Athenian orator and teacher of rhetoric (436–338 BC), is not otherwise known to have had "secret doctrines." An extant letter to Philip of Macedon, attributed to Speusippus (probably correctly) and dating to the early 340s BC, makes clear that Speusippus' Academy was engaged in a fierce rivalry with Isocrates for Philip's favor. The source Diogenes cites here, Caineus, is not otherwise known, and some editors think the text may be corrupt.



Grave naiskos of Theogenis with her mother, Nicomache, and her brother Nicodemus, c. 360 BC. This Greek stele was found in the village of Grammatiko in Attica. Theogenis is the woman on the left shaking hands with her mother, labeled as Nicomache. The young man at center is labeled as Nicodemus, the son of Polyllus.

the first to devise a way of making bundles of firewood portable.

When crippled by paralysis, he sent word to Xenocrates<sup>8</sup> inviting him to come and succeed him as head of the school. They say that when he was being conveyed in a little wagon to the Academy he encountered Diogenes,<sup>9</sup> whom he hailed, wishing him well, to which Diogenes replied, “Well, I don’t wish the same to you, if you can bear to stay alive in your present condition.” At last, despondent in old age, he willingly ended his life. My own verses about him run as follows:

Had I not learned that Speusippus would die like this,  
 No one would have persuaded me to declare  
 That he was not related by blood to Plato. For otherwise  
 He would not have died in despair at something so trivial.

8 Diogenes discusses Xenocrates’ life and views at 4.6–15.

9 Diogenes Laertius discusses Diogenes the Cynic’s life and views at 6.20–81.

- 4 Plutarch, in his lives of Lysander and Sulla, says that Speusippus suffered from infestations of lice;<sup>10</sup> and according to Timotheus, in his book *On Lives*, his body wasted away. Speusippus, he says, remarked to a wealthy man who was in love with a homely person, “What do you need this (situation) for? For ten talents I’ll find you someone prettier.”<sup>11</sup>

He left a great many commentaries and numerous dialogues, including

*Aristippus the Cyrenaic*

*On Wealth*, one book

*On Pleasure*, one book

*On Justice*, one book

*On Philosophy*, one book

*On the Gods*, one book

*The Philosopher*, one book

*A Reply to Cephalus*, one book

*Cephalus*, one book

*Clinomachus* or *Lysias*, one book

*The Citizen*, one book

*On the Soul*, one book

*A Reply to Gryllus*, one book

*Aristippus*, one book

*Criticism of the Arts*, one book

- 5 *Reminiscences in the Form of a Dialogue*

*Treatise on Technique*, one book

{ . . . } of a *Treatise on Resemblances*, in ten books

*Divisions and Hypotheses Related to the Resemblances*

*On Examples of Genera and Species*

*A Reply to the Anonymous Work*

*Encomium of Plato*

*Letters to Dion, Dionysius, and Philip*

*On Legislation*

*The Mathematician*

*Mandrobolus*

*Lysias*

*Definitions*

*Lists of Reminiscences*

10 Plutarch’s life of the Roman general Lucius Cornelius Sulla (paired with that of Greek Lysander) does not mention Speusippus, though at 36.5–6 it does list other men said to have died from lice infestations. Diogenes seems to have read the *Parallel Lives*, a work composed around AD 100, but to have remembered it imperfectly.

11 This odd anecdote, connected to the previous one only by their common source, seems intended to illustrate Speusippus’ greed, a quality already remarked on in 4.2.

Together these works comprise 43,475 lines. It is to Speusippus that Timonides has dedicated his narratives, in which he relates the achievements of Dion {and Bion}.<sup>12</sup> Favorinus, in the second book of his *Reminiscences*, says that Aristotle purchased the books of Speusippus for three talents.<sup>13</sup>

There was another Speusippus, from Alexandria, a doctor of the school of Herophilus.

## XENOCRATES

Xenocrates, son of Agathanor, was a native of Chalcedon.<sup>14</sup> From an early age he studied with Plato and even accompanied him to Sicily. He was naturally sluggish, and consequently Plato, comparing him with Aristotle, said, “The one needs a spur, the other a bridle,”<sup>15</sup> and, “What an ass I am training, after what a horse his rival!” But in all else Xenocrates was dignified and grave of countenance, which often prompted Plato to say to him, “Xenocrates, offer a sacrifice to the Graces.” He spent most of his time in the Academy; and whenever he was about to venture into the city, they say that all the noisy crowd and hired porters made way for him. 6

One day, when Phryne<sup>16</sup> the courtesan wished to seduce him, she fled, as if she were being pursued, to his little house. And he, out of kindness, took her in; and as there was only one small bed, he permitted her to share it with him. At last, despite her many entreaties, she departed without success and told those who inquired that she had left the bed not of a man (*andros*), but of a statue (*andriantos*). Others say that his students persuaded Lais to share his bed. But his self-command was such that he even endured frequent genital incisions and cauteries.<sup>17</sup> And he was so trustworthy that though it was illegal to bear witness without swearing an oath, the Athenians permitted Xenocrates alone to do so. Furthermore, he was exception- 8

12 Dion was the brother-in-law of Dionysius I of Syracuse and top adviser to both that tyrant and his son, Dionysius II. Timonides fought in Dion's campaign against the younger Dionysius, after Dion had been exiled from Syracuse in the 360s BC but then led a military invasion of Syracuse; Timonides' letters to Speusippus about that campaign are cited numerous times in Plutarch's life of Dion. (The second name given in the manuscripts after Dion's, “Bion,” is deleted by many editors as a doublet of “Dion.”)

13 It is unclear whether the “books of Speusippus” refers to the man's own writings or his library. Three talents would be a huge sum to pay for the list of books given above.

14 Chalcedon was a Megarian colony in Asia Minor, across the Bosphorus from Byzantium.

15 A well-worn comparison; see 5.39 and 5.65.

16 A famously beautiful *hetaira* (courtesan), like Lais in the next anecdote.

17 Cutting and burning were standard medical treatments for various inflammations and discharges; it's unlikely Xenocrates used these procedures as aids to self-restraint, as Diogenes assumes.



*Phryne Before the Areopagus*, by Jean-Léon Gérôme, 1861.

Legend has it that Phryne was on trial for impiety, and when it appeared the verdict would be unfavorable, her employer and lover, Hypereides, disrobed her. The jurors, persuaded by Phryne's divine beauty, acquitted her.

ally self-sufficient. At any rate, when Alexander sent him a large sum of money, Xenocrates took three thousand Attic drachmas and sent the rest back, saying that Alexander's need was greater, since more people depended on him.<sup>18</sup> He likewise declined the present sent him by Antipater,<sup>19</sup> as Myronianus says in his *Parallels*. And when he was honored at Dionysius' court<sup>20</sup> with a golden crown as the prize for the champion drinker at the Feast of the Choes,<sup>21</sup> he went out and placed it on the statue of Hermes, where he was in the habit of placing garlands of flowers.

There is a story that he was sent with others on an embassy to Philip. Though his colleagues, softened by bribes, accepted Philip's invitations and conversed with him, Xenocrates would do neither. This was why Philip did

18 The reason Alexander the Great would thus patronize Xenocrates, who was no supporter of Macedonian power, is perhaps explained at 5.10: Alexander apparently wished to antagonize Aristotle, the former tutor from whom he had become estranged, by supporting his rival for leadership of the Academy.

19 Antipater was a Macedonian nobleman who served both Philip II and Alexander the Great. After Alexander's death he controlled most of the Greek world, including Athens.

20 Xenocrates accompanied Plato to Dionysius II's court in Syracuse in 367 or (less likely) 361 BC (see 4.11).

21 At the Feast of the *Choes*, celebrants competed in draining a *chous*, or nine-pint pitcher, of wine.



*Standing Female Nude (Marie-Christine Leroux),*  
by Nadar, 1860–1861.

Nadar is known to have photographed only three female nudes, and this one was made at the behest of the painter Jean-Léon Gérôme to assist in the process of painting *Phryne Before the Areopagus*.

not receive him.<sup>22</sup> Hence, when the ambassadors returned to Athens, they said that Xenocrates had accompanied them to no purpose, and the Athenians were ready to fine him.<sup>23</sup> But when he told them that now more than ever they should consider their city’s interests—“For Philip knew that the others had accepted his bribes, but that he would never win me over”—it is said that the Athenians paid him double honors. And Philip later said that Xenocrates alone, of those who had come to him, was incorruptible. Furthermore, when Xenocrates went on an embassy to Antipater about the Athenians who had been taken prisoner in the Lamian War, and was invited to dine with Antipater, he quoted to him the following verses:

9

O Circe, what honorable man  
Could bear to partake of food and drink  
Before he had ransomed his men and set eyes on them?

And Antipater, appreciating that Xenocrates had hit the bull’s-eye, immediately released the prisoners.<sup>24</sup>

22 This story is not found elsewhere, but its context is clearly Philip of Macedon’s growing ascendancy over Athens in 346–338 BC (Xenocrates had returned to Athens from Asia Minor in 340 or 339). Philip was notorious for suborning Athenian ambassadors.

23 Fines were commonly levied by the Athenians on unsuccessful public servants.

24 This story conflicts with one related by Plutarch (*Phocion* 27), in which Xenocrates, on the occasion of this embassy, could not even get Antipater to listen to him. The Lamian War was an Athenian-led rebellion against Antipater, guardian of Alexander’s European empire; it ended in defeat for Athens under harsh Macedonian terms. The verses here quoted are from an episode of the *Odyssey* (10.383–85) in which Odysseus insists that the witch Circe release his men from the animal forms she has given them.

10 One day when a little sparrow, pursued by a hawk, took refuge in his cloak, Xenocrates stroked it and let it go, saying that one seeking sanctuary must not be betrayed. When mocked by Bion,<sup>25</sup> Xenocrates said he would not respond, since tragedy, when mocked by comedy, does not stoop to reply. To someone who had not studied music or geometry or astronomy but wished to be his student, Xenocrates said, “Be on your way. For you have no footholds into philosophy.” According to others, he said, “One doesn’t come to me for wool carding.”<sup>26</sup>

11 When Dionysius told Plato that he would have his throat cut, Xenocrates, who was present, pointed to his own and said, “Not before you cut mine.” They also say that when Antipater came to Athens and greeted him, Xenocrates kept on with the conversation he was in before returning his greeting. He was the least puffed up of men; he would often, in the course of a day, withdraw into himself, and it is said that he used to assign an entire hour to silence.

He left a great many writings, poems, and addresses, which are listed below:

- On Nature*, six books
- On Wisdom*, six books
- On Wealth*, one book
- The Arcadian*, one book
- On the Indeterminate*, one book
- 12 *On the Child*, one book
- On Self-Control*, one book
- On Usefulness*, one book
- On Freedom*, one book
- On Death*, one book
- On Volition*, one book
- On Friendship*, two books
- On Fairness*, one book
- On What Is Contrary*, two books
- On Happiness*, two books
- On Writing*, one book
- On Memory*, one book
- On Falsehood*, one book
- Callicles*, one book
- On Prudence*, two books
- The Householder*, one book

25 Evidently Bion of Borysthenes, a later head of the Academy (see 4.46–58) and a famously satirical man, is meant, though he would have been only a young boy in the last part of Xenocrates’ life.

26 Wool carding is the process of cleaning dirt and dung out of wool before spinning it into thread.

*On Temperance*, one book  
*On the Power of Law*, one book  
*On the Republic*, one book  
*On Piety*, one book  
*That Virtue Can Be Taught*, one book  
*On Being*, one book  
*On Fate*, one book  
*On the Emotions*, one book  
*On Ways of Life*, one book  
*On Concord*, one book  
*On Students*, two books  
*On Justice*, one book  
*On Virtue*, two books  
*On Forms*, one book  
*On Pleasure*, two books  
*On Life*, one book  
*On Courage*, one book  
*On the One*, one book  
*On Ideas*, one book  
*On Art*, one book  
*On the Gods*, two books  
*On the Soul*, two books  
*On Knowledge*, one book  
*The Statesman*, one book  
*On Skill*, one book  
*On Philosophy*, one book  
*On Parmenides' Works*, one book  
*Archedemus or On Justice*, one book  
*On the Good*, one book  
*On Matters Concerning the Intellect*, eight books  
*Solution of Logical Problems*, ten books  
*Lectures on Nature*, six books  
*Summary*, one book  
*On Genera and Species*, one book  
*On Matters Pythagorean*, one book  
*Solutions*, two books  
*Divisions*, eight books  
*Theses*, twenty books, 30,000 lines  
*The Study of Dialectic*, fourteen books, 12,740 lines

13

After this come fifteen books, and then sixteen books of *Studies on Style*

*Calculations*, nine books  
*On Mathematics*, six books  
*On Matters Concerning the Intellect*, two other books

- On Geometers*, five books  
*Commentaries*, one book  
*Contraries*, one book  
*On Numbers*, one book  
*Theory of Numbers*, one book  
*On Dimensions*, one book  
*On Astronomy*, six books  
14 *Elementary Principles of Monarchy*, four books, dedicated to Alexander<sup>27</sup>  
*To Arybas*  
*To Hephaestion*  
*On Geometry*, two books

In all, 224,239 lines.

But despite his character, the Athenians put him up for sale when he was unable to pay the tax levied on resident aliens.<sup>28</sup> And Demetrius of Phalerum<sup>29</sup> purchased him, thereby making restitution to both parties: to Xenocrates of his freedom, to the Athenians of their tax. This is reported by Myronianus of Amastris in the first book of his *Chapters on Historical Parallels*. Xenocrates succeeded Speusippus and was head of the school for twenty-five years from the archonship of Lysimachides in the second year of the 110th Olympiad.<sup>30</sup> He died at the age of eighty-two from injuries sustained when he stumbled against a basin at night. My own verses about him run as follows:

15

Stumbling over a bronze vessel and breaking his head,  
 He cried “Oh” and breathed his last;  
 Xenocrates, that matchless ideal, a man in full.

There have been five other men named Xenocrates: a tactician in quite ancient times; the kinsman and fellow citizen of the philosopher (a speech of his exists, *Arsinoetica*, written on the occasion of the death of Arsinoe).<sup>31</sup> The fourth a philosopher and unsuccessful writer of elegies. (As a rule, poets who undertake to write prose meet with success, while prose writers who attempt poetry do not; this makes it clear that the one is a gift of nature and the other of art.) The fifth a sculptor; and the sixth a writer of songs, according to Aristoxenus.

27 The work may have been polemical, since Xenocrates, unlike his fellow student Aristotle, was no supporter of Alexander.

28 Other sources, including Plutarch (*Phocion* 29), recount that Xenocrates got in trouble for not paying the tax levied on resident aliens (known as metics), but there is no other evidence he was—or could be—sold into slavery.

29 Demetrius of Phalerum led Athens briefly in the late fourth century BC. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 5.75–85.

30 That is, beginning in 339 BC and running for twenty-five years, until 314.

31 Arsinoe was the sister and wife of Ptolemy II, ruler of Egypt in the early third century BC.



*The Conversion of Polemon*, by James Barry, 1778.

## POLEMON

Polemon, son of Philostratus, was an Athenian who belonged to the deme of Oea. As a youth he was so unbridled and promiscuous that he carried money about with him to procure the immediate gratification of his desires. He even kept sums hidden in narrow lanes. And even in the Academy a three-obol piece was found next to a pillar, where he had buried it for the same purpose.<sup>32</sup> One day, by agreement with his young friends, he burst into Xenocrates' school in a drunken state, wearing a garland on his head.<sup>33</sup> Unperturbed, Xenocrates proceeded with his discourse as before, its subject being temperance. The boy, as he listened, was gradually captivated, and thereafter became so diligent that he surpassed all the others and eventually became head of the school in the 116th Olympiad.<sup>34</sup>

16

<sup>32</sup> A peculiar anecdote, since three obols—half a day's wage for an unskilled worker—could not purchase very much gratification.

<sup>33</sup> An evocation of Plato's *Symposium*, 212c–e, in which a similarly drunk Alcibiades bursts in upon a sober Socrates.

<sup>34</sup> In 314 BC, after the death of Xenocrates. The position of scholarch, or head of the school, was a lifetime appointment, though a lesser executive office was rotated every ten days (see 5.4).

17 Antigonus of Carystus says in his *Lives* that Polemon's father was a leading citizen and that he kept chariot horses; that Polemon himself was a defendant in an action brought by his wife, who charged him with ill usage on the grounds of his liaisons with young men;<sup>35</sup> but that from the time he began to study philosophy he developed such strength of character that his demeanor remained the same on all occasions. Even his voice never varied, which is why Crantor<sup>36</sup> was fascinated by him. At any rate, when a mad dog bit him in the back of the thigh, he did not even turn pale, and remained unmoved by the uproar that arose in the city at the news of what had happened.

18 In the theaters too he was utterly impassive. At any rate, once when Nicostratus, who was nicknamed Clytemnestra, was reading to him and Crates something from the poet's work,<sup>37</sup> Crates was deeply touched, while Polemon was no more moved than if he had not heard him. He was in every sense the type of man Melanthius the painter describes in his work *On Painting*. There he says that a certain willfulness and austerity should imbue a man's works, and likewise his character. Polemon used to say that we should exercise ourselves with facts and not with dialectical speculations; otherwise, like a man who has imbibed some little handbook on harmony but never practiced, we may be admired for our ability to pose questions, but will be at variance with ourselves in the ordering of our lives.

19 He was urbane and noble, and would beg pardon for what Aristophanes calls (in reference to Euripides) his "sharp and pungent style," which the comic poet says is

rude rump-thumping, compared with juicy steak.<sup>38</sup>

Furthermore, Polemon would not even sit down when discussing his students' themes, they say, but would argue while walking about. Certainly it was for his love of what is noble that he was honored in the city. Nevertheless, he would withdraw from society and pass his days in the garden, where his students, erecting little shelters, would camp near the shrine of the Muses and the

35 Sexual relations with *meirakia*, boys in early adolescence, were apparently common practice among members of the Academy, to judge by Plato's writings; but this passage gives a rare glimpse into their impact on marriages.

36 Crantor of Soli (335–275 BC), a future scholar; see 4.24–27.

37 Nicostratus is not otherwise known, but his nickname, Clytemnestra, suggests he was a tragic actor or tragic poet (since Clytemnestra, the wife of Agememnon, was a character in many plays). Crates was Polemon's successor as the head of the school (see 4.21–23). "The poet" here probably refers to Homer.

38 The surviving comedies of Aristophanes (c. 446–386 BC) do not include either of the quotes in this sentence. The second one contrasts a coarse or vulgar style, here linked to sexual lewdness, with "gourmet" use of language.



Three views of a statuette of a youth dancing, Hellenistic, late fourth century BC.  
The crown of myrtle he wears is an attribute of followers of the god Dionysus.

arcade.<sup>39</sup> It would appear that in all respects Polemon emulated Xenocrates; according to Aristippus,<sup>40</sup> in the fourth book of his work *On the Luxuriousness of the Ancients*, he had been the man's beloved. At any rate, Polemon had Xenocrates constantly in mind, and clothed himself in the man's candor, austerity, and gravity, which characterize the Dorian mode. He also loved Sophocles, especially in the passages where it seemed as if, in the comic poet's phrase,

20

Some Molossian hound were lending him aid,

and where the poet was, in the words of Phrynichus,

Neither sweet wine, nor blended vintage, but true Pramnian.<sup>41</sup>

He used to call Homer the Sophocles of epic, and Sophocles the Homer of tragedy.

<sup>39</sup> Evidently there were no living quarters in the Academy, a space that mainly consisted of a garden and public exercise area. As Diogenes here indicates, the Academy also contained a shrine of the Muses (dedicated by Plato and augmented by Speusippus; see 4.1), and an arcade (*exedra*), an outdoor seating area where students could listen to lectures.

<sup>40</sup> Not the philosopher Aristippus of Cyrene but a later author, often termed Pseudo-Aristippus today.

<sup>41</sup> The first quotation comes from Aristophanes; Molossian hounds were especially keen-scented. The second quote comes from another contemporary of Sophocles, the comic playwright Phrynichus; Pramnian wine was much admired in the ancient world.

He died in old age of consumption, leaving behind a considerable number of written works. My own verses about him run as follows:

Haven't you heard? We have buried Polemon, laid here  
 By mortal weakness, the terrible scourge of mankind.  
 Or rather, not Polemon himself, but his body, which he,  
 Ascending to the stars, left to be eaten up in the ground.

## CRATES

21 Crates was the son of Antigenes, of the deme of Thria. He was both the student and the beloved of Polemon, whom he also succeeded as head of the school. The two were so devoted to each other that they not only shared the same pursuits in life, but became increasingly alike up to their last breath, and on dying shared the same tomb. Hence Antagoras wrote of both as follows:

Stranger, say that in this tomb lie  
 Godlike Crates and Polemon,  
 Men great-hearted in concord, from whose divine lips  
 Sprang sacred speech, and whose pure life of wisdom,  
 Obedient to unshakable tenets,  
 Adorned them for divine eternity.

22 Hence Arcesilaus,<sup>42</sup> who came to them after leaving Theophrastus,<sup>43</sup> said that they were gods or survivors from the Golden Age. For they were not inclined to side with the people, but were instead the sort of men they say Dionysodorus the flute player claimed to be, who prided himself that no one had ever heard *his* melodies, as those of Ismenias were heard, either on shipboard or beside a well. Antigonus says Crates took his meals at Crantor's table, and that these two and Arcesilaus lived together in harmony. Arcesilaus shared a house with Crantor, while Polemon and Crates lived with Lysicles, one of their fellow citizens. Crates, he says, and as we mentioned earlier, was Polemon's beloved, while Arcesilaus was Crantor's.

23 When Crates died <in the . . . year of the 128th Olympiad>,<sup>44</sup> according to Apollodorus in the third book of his *Chronology*, he left written works: some

42 Head of the Academy in the mid-third century BC. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 4.28–45.

43 Theophrastus (c. 372/70–c. 288/86 BC) was a Peripatetic philosopher and Aristotle's successor as the head of the Lyceum. His life and views are discussed at 5.36–57.

44 This Olympiad began in 268 BC. The text between the brackets is inserted by editors on the assumption it had dropped out of the manuscripts.

on philosophy, others on comedy, as well as speeches he had delivered in the assembly and when serving as an ambassador. He also left distinguished students, including Arcesilaus, of whom we will speak<sup>45</sup> (for he was also a student of Crates), and Bion of Borysthenes, who was later known as the Theodorean,<sup>46</sup> from the school he joined; of him we will also speak,<sup>47</sup> right after Arcesilaus.

There have been ten men named Crates: the first was a poet of the Old Comedy; the second an orator from Tralles who had studied with Isocrates; the third an excavator of trenches who accompanied Alexander; the fourth the Cynic, of whom we will speak;<sup>48</sup> the fifth a Peripatetic philosopher; the sixth our present subject, the Academic philosopher; the seventh a grammarian from Malos; the eighth an author of a work on geometry; the ninth a writer of epigrams; and the tenth an Academic philosopher from Tarsus.

## CRANTOR

Crantor of Soli,<sup>49</sup> though admired in his own country, sailed to Athens and studied with Xenocrates at the same time as Polemon.<sup>50</sup> He left commentaries running to thirty thousand lines, some of which have been attributed to Arcesilaus. They say that when asked why he was so fascinated by Polemon, Crantor said he had never heard the man raise or lower his voice. Falling ill, he withdrew to the temple of Asclepius, where he walked about while discoursing. Others flocked to him from all sides, thinking that he had gone there not as a result of an illness, but because he wished to open a school. Among them was Arcesilaus, who wished to be introduced by him to Polemon, though Crantor was his lover, as will be related in the life of Arcesilaus. But even when Crantor recovered, he continued to study with Polemon, and for this he was highly admired. It is also said that he left his property, which amounted to twelve talents,<sup>51</sup> to Arcesilaus. And when asked by him where he wished to be buried, he replied,

It's fine to be buried in some lovely corner of one's native land.<sup>52</sup>

45 See 4.28–45.

46 Theodorus, founder of a branch of the Cyrenaic school, is discussed at 2.98–104.

47 See 4.46–58.

48 Crates of Thebes (c. 368/65–288/85 BC), also known as Crates the Cynic. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 6.85–93.

49 Soli lay on the coast of Cilicia, in southern Asia Minor.

50 Xenocrates and Polemon are discussed at 4.6–15 and 4.16–20, respectively.

51 Twelve talents was a sizable fortune. A talent consisted of six thousand drachmas, each about a day's wage for an unskilled worker.

52 A line from an unknown tragedy.

It is also said that he wrote poems and deposited them under seal in the temple of Athena in his native country. The poet Theaetetus speaks of him as follows:

Pleasing to men, and still more to the Muses,  
Was Crantor, who never saw old age.  
Receive, O earth, the sacred dead;  
He lives below in peace and prosperity.

26 Crantor admired Homer and Euripides beyond all other poets; he said that it is difficult to write in a tragic vein and at the same time to stir emotions using ordinary language. And he would quote the line from the tale of Bellerophon:<sup>53</sup>

Alas! But why alas? We have suffered the lot of mortals.

And it is said that in these lines of the poet Antagoras we have Crantor speaking on Love:

27 My heart is in doubt—since your birth is disputed, Eros—  
Whether I am to call you the first of the immortal gods,  
The eldest of all the children whom ancient Erebos and queenly Night  
Brought to birth in the depths of wide Ocean;  
Or the child of wise Cypris,<sup>54</sup> or of Earth, or of the Winds.  
What evils you devise for men in your wanderings,  
And what goods! Even your body takes two forms.

He was also clever at coining phrases. At any rate, he said of a certain tragedian's words that they were unhewn and full of bark. And of a certain poet that his verses abounded in miserliness. And that Theophrastus' theses had been written in purple ink.<sup>55</sup> His most admired work is his book *On Grief*. He died before Polemon and Crates, having fallen ill of dropsy. My own verses about him run as follows:

The worst of ailments overwhelmed you, Crantor,  
And thus you descended to the black abyss of Pluto.<sup>56</sup>  
And there you may {now} rejoice, but the Academy and Soli,  
Your native land, are bereft of your discourses.

53 Bellerophon was a mythical hero who fell to earth from Pegasus, the winged horse, and wandered blind and broken for the rest of his days. The line quoted here comes from Euripides' lost tragedy on this theme.

54 Cypris ("the Cyprian") is Aphrodite, goddess of sexual love.

55 The meanings of all three critiques of style are obscure due to the use of rare words and expressions, and the translations are tentative.

56 Pluto was another name for Hades, the eldest brother of Zeus and ruler of the underworld.

## ARCESILAUS

Arcesilaus, son of Seuthes (or Scythes, as Apollodorus says in the third book of his *Chronology*), was from Pitane in Aeolis. It was he who inaugurated the Middle Academy.<sup>57</sup> He was the first to suspend judgment in light of the contradictions in opposing arguments. He was also the first to attempt to argue both sides of a question, and the first to modify the system handed down by Plato and to make it more eristic<sup>58</sup> by means of question and answer. 28

He became acquainted with Crantor in this way. He was the youngest of four brothers, two of whom had the same father, two the same mother. Of the latter two Pylades was the elder, and of the former Moereas, who was his guardian. At first, before he sailed for Athens, he studied with the mathematician Autolycus, his countryman, with whom he also traveled to Sardis. Next he studied with Xanthus, the Athenian musician; then he became a student of Theophrastus.<sup>59</sup> Leaving Theophrastus, he came to the Academy to join Crantor. For though his brother Moereas, whom we mentioned above, wanted to make an orator of him, he himself loved philosophy, and Crantor, who was in love with him, asked him the question from Euripides' *Andromeda*:<sup>60</sup> 29

O maiden, if I save you, will you be grateful to me?

To this Arcesilaus replied with the line that comes next:

Take me, stranger, whether as a serving woman or a wife.

From then on they lived together, whereupon Theophrastus, provoked at his loss, is said to have remarked, "What a clever and courageous lad has left my school!" For besides being highly adept in argument and a lover of books, Arcesilaus also took up poetry. His epigram about Attalus<sup>61</sup> runs as follows: 30

57 The Academy, Plato's school, was divided by the later Greeks into stages, Old, Middle, and New, based on shifts in doctrine. The Middle Academy was defined by its skepticism, as Diogenes goes on to say.

58 The Greek word *eris* means "strife" or "disputation." In calling Arcesilaus' approach "eristic," Diogenes suggests that he emphasized the debater's skill of being able to argue effectively for or against any position.

59 For more on Theophrastus (c. 372/70–288/86 BC), Aristotle's successor as the head of the Lyceum, see 5.36–57.

60 The now lost play depicted the rescue of Andromeda from a sea-monster by the hero Perseus. The lines that Diogenes quotes were evidently part of an exchange between Andromeda and Perseus at the play's climax.

61 Attalus I (269–197 BC) was king of Pergamon, a powerful state near the eastern coast of Asia Minor. He waged wars against Seleucus II and III, eventually seizing a large portion of their territories.

Pergamon, not famed for arms alone, is often  
 Celebrated for its steeds in divine Pisa.  
 But if a mere mortal may be permitted to declare the will of Zeus,  
 It will be much more sung of by bards in days to come.

And about Menodorus, the beloved of Eudamus, one of his fellow students:

31 Far off lie Phrygia and sacred Thyatira,<sup>62</sup>  
 Your native land, Menodorus, son of Cadauas.  
 But to unutterable Acheron<sup>63</sup> the paths are equal,  
 From whatever point they are measured, as the proverb says.<sup>64</sup>  
 In your honor Eudamus has erected this eminent tomb,  
 Since you were dearest to him of the many who labored for him.

He appreciated Homer beyond all poets and would always read a passage from him before going to sleep. And in the morning, whenever he wanted to read him, he would say he was going off to visit his beloved. He also considered Pindar remarkable for the fullness of his diction and his vast store of words and expressions. And as a young man he interpreted the works of Ion.<sup>65</sup>

32 He also studied with the geometer Hipponicus, whom he jokingly observed was sluggish in everything else and constantly yawning, but highly accomplished in his own field. “Geometry,” he said, “flew into his mouth while he was yawning.” When Hipponicus suffered a fit of madness, Arcesilaus took him home and nursed him until he had recovered.

When Crates died, Arcesilaus took over the school, a certain Socratides having withdrawn in his favor. According to some, he never wrote a book because he suspended judgment on all matters. Others report that he was caught revising certain works, which according to some he published, according to others he burned. He seems to have admired Plato, and he owned copies of his works.  
 33 Some say that he also emulated Pyrrho.<sup>66</sup> He was devoted to dialectic and adopted the methods of argument of the Eretrian school.<sup>67</sup> This is why Ariston said of him:

He’s Plato in front, Pyrrho behind, Diodorus in the middle.<sup>68</sup>

62 Thyatira was a small city southeast of Pergamon.

63 One of the five rivers of Hades.

64 A proverb attributed at 2.11 to the philosopher Anaxagoras.

65 Ion of Chios was a fifth-century poet and tragedian, all of whose plays are now lost.

66 Pyrrho was the founder of the Skeptic school in the early third century BC. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 9.61–108.

67 The Eretrian school was founded by Menedemus, discussed at 2.125–44.

68 The hexameter line parodies *Iliad* 6.181, a description of the chimera. Diodorus Cronus (d. c. 284 BC) was a master dialectician renowned for his skill in exploring logical problems and fallacies.



Statuette of seated Cybele, Greek, c. 300 BC.

And Timon speaks of him as follows:

Having Menedemus as a lead weight, under his chest,  
He will run either to Pyrrho, that mountain of flesh,  
Or to Diodorus.

And further on he has him say:

“I shall swim to Pyrrho and to crooked Diodorus.”

He was highly aphoristic and concise, and in his conversation careful and precise about the meaning of words, quite satirical, and outspoken. This is why Timon speaks of him again as follows:

34

. . . and mixing < . . . > with reproaches.

Hence, when a young man conversed more boldly than others, Arcesilaus would say, “Will no one beat him at a game of knuckle-bones?”<sup>69</sup> To a man who let himself be penetrated and who recalled to him the doctrine that one thing is not greater than another, Arcesilaus asked whether a ten-incher did not seem to him greater than a six-incher. When a certain Hemon of Chios,

<sup>69</sup> Both the translation and the point of the quip are uncertain.

who was ugly but assumed he was handsome, and always went about in fine clothes, said he did not think the wise man would ever fall in love, Arcesilaus asked, “Not even with someone as handsome and well dressed as yourself?” And when another catamite, addressing Arcesilaus as if he were arrogant, said,

35 Am I permitted, Queen, to speak, or must I keep silence?

Arcesilaus replied,

Woman, why address me so harshly, and not in your usual manner?<sup>70</sup>

When a talkative lowborn fellow caused him some trouble, he said,

Unruly to live with are the offspring of slaves.<sup>71</sup>

Of another, who talked a great deal of nonsense, he said that the man could not have had a strict nurse. And to some he would not even reply. To a moneylender who was a lover of learning but admitted that he was ignorant on a certain point, Arcesilaus replied,

A hen only feels the wind’s direction  
When her interest is at stake.<sup>72</sup>

These verses are from the *Oenomaus* of Sophocles.

36 When a certain student of dialectic, a follower of Alexinus,<sup>73</sup> was unable to properly recount one of his teacher’s arguments, Arcesilaus told him the story of Philoxenus<sup>74</sup> and the brick makers. Finding them singing his own melodies badly, Philoxenus trampled on their bricks, saying, “Since you spoil my work, I’ll spoil yours.” Arcesilaus was genuinely vexed with those who took up their studies too late. By some natural impulse he made frequent use of such phrases as “I concur” and “So-and-so” (he would give the name) “will never agree to this.” And many of his students imitated this habit, as they did his style of speaking and his whole demeanor.

37 He was also exceptionally adept at countering objections or bringing the course of the discussion back around to its starting point, and adapting it to every occasion. His powers of persuasion were unsurpassed. This drew even

70 The two lines, possibly part of a dialogue between two female characters, belong to an unknown tragedy or tragedies.

71 A line from an unknown play of Euripides.

72 The Greek word *tokos* in the second line can signify either “offspring” or “interest (on a debt).” The context in Sophocles’ original suggests only the first meaning was intended, but Arcesilaus cleverly evokes the second.

73 Alexinus of Elis (c. 339–265 BC) was a philosopher of the Megarian school.

74 Philoxenus of Cythera (c. 435–380 BC) was a dithyrambic poet who lived for a time at the court of Dionysius I of Syracuse.

more students to his school, though they were terrified by his sharpness. But they bore this gladly, since his goodness was extraordinary, and he inspired his students with hopes.

Exceedingly liberal in private life, he was always ready to confer a benefit, though his modesty was such that he tried to escape detection when doing so. At any rate, one day he called on Ctesibius,<sup>75</sup> who was ill; and when he saw him pressed hard by poverty, he stealthily placed a money pouch under his pillow. When Ctesibius found it he said, “This is Arcesilaus’ little joke.” On another occasion he sent Ctesibius a thousand drachmas.

By introducing Archias the Arcadian to Eumenes,<sup>76</sup> he caused him to advance to a high rank. Because he was liberal and unconcerned about money, he was among the first to attend events with paid seating, and he was especially eager to attend those of Archecrates and Callicrates, for which the price of admission was a gold piece.<sup>77</sup> He assisted many people and would collect subscriptions for them. Once when someone borrowed his silver plate in order to entertain friends and never returned it, Arcesilaus did not ask for it, and even pretended that it had not been borrowed. But others say that he purposely lent it, and when it was returned he made the borrower, who was poor, accept it as a gift.

He had property in Pitane from which his brother Pylades would send him provisions. Furthermore, Eumenes, son of Philetaerus, regularly furnished him with large sums, which was why Eumenes was the only person to whom Arcesilaus dedicated any of his books. And though many people courted Antigonos<sup>78</sup> and flocked to him whenever he came to Athens, Arcesilaus would keep away, not wishing to impose on his acquaintance. He was on the best of terms with Hierocles, the garrison commander of Munychia and the Piraeus,<sup>79</sup> and would go down to see him at every festival. And though Hierocles joined the others in urging him to greet Antigonos, Arcesilaus was not persuaded, but would go as far as the city gates and then turn back. Even after the naval battle,<sup>80</sup> when many approached Antigonos and sent him invitations, Arcesilaus kept silent. Nevertheless, on behalf

38

39

75 Ctesibius (fl. c. 270 BC) was an Alexandrian mathematician, physicist, and engineer.

76 Eumenes I, who became king of Pergamon (r. 263–241 BC) after being adopted by his uncle Philetaerus, was a patron of the liberal arts. Archias is not otherwise known.

77 It’s unclear what sort of “events” Diogenes means; philosophic lectures are a possibility. The two names given here are otherwise unknown.

78 Antigonos II Gonatas (c. 320–239 BC) was a king of Macedonia. He sought to fill his court at Pella with philosophers, poets, and intellectuals.

79 Munychia was a fortified hill that controlled the port of Piraeus and, thereby, the food supply of Athens. Various dynasts of the Hellenistic age garrisoned it to prevent Athenian uprisings.

80 Sometime around 260 BC, Antigonos II defeated the naval forces of Ptolemy II at the Battle of Cos.

of his native city he journeyed to Demetrias<sup>81</sup> as an envoy to Antigonus, though his mission did not succeed. He spent all of his time in the Academy, avoiding public life. One time, out of friendship for Hierocles, he lingered in the Piraeus, discussing certain questions; and for this he was censured by certain persons.

40 He was highly extravagant (was he anything but another Aristippus?<sup>82</sup>) and fond of hosting dinners, but only for those who shared his predilections. He lived openly with the Elean courtesans Theodote and Phila, and to any who criticized him he would quote the maxims of Aristippus. He was also lecherous and fond of boys; hence he was censured by the Stoic Ariston of Chios and his followers, who called him a corrupter of young men and a shameless champion of sexual license. Arcesilaus is said to have been particularly enamored of that Demetrius who sailed to Cyrene and of Cleochares of Myrlea.<sup>83</sup> There is a story that when a band of revelers came to the door, Arcesilaus told them that *he* was willing to open up but that Cleochares was barring the way.<sup>84</sup> Cleochares was also courted by Demochares,<sup>85</sup> son of Laches, and by Pythocles, son of Bugelus; and when Arcesilaus caught them together he said he would out of forbearance step aside. In light of these incidents the above-mentioned detractors attacked and ridiculed him for delighting in renown and popularity. He was especially assailed by Hieronymus the Peripatetic and his circle whenever he assembled his friends to celebrate the birthday of Halcyoneus, son of Antigonus, on which occasion Antigonus used to send considerable sums of money to be spent on their entertainment. On that occasion he always avoided discussing philosophy over the wine; and when Aridelus<sup>86</sup> proposed a certain subject and urged him to address it, he replied, “But this is just the prerogative of philosophy: to know the proper moment for every undertaking.” As for the accusation that Arcesilaus courted the mob, Timon, among several other things, offers the following:

So saying, he plunged into the surrounding throng.  
And they marveled at him, like chaffinches around an owl,  
Pointing him out as vain, because he flattered the mob.

81 Demetrias was a city in Thessaly founded by Demetrius I Poliorcetes, king of Macedonia and father of Antigonus II.

82 Aristippus was the founder of the Cyrenaic school. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 2.65–104.

83 It's unclear which of the twenty Demetriuses listed at 5.84–85 is meant here. Cleochares of Myrlea was a Greek orator and rhetorician.

84 There seems to be an obscene pun involved in the quip, as in a similar anecdote at 2.138.

85 Demochares (c. 360–275 BC), the nephew of the orator Demosthenes, was an Athenian orator and democratic statesman.

86 A pupil of Arcesilaus.



Marble head of a Ptolemaic queen, c. 270–250 BC.

It has recently been suggested that this is a head of Arsinoe II, who ruled together with her brother, Ptolemy II, from 278 BC until her death in 270 BC.

You're no big deal, wretch.  
Why plume yourself like a simpleton?

Yet he was so modest that he advised his students to hear other philosophers. And when a certain lad from Chios was dissatisfied with his lectures and preferred those of the above-mentioned Hieronymus, Arcesilaus himself took him and introduced him to the philosopher, exhorting the boy to behave well.

This delightful remark is attributed to him. To someone who asked why pupils from all the other schools leave them to join the Epicureans, but no one ever leaves the Epicureans, he said, "Because men may become eunuchs, but no eunuch ever becomes a man."

43

When his end was near, he left all his property to his brother Pylades, because he, without Moereas's knowledge, had taken him to Chios and from there to Athens.<sup>87</sup> Over the course of his life he had never married or had a child. On making three copies of his will, he deposited one in Eretria with

<sup>87</sup> As stated at 4.29, Moereas, the eldest son (who would normally inherit), had disapproved of Arcesilaus' philosophic ambitions.

Amphicritus, and the second in Athens with certain friends; the third he sent to his home to Thaumantias, a kinsman, charging him to keep it safe. To him he wrote as follows:

44 Arcesilaus to Thaumantias, greetings.  
I have given Diogenes my will to be conveyed to you. In light of my frequent illnesses and physical weakness, I decided to make a will, so that if anything happens I will not depart having in any way wronged you, who have been so deeply devoted to me. And you, more than anyone here, can be trusted to keep it safe for me, both because of your age and your relationship to me. Therefore, bearing in mind that I repose the greatest trust in you, do your best to be fair to me, so that, insofar as it depends on you, my will's provisions will be carried out with grace and dignity. One copy of the will has been deposited in Athens with some of my friends, and another in Eretria with Amphicritus.

He died in a fit of madness, as Hermippus says, after drinking a good deal of unmixed wine;<sup>88</sup> he had by then reached the age of seventy-five, and no man was more highly regarded by the Athenians.

45 My own verses about him run as follows:

Why, pray, Arcesilaus, did you draw unmixed wine  
So unsparingly as to take leave of your senses?  
I pity you not so much for your death,  
But because you insulted the Muses with an overflowing goblet.

There have been three other men named Arcesilaus: one a poet of the Old Comedy, another a writer of elegies, and the third a sculptor, about whom Simonides composed this epigram:

This is a statue of Artemis and it cost two hundred  
Parian drachmas, which bear a goat as their device.  
It was wrought by Arcesilaus, the worthy son of Aristodicus,  
A proficient in the arts of Athena.

The philosopher discussed above, as Apollodorus says in his *Chronology*, flourished around the 120th Olympiad.<sup>89</sup>

<sup>88</sup> The ancient Greeks usually drank their wines mixed with water to dilute their strength.

<sup>89</sup> This Olympiad began in 300 BC.



Gold coin, minted in Pella, commemorating Antigonos II Gonatas of Macedon.

## BION

Bion was by birth a native of Borysthenes.<sup>90</sup> Who his parents were, and under what circumstances he took up philosophy, he himself made clear to Antigonos.<sup>91</sup> For when Antigonos, quoting Homer, asked him, 46

Who are you among men, and where from? What  
[is your city, and who are your parents?]<sup>92</sup>

he, aware that he had already been maligned, said to Antigonos, “My father was a freed slave, who wiped his nose on his sleeve”—he meant that he was a dealer in salt fish—“a native of Borysthenes; he had no features, but only the brands on his face, a token of his master’s severity. My mother was the sort of woman such a man would marry, from a brothel. Then my father, who had cheated the tax collector, was sold with all our family. I was bought by an orator because I was young and charming; and when he died, he left me all he had. And I burned his writings, scraped together all I could, came to Athens, and took up philosophy. 47

This is the family and this the blood from which I claim to have sprung.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>90</sup> Presumably a town on the Borysthenes River (modern-day Dnieper) in Scythia.

<sup>91</sup> Antigonos II Gonatas (c. 320–239 BC) was a king of Macedonia. He sought to fill his court at Pella with philosophers, poets, and intellectuals.

<sup>92</sup> Homer, *Odyssey* 10.325, a line spoken by the sorceress Circe to Odysseus.

<sup>93</sup> Homer, *Iliad* 6.211, where Glaucus, a grandson of the hero Bellerophon, finishes recounting his family’s history.

“Such is my story. So let Persaeus and Philonides<sup>94</sup> give up recounting it. Judge me by myself.”

In truth Bion, though in certain instances wily, and a subtle sophist, one who had given a great many pretexts to those who wished to trample philosophy underfoot, was nonetheless affable and able to make fun of his own arrogance.

48 He left an enormous number of commentaries, as well as maxims of a practical character. For example, when reproached for not pursuing a young man, he said, “You can’t reel in a soft cheese with a fishhook.” When someone once asked him who suffers the greatest anxiety, he said, “He who wishes to attain the greatest happiness.” When asked by someone whether he should marry—for this remark is also attributed to him—he said, “If your wife is ugly, you’ll have to bear her; if beautiful, you’ll have to share her.”<sup>95</sup> He used to say that old age was the harbor of all evils; at any rate, all of them take refuge there. He called renown the mother of accusations; beauty someone else’s good; and wealth the sinews of success. To someone who had consumed his estate he said, “The land swallowed up Amphiarus,<sup>96</sup> but you’ve swallowed up your land.” It is a great evil, he declared, to be unable to bear evil. He would condemn those who burned corpses as if they could not feel, and yet set lanterns beside them as if they could. He often said that it is better to gratify someone else with one’s own beauty than to pluck that of another; for the latter harms both body and soul. He even attacked Socrates, saying that if he desired Alcibiades<sup>97</sup> but restrained himself, he was a fool; whereas if he did not, his conduct was not surprising. He used to say that the path to Hades was easy to travel; at any rate, men set off on it with their eyes closed. Disparaging Alcibiades, he said that as a youth he drew husbands away from their wives, and as an adult drew wives from their husbands. While the Athenians were practicing rhetoric, he was teaching philosophy in Rhodes. To someone who faulted him for this he said, “I brought wheat to market, yet I’m to sell barley?”<sup>98</sup>

50 He used to say that those in Hades would be more effectively punished if the vessels with which they drew water were intact and not full of holes.<sup>99</sup> To

94 Two other philosophers who also resided at Antigonus’ court.

95 The Greek contains two rhyming words. Diogenes attributes a similar remark to Antisthenes at 6.3.

96 A mythical hero and seer who fought alongside Polynices in the expedition of the Seven Against Thebes.

97 In Plato’s *Symposium*, Alcibiades, a youth famed for his beauty, tells how Socrates rejected his sexual advances.

98 Wheat being a more valued grain than barley, the quip extols the study of philosophy over that of rhetoric.

99 The allusion is to the fifty daughters of Danaus, who were doomed to fill leaky vessels with water for eternity, unable ever to wash the stain of murder from their hands. Bion’s point seems to be that carrying heavier loads would be a harsher punishment.



Comic actor in the role of a kitchen slave, Greek, 350–250 BC.

a prating fellow who begged for his help he said, “I will do what I can for you, but only if you send others to plead your cause and stay away yourself.” On a voyage with some worthless fellows he encountered pirates. When his companions said, “We are lost if we are recognized,” he replied, “And I too, if I am *not* recognized.”<sup>100</sup> He used to say that conceit is an obstacle to progress. Of a rich miser he said, “This man has not acquired property; property has acquired him.” He used to say that misers took care of their property as if it belonged to them, but got no more benefit from it than if it belonged to others. He said that in their youth men are courageous, but in their old age they excel in wisdom. Wisdom, he said, surpasses the other virtues as much as sight surpasses the other senses. He used to declare that we should not disparage old age, since we all hope to reach it. To a slanderer who was scowling he said, “I can’t tell whether something bad has happened to you, or something good to someone else.” He used to say that impiety made a bad partner for free speech, since

51

It makes a man slavish, even if he is bold-hearted.<sup>101</sup>

100 Since Bion came from lowly origins, he could not be held for ransom.

101 Euripides, *Hippolytus* 424.

We ought to pay careful attention, he said, to what sort of men our friends are, so that we may not be thought to consort with the bad or to decline the friendship of the good.

52 At first Bion, when he studied with Crates,<sup>102</sup> preferred to follow the Academic doctrines. Then he adopted the Cynic discipline, taking up a tattered cloak and knapsack. For what else was needed to complete his conversion to the doctrine of detachment?<sup>103</sup> Then he switched to the Theodorean theories after hearing the lectures of Theodorus the Atheist,<sup>104</sup> who made use of every kind of sophistical argument. After Theodorus, he studied with Theophrastus the Peripatetic.<sup>105</sup>

He was theatrical and excelled at ridiculing everything, using common terms for things. And because he blended together every style of speech, Eratosthenes is reported to have said of him that he was the first to clothe philosophy in parti-colored robes. He had a natural gift for parody, as one sees in these verses:

O Gentle Archytas,<sup>106</sup> a born musician, happy in your own conceit,  
Most skillful of men at striking the highest notes of strife.

53 He generally made fun of music and geometry.

54 He was extravagant, and this was why he moved from one city to another, sometimes arranging a parade. In Rhodes, at any rate, he persuaded the sailors to don students' attire and follow behind him; and when he entered the gymnasium with them, everyone turned to gaze at him. He was in the habit of adopting certain young men in order to satisfy his desire and to be protected by their goodwill. He was also extremely selfish and insisted strongly on the maxim "The possessions of friends are common property." As a result he is not credited with a single disciple, though so many students attended his lectures. And yet he led some of them into shamelessness. At any rate, Biton, one of his intimates, is said to have once remarked to Menedemus,<sup>107</sup> "As for me, Menedemus, I spend the night with Bion and don't think I've experienced anything unusual." In his conversation he often challenged views about the gods, following the example of Theodorus.

102 Crates was head of the Academy in the early third century BC. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 4.21–23.

103 *Apatheia*, here rendered "detachment," meant, for the early Cynics, not being affected by external circumstances.

104 Theodorus (c. 340–c. 250 BC), a philosopher of the Cyrenaic school, is discussed at 2.97–104.

105 Theophrastus was Aristotle's successor as the head of the Lyceum, in the late fourth and early third centuries BC. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 5.36–57.

106 Diogenes discusses the life and views of Archytas of Tarentum at 8.79–83.

107 Menedemus was the founder of the Eretrian school of philosophy. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 2.125–44.

But later, when he fell ill, the people of Chalcis maintain (for it was there that he died) that he was persuaded to wear amulets and to repent of his offenses against the gods. Lacking anyone to tend his illness, he was in a sorry state until Antigonus sent him two servants. And he followed Antigonus in a litter,<sup>108</sup> as Favorinus says in his *Miscellaneous History*.

But he died just the same, and I have taken him to task in these verses:

We hear that Bion, scion of the Scythian land of Borysthenes, 55  
 Said that the gods do not really exist.  
 Had he held to that view it would have been reasonable to say,  
 “He thinks as he likes; wrongly, of course, but so he thinks.”  
 But in fact, when he fell ill and feared he would die,  
 He who said there were no gods and would not even look at a temple,  
 And who often jeered at mortals who sacrifice to gods, 56  
 Not only feasted the nostrils of the gods with savory aromas and fat,  
 And incense over sacrificial hearths and altars and tables;  
 Nor did he merely say, “I have sinned, forgive the past”;  
 But he readily allowed an old woman to put a charm around his neck,  
 And he faithfully bound his arms with leather, 57  
 Placed buckthorn and laurel branches over the door,  
 And prepared to render any service sooner than die.  
 He was a fool to wish that divine aid might be obtained at a certain price,  
 As if the gods exist whenever Bion chooses to acknowledge them.  
 It was then, regaining his wits in vain, when he was all ashes,  
 That he stretched forth his hand and said, “Hail, Pluto, hail!”<sup>109</sup>

There have been ten men named Bion: the first a contemporary of Pher- 58  
 cydes of Syros, to whom two books in the Ionic dialect have been attributed (he  
 was from Proconnesus); the second a Syracusan, who wrote handbooks on rhet-  
 oric; the third our present subject; the fourth a Democritean, a mathematician  
 from Abdera who wrote in both the Attic and Ionic dialects; he was the first to  
 say that there are certain places where the night lasts for six months and the day  
 for six months; the fifth a native of Soli, who wrote a work on Ethiopia; the sixth  
 an orator, to whom nine books named after the Muses are attributed; the seventh  
 a lyric poet; the eighth a Milesian sculptor mentioned by Polemon; the ninth a  
 tragic poet, one of the poets of Tarsus, as they are called; and the tenth a sculptor  
 from Clazomenae or Chios, mentioned by Hipponax.

108 That is, Bion was carried about in Antigonus II’s train when he became too ill to walk. Some editors emend the text here on the assumption that Antigonus was carried to Bion’s side, rather than the other way around.

109 That is, Bion acknowledged Pluto (Hades) as a god, thereby admitting the existence of the Olympians generally.

## LACYDES

59 Lacydes, son of Alexander, was a native of Cyrene. It was he who succeeded Arcesilaus and inaugurated the New Academy.<sup>110</sup> A man of great nobility who had numerous emulators, he was diligent from his youth up and, despite his poverty, gracious and sociable. They say that in the management of his household he was extremely stingy. For whenever he brought anything out of his storeroom, he would apply a layer of wax to the door and throw his seal ring inside through a hole, so that nothing stored there would ever be removed and carried off.<sup>111</sup> Eventually his servants, getting to know of this, used to remove as much as they liked, afterward throwing the ring back into the storeroom through the same hole. Nor were they ever caught at it.

60 Lacydes used to lecture in the Academy in the garden that had been laid out by King Attalus;<sup>112</sup> named in his honor, the garden was called the Lacydeum. He was the only head of the school ever to hand it on to his successors, Telecles and Evander (both from Phocaea), during his lifetime. Evander was succeeded by Hegesias of Pergamon, who was succeeded by Carneades.<sup>113</sup> A delightful anecdote is told of Lacydes. When Attalus sent for him, Lacydes is said to have remarked that statues should be seen from a distance.<sup>114</sup> As he devoted himself late in life to the study of geometry, someone said to him, “But why now?” <And he replied,> “But why *not* now?”

61 He became head of the school in the fourth year of the 134th Olympiad<sup>115</sup> and died after heading it for twenty-six years. His death was due to paralysis brought on by heavy drinking. My own satiric verses about him run as follows:

Of you, Lacydes, I have heard this tale:  
Bacchus seized and dragged you, with trailing toes, to Hades.  
It's clear that when Dionysus enters the body in force  
He loosens our limbs. Isn't this why he is called Lyaeus?<sup>116</sup>

110 The third and final phase in the doctrinal development of Plato's school, the New Academy was marked by a moderation of the skepticism that had been prevalent during the Middle Academy. In saying that Lacydes was the first head of the New Academy, Diogenes differs from other ancient sources, who instead assign this role to Carneades.

111 By this stratagem, Lacydes supposed that the door could not be resealed to conceal a theft, but he failed to reckon with the countermeasure Diogenes goes on to describe.

112 Attalus I, king of Pergamon in the late third century BC.

113 Carneades' life and views are discussed at 4.62–66.

114 A deferential way of refusing to attend on the monarch.

115 The fourth year of this Olympiad began in 241 BC.

116 This epithet of Dionysus derives from a Greek verb meaning “to loosen.”

## CARNEADES

Carneades, son of Epicomus (or of Philocomus, according to Alexander in his *Successions*), was a native of Cyrene. After carefully studying the writings of the Stoics, <particularly those of> Chrysippus,<sup>117</sup> he challenged them reasonably and with such success that he would often say, 62

Had Chrysippus not existed, I would not have existed.<sup>118</sup>

His industry was unsurpassed (though he devoted himself less to natural philosophy than to ethics), so that he would let his hair and nails grow long from devotion to his studies. He was so prominent in philosophy that even the orators would dismiss their classes and go to hear him lecture.

He had an exceptionally loud voice, and consequently the head of the gymnasium sent to him to ask him not to shout so loudly. Carneades answered, “Then give me a gauge to measure my voice,” whereupon the man, taking him up, wittily replied, “You have a gauge: your audience.” Carneades was a formidable critic and an invincible debater. And for the reasons already mentioned<sup>119</sup> he declined dinner invitations. A student of his, Mentor of Bithynia, aimed to seduce his concubine; so one day (according to Favorinus in his *Miscellaneous History*), when Mentor came to his lecture, Carneades in the course of his remarks parodied some Homeric verses at Mentor’s expense: 63

Here comes an infallible old man of the sea, 64  
Resembling Mentor in form and in voice;  
Him I proclaim to have been banished from this school.<sup>120</sup>

At this Mentor rose and said,

They made their proclamation, and the others quickly assembled.<sup>121</sup>

Carneades seems to have conducted himself faintheartedly as his end approached, repeatedly remarking, “Nature which assembled will disassemble.” When he learned that Antipater had died after drinking poison, he was moved by the courage with which he faced his end, and said, “Give *me* some

117 Diogenes discusses the life and views of Chrysippus at 7.179–202.

118 A parody of a verse about Chrysippus (7.183): “Had there been no Chrysippus, there would have been no Stoa.”

119 Namely, his single-minded devotion to his studies.

120 These verses stitch together two lines of Homer’s *Odyssey* (4.384, 2.268) with a parody of one line from Sophocles’ *Antigone* (203). In the last case, the original text had Creon, ruler of Thebes, reading a decree of banishment from the city, rather than from the school.

121 Mentor deploys another Homeric verse, used twice in the *Iliad* (2.52, 2.444) and once in the *Odyssey* (2.8).

too.” And when they asked, “What?” he replied, “Some honeyed wine.” They say that his death coincided with an eclipse of the moon, as if, so to speak, the brightest orb after the sun were conveying her sympathy.

65 Apollodorus, in his *Chronology*, says that Carneades departed the world of men in the third year of the 162nd Olympiad<sup>122</sup> at the age of eighty-five. Letters of his to Ariarathes,<sup>123</sup> the king of the Cappadocians, are extant. Everything else was assembled by his students. He himself left nothing in writing. My own epigram about him, written in logaedic and Archebulian verses,<sup>124</sup> run as follows:

Why, oh why, Muse, would you have me censure Carneades?  
 <For> he is ignorant who does not know how Carneades feared death.  
 When wasting away from the direst of diseases,  
 He would not obtain release. But having heard that  
 Antipater died after drinking poison, he said,  
 66 “Then let me drink some, too.” “What?”  
 “What? Give me some honeyed wine.”  
 He was always ready to remark,  
 “Nature which holds me together will dissolve me.”  
 He descended nonetheless to the grave; but he might have  
 Reached Hades with the help of more numerous woes.

It is said that he went blind at night without being aware of it, and he ordered his slave to light a lamp. When the man brought it in and said, “Here it is,” Carneades replied, “Then read.”

He had many other students, but the most distinguished was Clitomachus, of whom we must speak.

There was another Carneades, an insipid elegiac poet.

## CLITOMACHUS

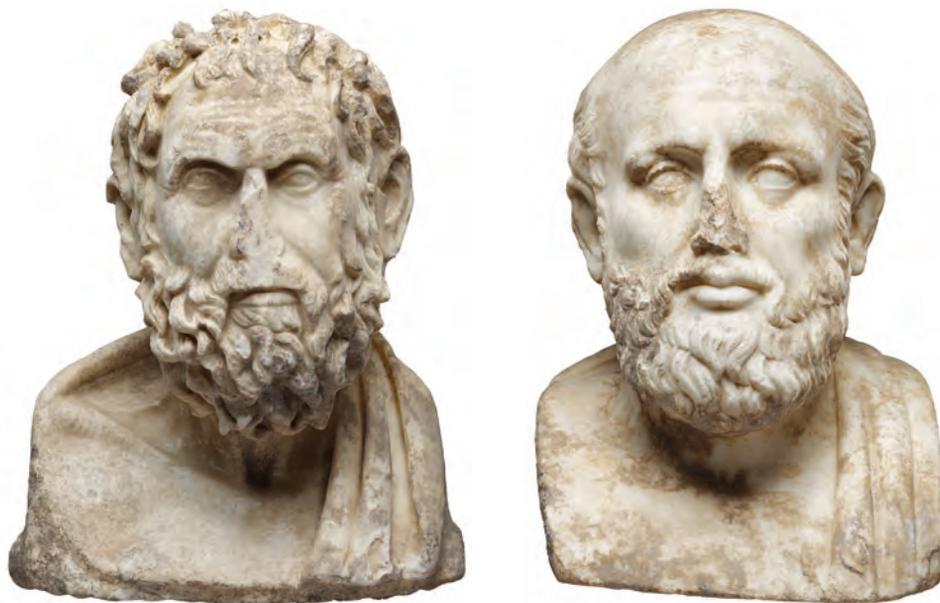
67 Clitomachus was from Carthage. He was originally called Hasdrubal,<sup>125</sup> and he taught philosophy in Carthage in his native language. Coming to Athens at the age of forty, he became a student of Carneades. Appreciating

122 The third year of this Olympiad began in 130 BC.

123 Presumably Ariarathes V of Cappadocia, who reigned 163–130 BC.

124 Both are fairly rare Greek meters. Diogenes liked to use a wide variety of metrical forms in his poems, as demonstrated by the title of his now lost book of verse, *Pammetros* (“[Poems of] All Meters”).

125 Clitomachus’ birth name, Hasdrubal, was notably Carthaginian, and was shared by the brother of Hannibal, the Carthaginian general who fought the Romans.



Two herm busts, each purportedly to be of a Greek philosopher.  
Both are Roman and from the late first century AD.

Clitomachus' diligence, Carneades had him educated and took part in training him. Clitomachus was so industrious that he wrote more than forty treatises. He succeeded Carneades, and by his own writings shed considerable light on his predecessor's doctrines. The man became eminent in three schools of thought: the Academic, the Peripatetic, and the Stoic.

The Academics in general are ridiculed by Timon in the line:

Not even the unsalted<sup>126</sup> long-windedness of the Academics.

Now that we have reviewed the Academics who descended from Plato, let us pass on to the Peripatetics, who also descended from Plato. They begin with Aristotle.

126 Salt was a frequent metaphor in the ancient world for wit. Speech that is "unsalted" is therefore dull and bland.



# BOOK 5

ARISTOTLE

384-322 BC

THEOPHRASTUS

C. 372/70-C. 288/86 BC

STRATO

D. 269 BC

LYCO

C. 300/298-C. 226/24 BC

DEMETRIUS

B. C. 350 BC

HERACLIDES

4TH CENT. BC

## ARISTOTLE

1 Aristotle, son of Nicomachus and Phaestis, was a native of Stagira.<sup>1</sup> His father Nicomachus traced his descent to the Nicomachus who was the son of Machaon and grandson of Asclepius,<sup>2</sup> as Hermippus says in his book *On Aristotle*; he lived with Amyntas, the king of the Macedonians, in the capacity of doctor and friend.<sup>3</sup> Aristotle was the most faithful of Plato's students; he spoke with a lisp, as Timotheus the Athenian says in his book *On Lives*; they also say that his calves were thin and his eyes small, and that he wore fine clothes and rings, and kept his hair short. He had a son, also called Nicomachus, by his concubine Herpyllis,<sup>4</sup> as Timotheus says.

2 He left the Academy while Plato was still alive; hence Plato is said to have remarked, "Aristotle kicked me away just as <. . .> colts kick away their mother." Hermippus, in his *Lives*, says that Aristotle was on an Athenian embassy to Philip when Xenocrates became head of the school,<sup>5</sup> and that when he returned and saw the school headed by another, he chose a walkway (*peripatos*) in the Lyceum,<sup>6</sup> where he walked up and down discussing philosophy with his students until it was time for them to exercise. And thus he was called a "peripatetic."<sup>7</sup> Others, however, say that the name was given to him

1 Stagira was a small city on the Chalcidice peninsula. It was destroyed by Philip II of Macedon in 349 as part of his imperial expansion, long after Aristotle himself had left it. Stagira may have been rebuilt at Aristotle's request (see 5.4).

2 The healer god Asclepius, son of Apollo, was an appropriate ancestor for a doctor like Nicomachus, as was Machaon, a legendary physician who fought at Troy.

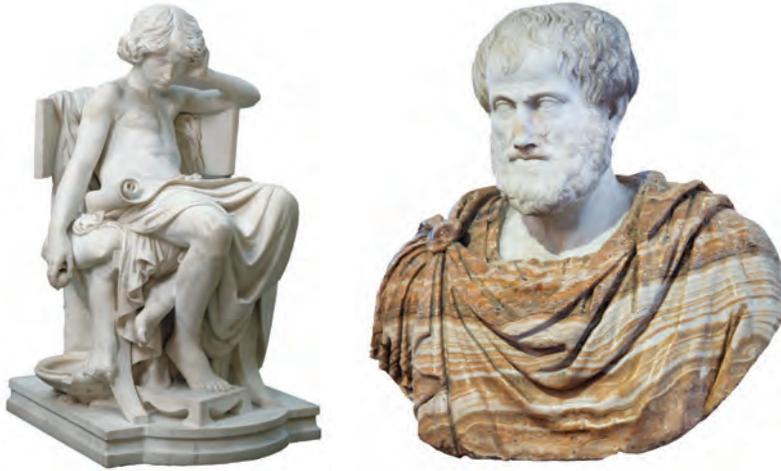
3 Amyntas II was the king of Macedonia from 393 to 370 or 369 BC, and the father of Philip II. He brought Aristotle's father, Nicomachus, to his court as physician to the royal family.

4 Herpyllis, originally Aristotle's household slave, became his consort after the death of Pythias, Aristotle's wife. Aristotle's work *Nicomachean Ethics* may be named after this man (although Aristotle's father had the same name), because either Nicomachus helped edit it or it was directed toward him.

5 The "school" referenced here is Plato's Academy; Xenocrates (see 4.6–15) assumed leadership of it in 339 BC, at a time when Athens was preparing for war with the Macedonians. There is no other evidence that Aristotle was sent as an ambassador to Philip, king of the Macedonians, and indeed he was most likely not living in Athens at this time.

6 The Lyceum was originally a sanctuary dedicated to Apollo (who bore the cultic epithet "Lyceius") as well as a gymnasium. Like the grove of Academe, where Plato established his school, the Lyceum was a favorite gathering place for philosophically minded young Athenians before it became identified with a particular school. The *peripatos* became closely identified with the Lyceum and was sometimes used as another name for the school itself (see 5.70).

7 The word derives from the Greek adjective meaning "pacing about."



Two marble portraits of Aristotle. *Left: Young Aristotle*, by Charles Jean Marie Degeorge, c. 1875. *Right: a Hadrianic copy of an original commissioned by Alexander the Great from the sculptor Lysippus in c. 330 BC. The mantle is a seventeenth-century addition.*

because when Alexander was walking about after an illness, Aristotle joined him and conversed with him about various matters.<sup>8</sup>

But when his students had grown in number, then Aristotle too took a seat, saying:

It is shameful to keep silence and let Xenocrates speak.<sup>9</sup>

He taught his students to discourse on a set thesis, while also training them in oratory. Later, however, he departed to the court of Hermias the eunuch, the ruler of Atarneus,<sup>10</sup> whom some say became his beloved, though others maintain that Hermias made Aristotle his kinsman, giving him his daughter or niece in marriage,<sup>11</sup> as Demetrius of Magnesia says in his work *On Poets and Writers of the*

8 The vignette described here is set during the late 340s, when Aristotle was employed by Philip as tutor to his son, Alexander the Great.

9 The verse parodies a line from Euripides' lost *Philoctetes*, inserting Xenocrates' name in place of "barbarians."

10 Atarneus was a Greek city in Persian-controlled Asia Minor; Hermias, a former slave who may perhaps have been castrated by his master Eubulus, came to power there in the mid-fourth century BC and greatly expanded its territory. At some point in his youth, Hermias had studied at Plato's Academy, where he became friendly with Aristotle. When Aristotle left Athens around 348 BC, partly as a result of the city's growing anti-Macedonian sentiments, he landed at the court of Hermias.

11 Aristotle married Pythias, adoptive daughter or niece of Hermias, around 345 BC, when he was around forty.

4 *Same Name.* Demetrius also says that Hermias had been a slave of Eubulus, that he came from Bithynia, and that he slew his master. Aristippus,<sup>12</sup> in the first book of his work *On the Luxuriousness of the Ancients*, says that Aristotle fell in love with a concubine of Hermias; that he married her with Hermias's consent, and in his great joy offered sacrifices to this woman as the Athenians did to Demeter of Eleusis;<sup>13</sup> and that he also wrote a paean to Hermias, which is given below.<sup>14</sup>

Thereafter he was in Macedonia at Philip's court and received from him his son Alexander as a student;<sup>15</sup> he requested that his native city, which had been razed by Philip, be restored, and had his petition granted; he also established laws for its inhabitants. We also learn that, following Xenocrates' example, he made it a rule at his school that a new head should be appointed every ten days.<sup>16</sup> When he thought he had stayed long enough with Alexander, he departed to Athens, having first introduced Alexander to his kinsman, Callisthenes of Olynthus.<sup>17</sup> But when Callisthenes spoke too frankly to the king and didn't obey him,<sup>18</sup> Alexander is said to have rebuked him, citing the verse,

You'll be short-lived, my child, by speaking thus.<sup>19</sup>

And so it turned out. For Callisthenes, suspected of conspiring with Hermolaus in a plot against Alexander, was carried about in an iron cage, lice-ridden and untended; and finally he was thrown to a lion, and thus met his end.<sup>20</sup>

12 Not the hedonist philosopher Aristippus of Cyrene but a later author who assumed that name, presumably to give his work (which purveys gossip about the erotic lives of the philosophers) greater credibility. This writer is also known as Pseudo-Aristippus.

13 Aristotle's close connections to Hermias drew many politically motivated attacks in Athens. The goddess Demeter was the focus of the pious Athenian mystery rites at Eleusis.

14 At 5.7–8.

15 Philip II employed Aristotle as tutor to Alexander beginning in 343 BC. There is no record of what occurred during the period of instruction, which lasted perhaps three years.

16 By "head" (*archôn*), Diogenes must here mean some administrative official subordinate to the scholar.

17 Callisthenes, born around 360 BC, was Aristotle's grandnephew. In 334, he accompanied Alexander on his expedition into Asia as court historian; his highly complimentary account of the campaign is now lost.

18 This episode occurred after Alexander had largely completed his conquest of the Persian Empire and was seeking to be greeted by his officers with a low bow, in the manner of a Persian king. Callisthenes, formerly a supporter of Alexander's policies, balked at this and spoke out against it at a staff dinner. Alexander, according to other sources, was not present, but listened from another room.

19 The line is from Homer's *Iliad* (18.95). The sea-goddess Thetis warns her son, Achilles, that if he kills Hector—which he has just sworn to do—he will in turn bring about his own death.

20 Callisthenes was arrested on suspicion of having aided Hermolaus, a royal page, in mounting a conspiracy to assassinate Alexander, though the charge may have been fabricated by Alexander to eliminate a perceived dissident. Other sources give a milder account of Callisthenes' fate, some suggesting that he died of natural causes while being held for trial.



Leaded bronze arrowhead, fourth century BC. The blunted tip suggests it saw impact; the socket's cast inscription with Greek letters in retrograde reads "of Philip." Reportedly found near the city of Olynthus, on the Chalcidice peninsula, it was probably used during the siege of Olynthus by Philip II of Macedon in 348 BC, one year after his destruction of Aristotle's native city, Stagira.

As for Aristotle, after coming to Athens and leading his school for thirteen years, he retired to Chalcis<sup>21</sup> because Eurymedon, the priest at Eleusis (or Demophilus, as Favorinus says in his *Miscellaneous History*), charged him with impiety for having composed the hymn to the above-mentioned Hermias, as well as the following inscription for the statue he dedicated at Delphi:<sup>22</sup>

6

This man the king of the bow-bearing Persians slew,  
 Impiously transgressing the sacred law of the immortals,  
 Overcoming him not openly, with a spear in mortal combat,  
 But with the help of a treacherous man whom he trusted.

In Chalcis, drinking wolfsbane, Aristotle died,<sup>23</sup> as Eumelus reports in the fifth book of his *Histories*, at the age of seventy. But the same author says that Aristotle met Plato at the age of thirty; and here he is mistaken. For

21 The chief city on the island of Euboea, and the birthplace of Aristotle's mother.

22 Both the "hymn" (called a paean at 5.4) and the statue (possibly adorning a cenotaph; see 5.11) were meant to honor the courage of Hermias, Aristotle's father-in-law, for refusing to give up information even while being tortured to death. Hermias had been conspiring with Philip of Macedon in the planned Macedonian invasion of Asia. The Persians lured him into a trap and arrested him, but failed to get him to reveal the plans. The charge of impiety brought by Eurymedon stems from the way in which Aristotle personifies and addresses Virtue, as if it were a god. The hymn is quoted below.

23 Other sources do not suggest that Aristotle committed suicide, but died of a stomach ailment. Diogenes says that he died of natural causes, at 5.10.

Aristotle lived to be sixty-three, and he was seventeen when he became Plato's student. His hymn to Hermias runs as follows:

- 7           O Virtue, achieved with toil by the race of mortals,  
           The finest goal in life,  
           For the sake of your beauty, O maiden,  
       'Tis in Greece an enviable fate to die  
           And to endure fierce and ceaseless toils.  
       Such courage do you implant in the heart,  
           An immortal harvest, better than gold,  
       Dearer than parents, than sloe-eyed sleep.  
           For your sake, Heracles, son of Zeus,  
       And the sons of Leda  
           Endured many labors,<sup>24</sup>  
       Pursuing your power.  
           For love of you Achilles  
       And Ajax came to the house of Hades.
- 8           And for the sake of your beloved form  
       The nursling of Atarneus too was bereft of the sun's rays.<sup>25</sup>  
           Therefore will his deeds be sung,  
       And the Muses, the daughters of Memory,  
           Will make him immortal,  
       Exalting the majesty of Zeus,  
           Patron of strangers, and the prize of steadfast friendship.

My own verses about him run as follows:

Eurymedon, the priest of Deo's<sup>26</sup> mysteries,  
       Was once about to indict Aristotle for impiety;  
       But he, by drinking wolfsbane, escaped;  
       And thus, without effort, defeated unjust calumnies.

- 9           Favorinus, in his *Miscellaneous History*, says that Aristotle was the first to write a forensic speech in his own defense, on the occasion of the suit mentioned above; and he quotes him as saying that at Athens

pear upon pear grows old, and fig upon fig.<sup>27</sup>

24 Both Heracles and the "sons of Leda" (the demigods Castor and Pollux) were famous for their toils and feats of stamina, including those endured on Jason's quest for the Golden Fleece.

25 The "nursling of Atarneus" is Hermias. His death under torture is here compared with the mythic struggles of the greatest warriors at Troy.

26 Another name for Demeter.

27 A quote cobbled from two lines of the *Odyssey* (7.120–21), where Homer praises the orchards in mythic Phaeacia, which are always in fruit. The point of the quip lies in the Greek word



Marble portrait heads of Alexander the Great (left) and his beloved companion, Hephaisstion (right), c. 320 BC, Greek.

Apollodorus, in his *Chronology*, says that Aristotle was born in the first year of the ninety-ninth Olympiad;<sup>28</sup> that he met Plato and remained with him for twenty years, having become his student at the age of seventeen; and that he went to Mytilene during the archonship of Eubulus,<sup>29</sup> in the third year of the 108th Olympiad.<sup>30</sup> When Plato died, in the first year of that Olympiad,<sup>31</sup> during the archonship of Theophilus, Aristotle went to Hermias and stayed with him for three years. During the archonship of Pythodotus, in the second year of the 109th Olympiad,<sup>32</sup> he went to Philip, Alexander being then fifteen years old. He returned to Athens in the second year of the 111th Olympiad<sup>33</sup> and lectured at the Lyceum for thirteen years. He departed for Chalcis in the third year of the 114th Olympiad<sup>34</sup> and died of disease at about the age of sixty-three, during the archonship of Philocles, in the same year Demosthenes died on Calauria.<sup>35</sup>

10

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for “fig,” *sukos*, which evokes *sukophantēs*, literally “fig-shower,” the term for schemers who advanced themselves by bringing indictments against others.

28 This Olympiad began in 384 BC.

29 A prominent Athenian statesman (c. 405–c. 335 BC), not the master of Hermias mentioned at 5.3.

30 The year referred to is 345–344 BC (archon years began in summer). Athens was at this time in a strongly anti-Macedonian mood, and Aristotle, known to be a close friend and employee of Philip II, left the city in part as a result of the unfriendly treatment he received there.

31 348–347 BC.

32 343–342 BC.

33 335–334 BC.

34 322 BC.

35 The year referred to began in the summer of 322 BC. That autumn, Demosthenes, a refugee

It is said that Aristotle offended Alexander by his introduction of Callisthenes, and that Alexander, in order to annoy Aristotle, honored Anaximenes<sup>36</sup> and sent gifts to Xenocrates.<sup>37</sup>

11 Theocritus of Chios,<sup>38</sup> according to Ambryon in his book *On Theocritus*, also ridiculed him in the following epigram:

To Hermias, who was a eunuch and at the same time a slave of Eubulus,  
An empty monument<sup>39</sup> was erected by empty-minded Aristotle.

And Timon attacked him, saying,

No, not even the painful thoughtlessness of Aristotle.<sup>40</sup>

So much for the life of the philosopher. I have also come across his will, which runs as follows:

12 All will be well; but if anything should happen, Aristotle has made the following dispositions. Antipater<sup>41</sup> is to be executor in all matters, without restriction. Until Nicanor arrives,<sup>42</sup> let Aristomenes, Timachus, Hipparchus, Dioteles, and Theophrastus (if he is willing and if circumstances permit him) take charge of the children and Herpyllis as well as the property.<sup>43</sup> And when my daughter comes of age, let her be given in marriage to Nicanor;<sup>44</sup> but if anything should happen to her (which heaven forbid, nor will any such thing occur) before she marries, or after her marriage but before there are children, let Nicanor have full authority, both with regard to my son and with regard to everything else, to manage in a manner worthy both of himself and of us. Let Nicanor take charge of my daughter and of my son Nicomachus, and act as he sees fit in all things that concern them, as if he were their father or

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from Athens after the city had lost a war he had helped to promote, committed suicide on the island of Calauria in order to avoid being taken prisoner by the Macedonians.

36 Anaximenes of Lampsacus (c. 380–320 BC) was a rhetorician and historian who accompanied Alexander on his Asian campaigns.

37 See 4.8 and the corresponding note for more on this incident.

38 An orator trained by Isocrates and renowned for his caustic wit. He traded insults with both Alexander the Great and Antigonos I, and was eventually executed by the latter.

39 That is, a cenotaph. Hermias had died in Persian custody and his body could not be recovered.

40 This line is based on a verse found several times in the *Iliad* (15.16, 22.457, and 23.701).

41 Antipater (c. 397–319 BC) was a Macedonian nobleman who served both Philip II and Alexander the Great, ruling Macedonia while Alexander was on campaign. Aristotle became his friend while residing at Philip's court; several quotes survive from his letters to the elder statesman.

42 Aristotle's nephew, Nicanor (360–317 BC), was probably serving in the Macedonian army at this time.

43 Of the executors listed here, only Theophrastus, Aristotle's close companion and successor as head of the Lyceum (see 5.36–57), is otherwise known. Aristotle had two children, a daughter named Pythias and a son named Nicomachus; the first was from his wife, also named Pythias, the second perhaps from his later consort, Herpyllis.

44 Such arranged marriages between cousins were not uncommon in the Greek world.

brother. And if anything should happen to Nicanor (which heaven forbid) either before he marries the girl, or after the marriage but before there are children, let any arrangement he has made be valid. And if Theophrastus consents to live with my daughter, let him assume the same responsibility as Nicanor. Otherwise, let the executors, in consultation with Antipater, administer with respect to my daughter and my son as they think best. 13

Let the executors and Nicanor, in memory of me and of the devotion Herpyllis has shown me, take care of her in every other respect and, if she wishes to marry, see to it that she is given in a manner not unworthy of me. Let them give her, in addition to what she has already received, a talent of silver out of the estate and three serving women, whichever <ones> she chooses, in addition to her present maid and the slave Pyrrhaeus; and if she wishes to live in Chalcis, the guest house by the garden; if in Stagira, my father's house. Whichever of these houses she chooses, let the executors furnish it with whatever furniture they think right and adequate for Herpyllis to have. 14

Let Nicanor take charge of the boy Myrmex,<sup>45</sup> in order that he be conveyed to his own people in a manner worthy of me with the property we received from him. Let Ambracis be granted her freedom and, when my daughter marries, five hundred drachmas and her present maid. And let Thale be given, in addition to the maid that she has and who was bought, one thousand drachmas and a maid. And for Simon, in addition to the money <given> to him previously for the purchase of another slave, let a servant be purchased or let him receive an additional sum of money. Let Tacho, Philo, Olympius, and his son be granted their freedom when my daughter is married. Do not sell any of the slaves who attended me, but let them continue to be employed; and when they reach the proper age, let them be granted their freedom if they deserve it. 15

Let the executors see to it that the images that Gryllion has been commissioned to execute are set up when they are finished, namely that of Nicanor and that of Proxenus,<sup>46</sup> which I was intending to have executed, and that of Nicanor's mother. And let them set up the bust, already completed, of Arimnestus,<sup>47</sup> that there may be a memorial of him, since he died childless; and let them dedicate <the one> of my mother to Demeter at Nemea or wherever they think best. And wherever they bury me, there let them place the bones of Pythias,<sup>48</sup> in accordance with her own instructions. And let Nicanor, once he has returned safe, dedicate, in fulfillment of the vow I made on his behalf, stone statues, six feet tall, to Zeus and Athena, the Saviors. 16

45 Otherwise unknown.

46 The father of Nicanor and husband of Arimneste, Aristotle's sister.

47 Aristotle's brother.

48 Aristotle's deceased wife, who had been buried at Athens some time before this.

These are the terms of Aristotle's will.<sup>49</sup> It is said that a large number of his dishes were found; Lyco<sup>50</sup> is also reported to have said that Aristotle bathed in a tub of warm oil and sold the oil. Some say that he placed a bag of warm oil on his stomach, and that, when he went to sleep, a bronze ball was placed in his hand, with a vessel lying under it, so that when the ball fell into the vessel he might be awakened by the sound.<sup>51</sup>

17 The following delightful sayings are attributed to him. When asked what people gain by telling lies, he replied, "That when they tell the truth they are not believed." Reproached one day because he gave alms to a good-for-nothing, he said, "It was the man that I pitied, not his conduct." He was constantly saying to his friends and students, whenever and wherever he happened to be lecturing, that the eyes receive light from the surrounding air, while the soul receives it from mathematics. He declared often and vehemently that the Athenians had discovered wheat and laws; and that they made use of the wheat, but not the laws.

18 He said of education that its roots are bitter, but its fruit sweet. When asked what ages quickly, he replied, "Gratitude." When asked to define hope, he said, "It is a waking dream." When Diogenes<sup>52</sup> offered him some figs, he noticed that unless he accepted them, Diogenes had a quip prepared for him; so he took them and remarked that Diogenes had lost his quip along with his figs. At another time, he took the offered figs, raised them aloft as one does with a baby, and returned them with the exclamation "Diogenes is a big boy!" He said that three things are necessary for education: natural ability, study, and practice. On hearing that someone had reviled him, he said, "As long as I'm not in his presence, let him flog me as well." Beauty, he used to say,  
19 was more effective than any letter of introduction. Others, however, attribute this maxim to Diogenes, and say that Aristotle called good looks a gift <of god>,<sup>53</sup> while Socrates called them a short-lived tyranny; Plato, a superiority of nature; Theophrastus, a mute deception; Theocritus, a scourge set in ivory; and Carneades, a monarchy without a bodyguard.

When asked how the educated differ from the uneducated, he said, "as much as the living from the dead." He used to say that education was an adornment in prosperity, and a refuge in adversity. Those parents who educate chil-

49 Aristotle probably made no provision for the Lyceum because, as a resident alien (or metic), he could not by Athenian law own or transfer property within the city.

50 Lyco (c. 300/298–c. 226/24 BC) succeeded Strato as the head of the Lyceum. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 5.65–74.

51 The point of the anecdote is that Aristotle gave up sleep to pursue his philosophic work.

52 Diogenes the Cynic (c. 412/03–c. 324/21 BC), whose life and views are discussed at 6.20–81.

53 The Greek word translated as "of god" has been supplied by a modern editor on the supposition that it fell out of the manuscripts.



Aristotle and a pupil.

From *Kitab Na't al-hayawan*, an Arabic treatise on animals and the medical properties of the various parts of their bodies, compiled from works of Aristotle by Ibn Bakhthishu', thirteenth century.

dren deserve to be honored more than those who only engender them: for parents make them live, but teachers make them live well. To someone who boasted that he came from a great city, he said, "That is not what one should consider, but who it is that is worthy of a great country." When asked to define a friend, he said, "One soul dwelling in two bodies." Mankind, he used to say, was divided into those who were as thrifty as if they were going to live forever, and those who were as extravagant as if they were going to die any moment. When someone asked him why we spend so much time with the beautiful, he replied, "That's a blind man's question."

20

When asked what benefit he had ever derived from philosophy, he said, "That I do without being ordered what some are forced to do by their fear of the law." When asked how students could make progress, he said, "By pursuing the front-runners and not waiting for those who lag behind." To a talkative fellow, who poured out a torrent of words and then said, "Let's hope I haven't been boring you with my chatter!" he replied, "No, by Zeus, I haven't been listening."

- 21 To someone who faulted him for having made a loan to a dishonest man—for the story is also told in this way—he said, “It was not the man that I assisted, but mankind.” When asked how we should behave to friends, he said, “As we would wish them to behave to us.” He defined justice as a virtue of the soul that distributes according to merit. The best provision for old age, he said, was education. Favorinus, in the second book of his *Reminiscences*, says that Aristotle was always saying, “He who has friends has no true friend.”<sup>54</sup> This is also found in the seventh book of the *Ethics*.<sup>55</sup> These then are the sayings attributed to him.

He wrote an enormous number of books, a list of which, in light of the man’s excellence and range, I deemed it right to append:<sup>56</sup>

- 22 *On Justice*, four books  
*On Poets*, three books  
*On Philosophy*, three books  
*On the Statesman*, two books  
*On Rhetoric* or *Gryllus*, one book  
*Nerinthus*, one book  
*The Sophist*, one book  
*Menexenus*, one book  
*On Love*, one book  
*Symposium*, one book  
*On Wealth*, one book  
*Hortatory*, one book  
*On the Soul*, one book  
*On Prayer*, one book  
*On Noble Birth*, one book  
*On Pleasure*, one book  
*Alexander* or *In Defense of Colonies*, one book  
*On Monarchy*, one book  
*On Education*, one book  
*On the Good*, three books  
*Extracts from Plato’s “Laws,”* three books  
*Extracts from the “Republic,”* two books  
*On Household Management*, one book  
*On Friendship*, one book  
*On Suffering or Having Suffered*, one book  
*On Branches of Knowledge*, one book

54 That is, true friendship cannot be maintained with more than one person.

55 Cf. *Eudemian Ethics* 1245b20–21 and *Nicomachean Ethics* 1171a15–17.

56 This list does not correspond to the Aristotelian corpus as we know it today, nor does it even correspond to the corpus as Diogenes knew it, since he cites works elsewhere in his text that are not listed here.

<i>On Controversies</i> , two books	
<i>Solutions of Controversial Questions</i> , four books	
<i>Sophistical Divisions</i> , four books	
<i>On Opposites</i> , one book	
<i>On Species and Genera</i> , one book	
<i>On Characteristic Properties</i> , one book	
<i>Three Notebooks of Dialectical Arguments</i>	23
<i>Propositions about Virtue</i> , two books	
<i>Objections</i> , one book	
<i>On Terms Used in a Number of Different Senses Where a Determinant Is Added</i> , one book	
<i>On Emotions</i> or <i>On Anger</i> , one book	
<i>Ethics</i> , five books	
<i>On Elements</i> , three books	
<i>On Knowledge</i> , one book	
<i>On Principle</i> , one book	
<i>Divisions</i> , seventeen books	
<i>On Division</i> , one book <sup>57</sup>	
<On> <i>Question and Answer</i> , two books	
<i>On Motion</i> , one book	
<i>Propositions Concerning Motion</i> , one book	
<i>Controversial Propositions</i> , one book	
<i>Syllogisms</i> , one book	
<i>Prior Analytics</i> , eight books	
<i>Greater Posterior Analytics</i> , two books	
<i>On Problems</i> , one book	
<i>Methodics</i> , eight books	
<i>On the Greater Good</i> , one book	
<i>On the Idea</i> , one book	
<i>Definitions Preceding the Topics</i> , one book	
<Topics>, seven books	
<i>Syllogisms</i> , two books	
<i>On Syllogism with Definitions</i> , one book	
<i>On the Desirable and the Contingent</i> , one book	24
<i>Preface to the Commonplaces</i> , one book	
<i>Topics Concerning the Definitions</i> , two books	
<i>Emotions</i> , one book	
<i>On Division</i> , one book	
<i>On Mathematics</i> , one book	
<i>Definitions</i> , thirteen books	
<i>Dialectical Proofs</i> , two books	

57 The same work is given later in this list, as in the original.



Aristotle stands on a cliff top in an attitude of distress and contemplates suicide at his inability to understand the source of waves. A mezzotint published by Robert Sayer of London in 1786.

*On Pleasure*, one book  
*Propositions*, one book  
*On the Voluntary*, one book  
*On the Beautiful*, one book  
*Theses for Dialectical Arguments*, twenty-five books  
*Theses Concerning Love*, four books  
*Theses Concerning Friendship*, two books  
*Theses Concerning the Soul*, one book  
*Politics*, two books  
*Lectures on Politics Similar to Those of Theophrastus*, eight books  
*On Just Actions*, two books  
*Anthology of Arts*, two books  
*The Art of Rhetoric*, two books  
*Art*, one book  
*Another Anthology of Arts*, two books  
*Concerning Method*, one book

<i>Anthology of the Art of Theodectes</i> , one book	
<i>A Treatise on the Art of Poetry</i> , two books	
<i>Rhetorical Enthymemes</i> , one book	
<i>On Style</i> , two books	
<i>On Advice</i> , one book	25
<i>Anthology</i> , two books	
<i>On Nature</i> , three books	
<i>Concerning Nature</i> , one book	
<i>On the Philosophy of Archytas</i> , three books	
<i>On the Philosophy of Speusippus and Xenocrates</i> , one book	
<i>Extracts from the “Timaeus” and the Works of Archytas</i> , one book	
<i>Against the Doctrines of Melissus</i> , one book	
<i>Against the Doctrines of Alcmeon</i> , one book	
<i>Against the Pythagoreans</i> , one book	
<i>Against the Doctrines of Xenophanes</i> , one book	
<i>Against the Doctrines of Gorgias</i> , one book	
<i>Against the Doctrines of Zeno</i> , one book	
<i>On the Pythagoreans</i> , one book	
<i>On Animals</i> , nine books	
<i>Dissections</i> , eight books	
<i>A Selection of Dissections</i> , one book	
<i>On Composite Animals</i> , one book	
<i>On Mythological Animals</i> , one book	
<i>On Sterility</i> , one book	
<i>On Plants</i> , two books	
<i>On Physiognomy</i> , one book	
<i>On Medicine</i> , two books	
<i>On the Unit</i> , one book	
<i>Warning Signs of Storms</i> , one book	
<i>On Astronomy</i> , one book	26
<i>On Optics</i> , one book	
<i>On Motion</i> , one book	
<i>On Music</i> , one book	
<i>On Memory</i> , one book	
<i>Homeric Problems</i> , six books	
<i>Poetics</i> , one book	
<i>On Natural Philosophy</i> , arranged alphabetically, thirty-eight books	
<i>Examined Problems</i> , two books	
<i>General Education</i> , two books	
<i>Mechanics</i> , one book	
<i>Problems Taken from the Works of Democritus</i> , two books	
<i>On the Magnet</i> , one book	
<i>Analogies</i> , one book	
<i>Miscellaneous Notes</i> , twelve books	

- Descriptions of Genera*, fourteen books  
*Justifications*, one book  
*Victors at the Olympic Games*, one book  
*Victors at the Pythian Games in Music*, one book  
*On Delphi*, one book  
*Critique of the List of Pythian Victors*, one book  
*Victories at the Dionysia*, one book  
*On Tragedies*, one book  
*Catalogues of the Dramas*, one book  
*Proverbs*, one book  
*Rules for a Common Mess*, one book  
*Law*, four books  
*Categories*, one book  
*On Interpretation*, one book  
27 *Constitutions of 158 Cities, Classed by Type: Democratic, Oligarchic, Aristocratic, and Tyrannical*  
*Letters to Philip about the Selymbrians*  
*Letters to Alexander*, four books  
*To Antipater*, nine books  
*To Mentor*, one book  
*To Ariston*, one book  
*To Olympias*,<sup>58</sup> one book  
*To Hephaestion*,<sup>59</sup> one book  
*To Themistagoras*, one book  
*To Philoxenus*, one book  
*To Democritus*,<sup>60</sup> one book  
An epic poem beginning, “Holy Far-Darter, most revered of gods . . .”<sup>61</sup>  
An elegiac poem beginning, “Daughter of a mother with beautiful children . . .”

In all, 445,270 lines.<sup>62</sup>

- 28 These are his written works. In them he advanced the following views.<sup>63</sup>  
Philosophy has two divisions, the practical and the theoretical. The practi-

58 Wife of Philip II of Macedon and mother of Alexander the Great.

59 One of Alexander the Great's closest comrades.

60 Not the philosopher discussed at 9.34-49, but a contemporary of Aristotle.

61 “Far-Darter” was one of the standard epithets of the god Apollo.

62 Diogenes also gives line counts elsewhere: see, e.g., Theophrastus (5.50) and Strato (5.60). A comparison of the line totals with the number of works listed by Diogenes in each corpus yields some improbable results (for example, the works of Strato would have to be, on average, twice as long as those of Theophrastus). Modern scholars therefore consider these figures unreliable.

63 The account of Aristotle's views given by Diogenes does not correspond closely to the Aristotelian corpus and is probably derived from a third source influenced by Stoicism.

cal part includes ethics and politics, and in the latter the doctrines that concern both the state and the household are sketched. The theoretical branch includes physics and logic, though logic is not treated as an independent branch of study but as an instrument, and is made the object of a detailed analysis. And on the assumption that it has two aims, he elucidated the nature of the probable and of the true. For each of these aims he employed two faculties: dialectic and rhetoric when probability is the aim, analytics and philosophy when truth is the aim; nor does he neglect anything that fosters discovery, judgment, or utility. To aid discovery, he left in the *Topics* and *Methodics* a great many propositions whereby the student may be well supplied with probable dialectical arguments for the solution of problems. As an aid to judgment, he left the *Prior* and *Posterior Analytics*. (By the *Prior Analytics* the premises are judged, by the *Posterior* the deduction is tested.) For utility there are the treatises on polemics, interrogation, eristics,<sup>64</sup> sophistical refutations, syllogisms, and the like. The criterion of truth in the realm of imaginative activities he declared to be sensation; but in the moral realm, which is concerned with the city, the household, and the laws, he made reason the criterion.

He held that the one end is the exercise of virtue in a completed life.<sup>65</sup> Happiness, he maintained, is made up of three sorts of goods: goods of the soul, which he indeed calls the foremost in importance; secondly, goods of the body: health, strength, beauty, and the like; and thirdly, external goods: wealth, noble birth, reputation, and the like.<sup>66</sup> He held that virtue, by itself, is not sufficient to ensure happiness; bodily and external goods are also necessary, since the wise man will be wretched if he lives in pain, poverty, and the like.<sup>67</sup> Yet vice, by itself, *is* sufficient to ensure unhappiness, even if abundant bodily and external goods accompany it. He said that the virtues are not mutually dependent. For a man might be prudent, or similarly, just, and at the same time undisciplined and without self-command. He said that the wise man was not free of passions, but indulged them in moderation.

He defined friendship as an equality of mutual goodwill, which by definition encompasses the friendship of kinsmen, that of lovers, and that of host and guest.<sup>68</sup> He held that love is aimed not solely at intercourse, but also at

64 Eristics is a branch of rhetoric concerned with the skill of formulating arguments so as to defeat an opponent in debate.

65 *Nicomachean Ethics* 1098a16–18.

66 *Ibid.*, 1098b12–16.

67 *Ibid.*, 1099a31–b7, 1100a7–9, and 1153b19–21.

68 On the division of kinds of friendship, see *Rhetoric* 1381b34 and *Nicomachean Ethics* 1161b11–16.

philosophy; that the wise man would fall in love and take part in public life; and that he would marry and reside at the court of a king. Of the three ways of life—the contemplative, the practical, and the pleasure-loving—he preferred the contemplative.<sup>69</sup> He held that the studies that constitute a general education are of service for the attainment of virtue.

32 In the sphere of natural philosophy he surpassed all other philosophers in investigating causes, with the result that he elucidated those of the least important phenomena. This is why he compiled a considerable number of notebooks on topics in natural philosophy. He held, as did Plato, that god is incorporeal; that his providence extends to the heavenly bodies, that he is unmoved,<sup>70</sup> and that terrestrial affairs are regulated in accordance with their affinity with those bodies. In addition to the four elements there is a fifth, from which the heavenly bodies are constituted. Its motion is different from that of the other elements, being circular.

33 He held that the soul is incorporeal, and defined it as the first entelechy of a natural and organic body potentially possessing life.<sup>71</sup> By “entelechy” he means that which has an incorporeal form. This, according to him, is twofold. It is either potential, like that of Hermes in the wax (when the wax is prepared to receive the molds) or in the bronze;<sup>72</sup> or it is dispositional, as in the case of the completed Hermes or the finished statue. Then, “of a natural body,” because bodies may be wrought either by hand, like the work of craftsmen (a tower, for example, or a vessel), or by nature, like plants and the bodies of animals. By “organic,” he meant constructed to serve some purpose, as sight is developed for seeing and the ear for hearing. By “potentially possessing life,” he means “possessing life within itself.”

34 “Potentially” is used in two senses; in one it refers to a disposition, in the other to its activity. In the latter sense, he who is awake is said to possess a soul; in the former, it is the sleeper who possesses one. It was therefore in order to encompass the sleeper that Aristotle added the word “potentially.”<sup>73</sup>

He set forth many other views on an array of subjects it would take too long to enumerate. Generally speaking, he was exceptionally inventive and

69 For this division of three ways of life, see *Nicomachean Ethics* 1095b17. Aristotle gives his defense of the contemplative life later in this work at 1177a12–79a32.

70 A key claim in Aristotle’s theology: see *Metaphysics* 1072a25.

71 See Aristotle’s definition of soul at *De Anima* 412a27–28. The idea that an ensouled body must be “organic”—i.e., differentiated into distinct organs—is introduced at *De Anima* 412a28–b6. The Greek word *entelecheia* literally means “having its end.” In saying that the soul is the first entelechy of the body, Aristotle means that a body has a soul when it has fully come to be a body of a specific type, e.g., a fully formed human body.

72 That is, a statue of Hermes about to be made from wax or bronze.

73 See *De Anima* 412a22–27.



“Prodigality and Liberality” and “Avarice and Covetousness” from Aristotle’s *Ethics*, translated by Nicole Oresme with gloss, c. 1397.

industrious, as is clear from the list of his written works given above, which number nearly four hundred, excluding those not considered genuine. For many other written works and incisive sayings are attributed to him.

There have been eight men named Aristotle: the first was our present subject; the second the Athenian statesman to whom charming forensic speeches are attributed; the third an expounder of the *Iliad*; the fourth a Sicilian orator who wrote a reply to the Panegyric of Isocrates;<sup>74</sup> the fifth, who was nicknamed Myth, a student of Aeschines the Socratic; the sixth a native of Cyrene who wrote on the art of poetry; the seventh a gymnastics trainer mentioned by Aristoxenus<sup>75</sup> in his *Life of Plato*; and the eighth an obscure grammarian, to whom a handbook on redundancy is attributed.

The philosopher of Stagira had many students. The most distinguished was Theophrastus, of whom we must speak next.

<sup>74</sup> An influential Athenian orator and teacher of rhetoric (436–338 BC).

<sup>75</sup> Aristoxenus (fl. c. 350–322 BC) was a philosopher and musical theorist. Of his works, only an incomplete treatise on music has survived.

## THEOPHRASTUS

36 Theophrastus was a native of Eresus,<sup>76</sup> the son of a fuller, Melantes, as Athenodorus says in the eighth book of his *Discourses*. He studied first in his native town with his countryman Alcippus, and then attended the lectures of Plato, whom he left for Aristotle. When the latter retired to Chalcis, he himself took over as head of the school in the 114th Olympiad.<sup>77</sup> He had a slave named Pompylus who became a philosopher, according to Myronianus of Amastris in the first book of his *Historical Parallels*.

Theophrastus was a man of exceptional intelligence and industry; and according to Pamphila in the thirty-second book of her *Commentaries*, he was the teacher of Menander the comic poet.<sup>78</sup> He was also eager to be of service and fond of discussion. Cassander,<sup>79</sup> at any rate, granted him audiences, and Ptolemy<sup>80</sup> wrote letters to him. The Athenians held him in such high regard that Hagnonides, having had the temerity to prosecute him on a charge of impiety, barely escaped incurring a penalty.<sup>81</sup> Roughly two thousand students used to attend his lectures. In a letter to Phantias the Peripatetic,<sup>82</sup> among other topics, he speaks as follows about his lecture hall: “To get an audience or even a select body of the sort one desires is not easy. Lectures read aloud must be revised. Always to adjourn and ignore criticism will no longer be tolerated by this generation.”<sup>83</sup> It was in this letter that he called someone a “pedant.”

38 Despite his high renown, he nevertheless went abroad for a brief period with all the other philosophers when Sophocles,<sup>84</sup> son of Amphiclidides, proposed a law that no philosopher should be the head of a school without the approval of the Council and the Assembly, under penalty of death.<sup>85</sup> But he

76 A city in western Lesbos.

77 This Olympiad began in 324 BC. Aristotle departed for Chalcis in 323 and died there the following year.

78 The Athenian playwright Menander, who died in 292/91 BC, was among the most popular of Greek dramatists. His work survives only in fragments and in Roman adaptations by Plautus and Terence.

79 Cassander (d. 297 BC), son of Antipater, ruled Macedonia starting in 317 BC.

80 Ptolemy I Soter (c. 367–282 BC) was a Macedonian general under Alexander the Great. Following the death of Alexander in 323, he became ruler of Egypt.

81 Hagnonides was an Athenian demagogue. Under rules of legal procedure, a citizen bringing charges against another was liable to a fine if he did not secure at least one fifth of the jurors' votes.

82 Phantias of Eresus (fl. 320 BC) was a disciple of Aristotle.

83 These cryptic remarks may be connected to the fact (mentioned at 5.39) that after Aristotle's death Theophrastus acquired a private garden, which he presumably used for teaching. The public spaces that he had previously been lecturing in may have exposed him to the critiques of unsympathetic auditors.

84 Not the tragic poet but a later Athenian politician.

85 These events were apparently triggered when Demetrius of Phalerum, the Peripatetic



*The Thinker and The Spirit*, by Auguste Rodin, 1899/1900.

returned the following year, when Philo<sup>86</sup> had prosecuted Sophocles for proposing an unconstitutional measure. At that point the Athenians repealed the law, fined Sophocles five talents, and voted the recall of the philosophers, in order that Theophrastus might return and live there as before.

Though he had been named Tyrtaemus, Aristotle renamed him Theophrastus because of the divine sweetness (*thespesion*) of his style (*phrasis*). And Aristippus,<sup>87</sup> in the fourth book of his work *On the Luxuriousness of the Ancients*, says that Theophrastus was infatuated with Aristotle's son Nicomachus, though he was his teacher. It is said that Aristotle made the same remark about Theophrastus and Callisthenes that Plato is said to have made (as mentioned earlier)<sup>88</sup>

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philosopher and pro-Macedonian ruler of Athens (see 5.75–85), was driven from power in 307 BC by Demetrius I Poliorcetes, king of Macedonia.

86 This particular Philo is otherwise unknown; a different Philo is cited at 9.67.

87 Not the hedonist philosopher Aristippus of Cyrene, whose life is discussed at 2.65–104, but a later author who assumed that name, presumably to give his work greater credibility. (This writer is also referred to as Pseudo-Aristippus.)

88 See 4.6.

about Xenocrates and Aristotle: because Theophrastus interpreted all his meaning with exaggerated cleverness, whereas the other was naturally sluggish, Aristotle said that the one needed a bridle, the other a goad. It is said that he became the owner of a private garden after Aristotle's death, with the assistance of his friend Demetrius of Phalerum.

40 The following pithy sayings are attributed to him: "One should sooner trust an unbridled horse," he said, "than a poorly organized discourse." To someone who remained perfectly silent at a drinking party he said, "If you are a fool, you act wisely; if educated, you act like a fool."<sup>89</sup> He was constantly saying that our most costly item of expenditure is time.

He died at the age of eighty-five, not long after he had suspended his labors. My own verses about him run as follows:

No vain word, this, when spoken to a fellow mortal:  
 "Slacken the bow of wisdom and it breaks."  
 For truly Theophrastus, while he toiled, was sound of body,  
 But when released from toils his strength failed and he died.

41 They say that when asked by his students if he had any parting words for them, he said, "Just this, that many of the pleasures life boasts are illusory. For just as we begin to live, we die. Hence nothing is more unprofitable than love of glory. But fare you well. Either abandon my doctrine—for it demands great effort—or champion it honorably and you will win great glory. Life's vanity exceeds its utility. But since it is no longer possible for me to reflect upon what we should do, proceed with your inquiry into how we should conduct ourselves." With these words, they say, he breathed his last. And it is said that all the Athenians, out of respect for the man, escorted his bier on foot. Favorinus says that in old age Theophrastus used to be carried about in a litter, and he cites Hermippus as the authority for his account, Hermippus having gleaned it from a remark of Arcesilaus of Pitane to Lacydes of Cyrene.<sup>90</sup>

42 Theophrastus too has left an extraordinary number of books; I thought it right to list them, since they abound in every kind of excellence. They are as follows:

*Prior Analytics*, three books  
*Posterior Analytics*, seven books  
*On the Analysis of Syllogisms*, one book

89 The Greek term *symposion*, rendered here as "drinking party," referred to an event that, at least among philosophers, combined consumption of wine with high-minded conversation.

90 Arcesilaus (316/15–242/41 BC) was a pupil of Theophrastus before he became the head of the Academy. Diogenes discusses Arcesilaus and Lacydes at 4.28–45 and 4.59–61, respectively.

<i>Epitome of Analytics</i> , one book	
<i>Classified Topics</i> , two books	
<i>A Polemical Discussion</i> <or> <i>On the Theory of Eristic Argument</i> <. . .>	
<i>On the Senses</i> , one book	
<i>Against Anaxagoras</i> , one book	
<i>On the Doctrines of Anaxagoras</i> , one book	
<i>On the Doctrines of Anaximenes</i> , one book	
<i>On the Doctrines of Archelaus</i> , one book	
<i>On Salt, Niter, and Alum</i> , one book	
<i>On Petrified Objects</i> , two books	
<i>On Indivisible Lines</i> , one book	
<i>Lectures</i> , two books	
<i>On Winds</i> , one book	
<i>Species of Virtues</i> , one book	
<i>On Monarchy</i> , one book	
<i>On the Education of a King</i> , one book	
<i>On Ways of Life</i> , three books	
<i>On Old Age</i> , one book	
<i>On the Astronomy of Democritus</i> , one book	43
<On> <i>Meteorology</i> , one book	
<i>On Likenesses or Emanations</i> , one book	
<i>On Flavors, Colors, and Flesh</i> , one book	
<i>On the Orderly Arrangement of the Universe</i> , one book	
<i>On Mankind</i> , one book	
<i>Anthology of the Writings of Diogenes</i> , one book	
<i>Definitions</i> , three books	
<i>On Love</i> , one book	
Another treatise on love, one book	
<i>On Happiness</i> , one book	
<i>On Forms</i> , two books	
<i>On Epilepsy</i> , one book	
<i>On Frenzy</i> , one book	
<i>On Empedocles</i> , one book	
<i>Dialectical Arguments</i> , eighteen books	
<i>Objections</i> , three books	
<i>On the Voluntary</i> , one book	
<i>Epitome of Plato's "Republic,"</i> two books	
<i>On the Diversity of Voices among Animals of the Same Species</i> , one book	
<i>On Animals That Appear in Herds</i> , one book	
<i>On Animals That Bite or Gore</i> , one book	
<i>On Animals Reputed to Be Malicious</i> , one book	
<i>On Animals That Live on Dry Land</i> , one book	
<i>On Animals That Change Color</i> , one book	44
<i>On Animals That Hibernate</i> , one book	

- On Animals*, seven books  
*On Pleasure According to Aristotle*, one book  
 Another treatise on pleasure, one book  
*Theses*, twenty-four books  
*On Hot and Cold*, one book  
*On Dizziness and Vertigo*, one book  
*On Sweating*, one book  
*On Affirmation and Negation*, one book  
*Callisthenes* or *On Mourning*, one book  
*On Fatigues*, one book  
*On Motion*, three books  
*On Stones*, one book  
*On Pestilences*, one book  
*On Fainting*, one book  
*Megarian Treatise*, one book  
*On Melancholy*, one book  
*On Mines*, two books  
*On Honey*, one book  
*Anthology of the Doctrines of Metrodorus*, one book  
*Meteorology*, two books  
*On Drunkenness*, one book  
*Laws*, in alphabetical order, twenty-four books  
*Epitome of Laws*, ten books  
*Remarks on Definitions*, one book  
 45 *On Smells*, one book  
*On Wine and Oil* < . . >  
*First Propositions*, eighteen books  
 <*On Political Questions*> of *Legislators*, three books  
*On Politics*, six books  
*Political Themes Dealing with Circumstances*, four books  
*On Political Customs*, four books  
*On the Best Constitution*, one book  
*A Collection of Problems*, five books  
*On Proverbs*, one book  
*On Freezing and Melting*, one book  
*On Fire*, two books  
*On Winds*, one book  
*On Paralysis*, one book  
*On Suffocation*, one book  
*On Mental Derangement*, one book  
*On Emotions*, one book  
*On Symptoms*, one book  
*Sophisms*, two books  
*On Solving Syllogisms*, one book



Theophrastus teaching students about a silver tree, a species from the Cape of Good Hope.  
From *Tonneel van Nederlands Lusthooven*, 1718.

*Topics*, two books  
*On Retribution*, two books  
*On Hair*, one book  
*On Tyranny*, one book  
*On Water*, three books  
*On Sleep and Dreams*, one book  
*On Friendship*, three books  
*On Ambition*, two books

- 46 *On Nature*, three books  
*On Natural Philosophy*, eighteen books  
*Epitome of Natural Philosophy*, two books  
*Natural Philosophy*, eight books  
*Against the Natural Philosophers*, one book  
*On Botanical Researches*, ten books  
*On Botanical Causes*, eight books  
*On Juices*, five books  
*On False Pleasure*, one book  
*Theses on the Soul*, one book  
*On Unsystematic Proofs*, one book < . . . >  
*On Simple Problems*, one book  
*Harmonics*, one book  
*On Virtue*, one book  
*Materials for Arguments or Contradictions*, one book  
*On Negation*, one book  
*On Judgment*, one book  
*On the Absurd*, one book  
*Afternoon Essays*, two books  
*Divisions*, two books  
*On Differences*, one book  
*On <Crimes>*, one book  
*On Slander*,<sup>91</sup> one book  
*On Praise*, one book  
*On Experience*, one book  
*Letters*, three books  
*On Animals Generated Spontaneously*, one book  
*On Secretion*, one book  
47 *Eulogies of the Gods*, one book  
*On Festivals*, one book  
*On Good Fortune*, one book  
*On Enthymemes*, one book  
*On Discoveries*, two books  
*Lectures on Ethics*, one book  
*Ethical Characters*, one book  
*On Tumult*, one book  
*On Inquiry*, one book  
*On Judging of Syllogisms*, one book  
*On the Sea*, one book  
*On Flattery*, one book

91 This title occurs twice more in the list of Theophrastus' works (in chapters 49 and 50, below); possibly Diogenes repeated it unwittingly. The same is true for *Ethical Characters*, a title listed in chapters 47 and 48.

<i>To Cassander, on Monarchy</i> , one book	
<i>On Comedy</i> , one book	
<i>On Celestial Bodies</i> , one book	
<i>On Style</i> , one book	
<i>A Collection of Arguments</i> , one book	
<i>Solutions</i> , one book	
<i>On Music</i> , three books	
<i>On Measures</i> , one book	
<i>Megacles</i> , one book	
<i>On Laws</i> , one book	
<i>On Illegalities</i> , one book	
<i>Anthology of the Doctrines of Xenocrates</i> , one book	
<i>The Affable Man</i> , one book	
<i>On Taking an Oath</i> , one book	
<i>Rhetorical Precepts</i> , one book	
<i>On Wealth</i> , one book	
<i>On the Art of Poetry</i> , one book	
<i>Problems in Politics, Natural Philosophy, Love, and Ethics</i> , one book	
<i>Prefaces</i> , one book	48
<i>A Collection of Problems</i> , one book	
<i>On Problems in Natural Philosophy</i> , one book	
<i>On Example</i> , one book	
<i>On Introduction and Narrative</i> , one book	
Another work on the art of poetry, one book	
<i>On the Wise</i> , one book	
<i>On Consultation</i> , one book	
<i>On Solecisms</i> , one book	
<i>On the Art of Rhetoric</i> , one book	
<i>On the Rhetorical Arts: {Sixty-One Forms}</i>	
<i>On Acting</i> , one book	
<i>Lecture Notes of Aristotle or Theophrastus</i> , six books	
<i>Opinions on Natural Philosophy</i> , sixteen books	
<i>Epitome of Opinions on Natural Philosophy</i> , one book	
<i>On Gratitude</i> , one book	
<i>Ethical Characters</i> , one book	
<i>On Falsehood and Truth</i> , one book	
<i>The History of Theological Doctrines</i> , six books	
<i>On the Gods</i> , three books	
<i>Geometrical Researches</i> , four books	
<i>Epitomes of Aristotle's Writings on Animals</i> , six books	49
<i>Dialectical Arguments</i> , two books	
<i>Theses</i> , three books	
<i>On Monarchy</i> , two books	
<i>On Causes</i> , one book	

- On Democritus*, one book  
*On Slander*, one book  
*On Becoming*, one book  
*On the Intelligence and Character of Animals*, one book  
*On Motion*, two books  
*On Vision*, four books  
*Remarks on Definitions*, two books  
*On What Has Been Admitted*, one book  
*On Greater and Less*, one book  
*On the Musicians*, one book  
*On the Happiness of the Gods, Against Those of the Academy*, one book  
*Exhortation*, one book  
*How Cities Could Best Be Governed*, one book  
*Lecture Notes*, one book  
*On the Eruption in Sicily*, one book  
*On Points Admitted*, one book  
*On Problems in Natural Philosophy*, one book  
*What Are the Methods of Attaining Knowledge*, one book  
*On the Liar*, three books  
*Prefaces to the Topics*, one book  
*Against Aeschylus*, one book  
50 *Astronomical Research*, six books  
*Arithmetical Researches on Growth*, one book  
*Acicharus*, one book  
*On Forensic Speeches*, one book  
*On Slander*, one book  
*Correspondence with Astycreon, Phantias, and Nicanor*  
*On Piety*, one book  
*Evias*, one book  
*On Occasions*, two books  
*On Relevant Arguments*, one book  
*On the Education of Children*, one book  
Another treatise with the same title, one book  
*On Education or On Virtues or On Temperance*, one book  
*Exhortation*, one book  
*On Numbers*, one book  
*Definitions Concerning the Diction of Syllogisms*, one book  
*On the Heavens*, one book  
*On Politics*, two books  
*On Nature*  
*On Fruits*  
*On Animals*

In all 232,808 lines. So much for his writings.



*Theophrastus' Garden*, by Terry Winters, 1982.

I have found his will, which is worded as follows:

51

All will be well; but if anything should happen, I make the following dispositions. All my property at home I give to Melantes and Pancreon, the sons of Leon. From the funds entrusted to Hipparchus I desire the following distributions to be made: First, the restoration of the *museion*<sup>92</sup> and the statues of the goddesses should be completed, and the latter embellished in any way that seems practicable. Next, the likeness of Aristotle should be placed in the

<sup>92</sup> The Greek word *museion*, the source of the English word “museum,” literally means “temple of the Muses.” The *museion* in the Lyceum probably combined elements of a library and a religious shrine. Plato also had a *museion* in his Academy.

52 temple along with all the other dedicatory offerings that were there previously. Then, the small stoa<sup>93</sup> adjoining the *museion* should be rebuilt at least as handsomely as before, and the tablets containing the maps of the world replaced in the lower stoa; then, the altar should be repaired so that it may be perfect and elegant. I also wish the statue of Nicomachus<sup>94</sup> to be completed at life size. The fee for the sculpting of the statue itself has already been paid to Praxiteles,<sup>95</sup> but let any additional expenses be defrayed from the same source. Let the statue be set up in whatever place seems best to the executors entrusted with carrying out the rest of the will's provisions. Let all that concerns the temple and the offerings be arranged in this way.

53 The estate in Stagira belonging to me I give to Callinus. All my books I give to Neleus.<sup>96</sup> The garden and walkway and all the houses adjoining the garden I give to any of the friends listed below who wish to philosophize there together—since it is not possible for all men to be always at home—on condition that no one alienate the property or appropriate it for private use; instead, let them hold it as if it were a temple they possess in common, living together on terms of familiarity and friendship, as is proper and right.<sup>97</sup> Let the community include Hipparchus, Neleus, Strato,<sup>98</sup> Callinus, Demotimus, Demaratus, Callisthenes,<sup>99</sup> Melantes, Pancreon, and Nicippus. Aristotle,<sup>100</sup> son of Metrodorus and Pythias, should also be permitted to associate with them and share their pursuits if he wishes to philosophize. And the oldest of them should devote all their attention to him, in order that he may acquire the utmost proficiency in philosophy.

54 Let them bury me at whatever spot in the garden seems most suitable, without superfluous expenditure on my funeral or on my monument. And in order that, after my death, the maintenance of the temple and the monument and the garden and the walkway continue without interruption, let Pompylus<sup>101</sup> share the responsibility with them, living nearby as he does,

93 A stoa is a covered colonnade or porch, often used as a place for conversation or teaching in ancient Athens.

94 This is likely Aristotle's son, of whom Theophrastus was especially fond.

95 Not the famous sculptor Praxiteles, who was active in Athens c. 375–330 BC, but presumably a descendant of his.

96 Neleus of Scepsis was a follower of both Aristotle and Theophrastus.

97 Theophrastus, unlike his predecessor Aristotle, was able to make dispositions in his will for ownership of the properties constituting his philosophic school, since he was an Athenian citizen and able to own land (Aristotle was a Stagirite). Henceforth, to judge by the wills Diogenes records, scholars of the Lyceum designated their successors by passing on the grounds and buildings that made up the school.

98 Strato (d. c. 270 BC) succeeded Theophrastus as the head of the Peripatetic school. His life and views are discussed at 5.58–64.

99 A disciple of Theophrastus, perhaps a kinsman of the Callisthenes who accompanied Alexander the Great into Asia.

100 The Aristotle named here is the grandson of the philosopher by his daughter, Pythias (see Aristotle's will, 5.11–16). Metrodorus, a physician, seems to have been Pythias's third husband.

101 One of Theophrastus' former slaves, who became a philosopher in his own right (see 5.36).

and attending to all other matters as before; and let those who hold the property take thought for his welfare.

As for Pompylus and Threpta, who have long been granted their freedom and have done me much service, whatever they have already received from me and whatever they have earned themselves, as well as the sum I have now decided to have made over to them by Hipparchus, namely two thousand drachmas, I think should certainly belong to them, as I have frequently mentioned to Melantes and Pancreon, who agreed with me. I also give them the maid Somatale.

Of my slaves I immediately grant Molon, Cimon, and Parmeno their freedom; as for Manes and Callias, I free them on condition that they remain four years in the garden and work there together and that their conduct be blameless. As for my household furniture, let my executors give as much to Pompylus as they think he should have, and sell the rest. I give Carion to Demotimus, and Donax to Neleus. But Euboeus should be sold.

55

Let Hipparchus give Callinus three thousand drachmas. And if I had not seen Hipparchus do good service to Melantes and Pancreon and formerly {to me}, and now in his private affairs suffer shipwreck, I would have appointed him with Melantes and Pancreon to manage these matters. But since I saw that it was not easy for them to share the management with him, and I assumed it to be more advantageous for them to receive a fixed sum from Hipparchus, let Hipparchus pay Melantes and Pancreon one talent each; and let Hipparchus give the executors funds with which to defray the expenses set down in the will, when each distribution falls due. And when Hipparchus has carried out these instructions, let all his debts to me be canceled. Any advance he has made in my name in Chalcis belongs to him alone.

56

Let Hipparchus, Neleus, Strato, Callinus, Demotimus, Callisthenes, and Ctesarchus be executors of the instructions set down in this will. One copy of the will, sealed with the signet ring of Theophrastus, has been deposited with Hegesias, son of Hipparchus, the witnesses being Callipus of Pallene, Philomelus of Euonymaea, Lysander of Hyba, and Philo of Alopece. Olympiodorus has another copy, the witnesses being the same. Adeimantus received another copy, and his son Androsthenes was the bearer; the witnesses are Arimnestus, son of Cleobulus, Lysistratus of Thasos, son of Pheido, Strato of Lampsacus, son of Arcesilaus, Thesippus of Cerameis, son of Thesippus, and Dioscurides of Epicephisia, son of Dionysius.

57

This was his will.

It is said that Erasistratus<sup>102</sup> the doctor was also a student of his; and this is likely.

102 Erasistratus of Ceos was a celebrated physician and the author of a number of books on anatomy and practical medicine, now lost.

## STRATO

58 Theophrastus was succeeded as head of the school by Strato, son of Arcesilaus, a native of Lampsacus, whom he mentioned in his will. A highly distinguished man, Strato was generally known as “the natural philosopher” because he devoted himself more than anyone else to the study of nature. He also taught Ptolemy Philadelphus,<sup>103</sup> and is said to have received eighty talents from him. He became head of the school, as Apollodorus says in his *Chronology*, in the 123rd Olympiad,<sup>104</sup> and presided over it for eighteen years.

His extant books include:

- On Monarchy*, three books  
*On Justice*, three books  
*On the Good*, three books  
*On the Gods*, three books  
*On First Principles*, three books  
 59 *On Ways of Life*  
*On Happiness*  
*On the Philosopher-King*  
*On Courage*  
*On the Void*  
*On the Heavens*  
*On the Wind*  
*On Human Nature*  
*On the Breeding of Animals*  
*On Mixture*  
*On Sleep*  
*On Dreams*  
*On Vision*  
*On Sensation*  
*On Pleasure*  
*On Colors*  
*On Diseases*  
*On Crises*<sup>105</sup>  
*On Faculties*  
*On Mechanics*  
*On Starvation and Dizziness*  
*On the Light and the Heavy*  
*On Frenzy*

103 Ptolemy II Philadelphus (308–246 BC) was the second ruler in Egypt’s Ptolemaic dynasty.

104 This Olympiad began in 288 BC.

105 Probably a medical work concerned with decisive moments in the treatment of disease.



Limestone votive ear, fourth or third century BC, Cypriot.

*On Time*  
*On Nurture and Growth*  
*On the Animals Whose Existence Is Doubtful*  
*On the Mythological Animals*  
*On Causes*  
*Solutions of Difficulties*  
*Introduction to Topics*  
*On Accident*  
*On Definition*  
*On the Greater and Less*  
*On Injustice*  
*On the Prior and Posterior*  
*On the First Genus*

60

*On the Characteristic Property*

*On the Future*

*Examinations of Discoveries*, two books

Lecture notes, the genuineness of which is in doubt

Letters, beginning: “*Strato to Arsinoe*,<sup>106</sup> *greetings*.”

332,420 <lines>.

They say he had grown so thin that he was unconscious when he died.  
My own verses about him run as follows:

A man spare in body < . . .>,  
I assure you, was this Strato,  
To whom Lampsacus gave birth; forever wrestling with diseases,  
He died without anyone knowing it, even himself.

61 There have been eight men named Strato: the first was a student of Isocrates; the second our present subject; the third a doctor, a student of Erasistratus<sup>107</sup> and, as some say, his foster child; the fourth a historian who wrote about the struggles of Philip and Perseus against the Romans;<sup>108</sup> < . . .>; the sixth a writer of epigrams; the seventh a doctor in ancient times, as Aristotle says; and the eighth a Peripatetic who lived in Alexandria.

The will of the natural philosopher runs as follows:

I make the following dispositions, if anything should happen. All the goods in my house I leave to Lampyrion and Arcesilaus.<sup>109</sup> From my funds in Athens, first let my executors provide for my funeral and for all that custom requires after the funeral, avoiding anything extravagant or miserly. Let the executors of my will be Olympichus, Aristides, Mnesigenes, Hippocrates, Epicrates, Gorgylus, Diocles, Lyco, and Athanes. I leave the school to Lyco,<sup>110</sup> since of the rest some are too old, others too busy. But the others would do well to assist him. I leave him all my books, except those I wrote myself, and all the furniture in the dining hall, as well as the cushions and the drinking-cups.

62

Let the executors give Epicrates five hundred drachmas and a slave, whichever one Arcesilaus thinks best. First, let Lampyrion and Arcesilaus cancel the agreement that Daippus made on behalf of Heraeus. Let him

63

106 Possibly the wife of Strato's former student Ptolemy II Philadelphus.

107 Presumably the physician and former student of Theophrastus mentioned at 5.57.

108 That is, the Second Macedonian War (200–197 BC), in which Rome supported various Greek states against the encroachments of Philip V of Macedon and his son Perseus. The Macedonian forces were defeated, and Philip was confined to Macedon.

109 Probably a different person than either Arcesilaus of Pitane, discussed at 4.28–45, or Strato's father.

110 Lyco's life and views are discussed at 5.65–74.

owe nothing either to Lampyrion or to any of Lampyrion's heirs, but let him be released from the entire agreement. Let the executors also give him five hundred drachmas and a slave, whichever one Arcesilaus thinks best, so that after toiling diligently with me and giving good service he may have the means to support an adequate and respectable way of life.

I grant Diophantus, Diocles, and Abus their freedom; I give Simias to Arcesilaus. I also free Dromo. And whenever Arcesilaus arrives, let Heraeus, with Olympichus, Epicrates, and the other executors, provide him with an accounting of the expenses associated with the funeral and the other customary charges. Let Arcesilaus take over from Olympichus any remaining money, without worrying him as to times and occasions. Let Arcesilaus cancel the agreement that Strato made with Olympichus and Ameinias, which was deposited with Philocrates, son of Tisamenes. As for my monument, let them fashion it as Arcesilaus, Olympichus, and Lyco think best.

64

Such are the terms of the will that is found in the collection of Ariston of Ceos.<sup>111</sup> Strato himself, as the above account makes clear, was a man worthy of great esteem, having distinguished himself in every branch of knowledge, and especially in that which is referred to as physics,<sup>112</sup> which is the most ancient branch and the one that demands the greatest diligence.

## LYCO

Strato's successor was Lyco, son of Astyanax of Troas, an eloquent man who attained high rank in the education of boys. He used to say that one must impose upon boys the yoke of shame and love of glory, as upon horses the spur and bridle. His exceptional powers of expression and interpretation are evident in what follows. He has this to say about a poor young girl: "A heavy burden for a father is a girl who, for lack of a dowry, outruns the bloom of her age." This is why Antigonus<sup>113</sup> is reported to have said about him that it was not possible to transfer elsewhere, like the fragrance and beauty of the apple, each separate expression of which he was the author, but that it was in the speaker himself, like the apple on the tree, that it had to be contemplated; he added that Lyco's conversation was extraordinarily sweet—which

65

66

111 A Peripatetic philosopher who probably succeeded Lyco as head of the Lyceum (c. 225 BC).

112 In the ancient world, the term "physics" meant something much broader than it does today. The word derived from the Greek *phusis* (nature) and was used to describe the study of nearly any natural process.

113 Probably not the Macedonian king of this name but Antigonus of Carystus, also cited by Diogenes at 5.67.

is why some persons prefixed a gamma to his name<sup>114</sup>—but that in writing he did not resemble himself. For example, those who regretted that they had not learned when they had the opportunity and wished they had done so he neatly characterized as follows, saying that “they were their own accusers, revealing, by vain regret, repentance of their incorrigible laziness.” Those who did <not> deliberate soundly he used to say were off in their calculations as if they had used a curved rule to test something straight, or sought the reflection of a face in troubled water or a distorting mirror. Or, “Many seek the crown in the public square, but very few, or none, the crown at Olympia.”<sup>115</sup>

67 Advising the Athenians often and on many subjects, he conferred the greatest benefits on them.

In his attire he was perfectly immaculate, so that the softness of his garments was beyond compare, according to Hermippus. But he was also highly adept at gymnastics and kept in good condition, displaying all an athlete’s physical characteristics, with a boxer’s cauliflower ears and skin smeared with dirt, as Antigonus of Carystus reports. Hence it is said that he wrestled, and that he even played ball at the Trojan Games in his native land. He was prized beyond anyone by Eumenes and Attalus,<sup>116</sup> who furnished him with assistance. Antiochus<sup>117</sup> too tried to get hold of him, but did not succeed. And he was so hostile to Hieronymus the Peripatetic that he alone declined to meet him at the birthday celebration we spoke of in the life of Arcesilaus.<sup>118</sup>

68

He led the school for forty-four years after Strato bequeathed it to him in his will in the 127th Olympiad.<sup>119</sup> Yet he also attended the lectures of Panthoides<sup>120</sup> the dialectician. He died at the age of seventy-four, afflicted by gout. My own verses about him run as follows:

Nay, I will not even neglect Lyco, who died of gout.  
 But this I find most amazing: that though  
 Formerly he could walk only with the feet of others,  
 He traversed the long road to Hades in a single night.

114 Adding the Greek letter gamma to Lyco’s name would render it “glyco,” a pun on *glukus*, an adjective meaning “sweet.”

115 To “seek the crown in the public square” is to pursue glory through a political career. The “crown at Olympia” refers to the wreaths awarded for athletic victories; Lyco was a lover of sport (see next chapter).

116 Eumenes and Attalus I, two successive members of the Attalid dynasty, ruled Pergamon through much of the third century BC. Both men cultivated an enlightened image by maintaining philosophers and artists at their courts.

117 Antiochus I (324–261 BC), called Soter (*Savior*), was a king of Syria.

118 See 4.41.

119 This Olympiad began in 272 BC.

120 Otherwise unknown.



Two views of the statue of an athlete, third or second century BC, Greek.

There have been others named Lyco: the first was a Pythagorean, the second  
our present subject; the third an epic poet; and the fourth a writer of epigrams. 69  
I also came across the philosopher's will, which runs as follows:

I make the following dispositions about my property, in case I am unable to  
bear my present ailment. All the goods in my house I give to my brothers  
Astyanax and Lyco,<sup>121</sup> and I think that from this source they should satisfy  
whatever obligations I have incurred in Athens, whether by borrowing {or  
purchasing}, and defray the cost of my funeral and the other customary  
charges. But my property in town and in Aegina I give to Lyco because he 70  
bears my name and has lived with me for a long period to my complete satis-  
faction, as befitted one whom I treated as my son.

I leave the Peripatos<sup>122</sup> to those of my friends who wish to use it: to Bulo, Cal-  
linus, Ariston, Amphion, Lyco, Pytho, Aristomachus, Heracleus, Lycomedes,  
and my nephew Lyco. Let them appoint as its head whoever they believe will

121 It is odd to find a "brother" of Lyco also named Lyco, but at 5.70 this "brother" Lyco is described as a nephew who had lived in Lyco's household, where he was treated like a son. There is also a third Lyco listed at 5.70.

122 The term (literally, a "walkway") is used here to mean the grounds of the Lyceum and therefore the school itself.

be most able to remain in charge of the enterprise and ensure its unity. Let the rest of my friends assist him for my sake and for the sake of the place.

71 Let Bulo and Callinus, with their colleagues, provide for my funeral and cremation, avoiding parsimony or extravagance. From my olive trees in Aegina, let Lyco, after my death, supply the young men with the oil—a suitable memorial, for as long as they use it, of myself and the man who did me honor. And let him set up my statue, selecting a convenient site for it with the cooperation of Diophantus and Heraclides, son of Demetrius. From my property in town let Lyco repay everyone from whom I borrowed anything after his departure. Let Bulo and Callinus provide the sums spent on my funeral and other customary charges. Let them obtain these sums from the funds in the house left by me to  
72 both of them in common. Let them also compensate the doctors, Pasithemis and Medias, who for their skill and the care they took of me deserve an even greater reward. I give to Callinus' child a pair of Thericlean cups,<sup>123</sup> and to his wife a pair of Rhodian vessels, a smooth carpet, a rug with pile on both sides, a counterpane, and two cushions, the best that I leave behind, so that to the extent I can recompense them I may not appear unmindful of their kindness.

With regard to the servants, I part with them as follows. To Demetrius, who has long been free, I remit the purchase money for his freedom and leave him five minas and a tunic and cloak, in return for all the toil he has undertaken with me, so that he may enjoy a respectable maintenance. To Crito of Chalcedon I also remit the purchase money and leave him four minas. I grant Micrus his freedom; let Lyco support and educate him for the next six years. I also free Chares; let Lyco support him as well, and give him two minas and my published writings. My unpublished writings I give to Callinus, that he may edit them carefully. To Syrus, who has been freed, I give four minas and Menodora, and I cancel any debt he owes me. To Hilara I give five minas, a rug with pile on both sides, two cushions, a counterpane, and a couch, whichever one she prefers. I also free Micrus' mother, and Noemon, Dion, Theon, Euphranor, and Hermias. Let Agathon be set free after two years, and the litter bearers  
74 Ophelio and Posidonius after four years. To Demetrius and to Crito and to Syrus I give a couch apiece and any bedclothes of those that I leave behind that Lyco thinks they should have. Let these things be given to them for having properly performed their appointed tasks. As for my funeral, let Lyco bury me here, if he wishes, or let him do so at home. For I am persuaded that his regard for propriety does not fall short of my own. When he has managed all these things, let his disposal of my property there be binding. Witnesses are Callinus of Hermione, Ariston of Ceos, and Euphronius of Paeania.

Thus while his sagacity is evident in all his actions, in his teaching, and in all his discourses, his will is in some sense no less marked by his thoroughness and shrewd management, so that on this score too he is to be emulated.

123 Thericles was a Corinthian potter who achieved celebrity throughout Greece.

## DEMETRIUS

Demetrius, son of Phanostratus, was a native of Phalerum.<sup>124</sup> He became 75  
 a student of Theophrastus. By the speeches he addressed to the Athenians he  
 led the city for ten years,<sup>125</sup> and was judged worthy of bronze statues, 360 in  
 number, most of which represented him on horseback or driving a chariot  
 or a pair of horses. These were completed in fewer than three hundred days,  
 so highly was he esteemed. According to Demetrius of Magnesia in *Men of*  
*the Same Name*, he embarked on his public career when Harpalus, fleeing  
 Alexander, arrived in Athens.<sup>126</sup> As a statesman he rendered his country many  
 honorable services, enriching the city with revenues and buildings, though 76  
 he was not well-born. For he belonged to Conon's household,<sup>127</sup> as Favorinus  
 says in the first books of his *Reminiscences*, but lived with Lamia, his beloved,  
 who was a well-born citizen,<sup>128</sup> as the same author says in his first book. But  
 in his second he reports that Demetrius was also Cleon's<sup>129</sup> beloved. And  
 Didymus, in *Table Talk*, says that a certain courtesan nicknamed him Chari-  
 toblepharos ("With Eyes like the Graces") and Lampeto ("Bright-Eyes"). It  
 is said that after losing his sight in Alexandria he recovered it by the gift of  
 Sarapis,<sup>130</sup> after which he composed the paeans that are sung to this day.

Despite his high renown among the Athenians, all-devouring jealousy cast 77  
 a shadow over him. Plotted against by certain persons and prosecuted, he was  
 condemned to death in absentia. And when his accusers could not get hold of  
 his person, they disgorged their venom on the bronze, tearing down his statues,  
 some of which were sold, some cast into the sea, and others, reportedly, cut up  
 to make chamber pots. Only one is preserved on the Acropolis. Favorinus, in  
 his *Miscellaneous History*, says that the Athenians did this at the command of

124 Phalerum (also, Phaleron) was the harbor of Athens until the early fifth century, when the Piraeus replaced it.

125 Demetrius governed Athens from 317 to 307 BC, with armed support from Cassander, the Macedonian king.

126 Harpalus, a Macedonian officer and the overseer of Babylon under Alexander the Great, embezzled a large sum of money and fled to Athens in 324 BC. Athenian leaders argued as to what should be done, and Demetrius evidently played some part in this debate.

127 Conon was an Athenian general who led forces in the Peloponnesian War, and evidently a man of modest means.

128 Lamia is elsewhere known as a flute player and courtesan, not a "well-born citizen." Diogenes may have confused Demetrius of Phalerum with Demetrius I, the king mentioned at 5.77, who was involved with Lamia for many years.

129 It is uncertain which Cleon is meant. The famous politician by this name lived well before Demetrius' time.

130 An Egyptian deity, later introduced into Greece, combining aspects of the Egyptian gods Osiris and Apis.



Gold statuette of Zeus Serapis, Roman, second century AD.

King Demetrius.<sup>131</sup> And they styled the year he served as archon<sup>132</sup> as “the year of lawlessness,” according to Favorinus.

78 Hermippus says that after the death of Cassander, in fear of Antigonus, Demetrius fled to Ptolemy Soter.<sup>133</sup> Spending a considerable time there he ad-

131 This Demetrius, the Macedonian king known by the epithet Poliorcetes, seized control of Athens from Demetrius of Phalerum in 307 BC.

132 309–308 BC (archon years began and ended in summer).

133 Demetrius indeed fled to Egypt, to the court of Ptolemy I Soter, in 297 BC, after the death of King Cassander; but Antigonus I was already dead by that time, and his grandson Antigonus II Gonatas was not yet old enough to be a threat. In any case, Demetrius was clearly seeking to find a haven with the enemy of his enemy, since Ptolemy was engaged in a fierce struggle with Demetrius I Poliorcetes, the man who had deposed him.

vised Ptolemy, among other things, to confer sovereign power on his children by Eurydice.<sup>134</sup> Ptolemy was not persuaded; instead he bestowed the diadem on his son by Berenice, who, after Ptolemy's death, thought fit to keep Demetrius under guard in the country until some decision could be made about him. He lived there in great despondency, and died in a sort of sleep after being bitten on the hand by an asp. He is buried in Busiris near Diospolis.<sup>135</sup>

My own verses about him run as follows:

79

An unclean asp, full of gummy venom,  
Killed wise Demetrius,  
Darting, from its eyes,  
Not light, but black Hades.

Heraclides, in his epitome of Sotion's *Successions*, says that Ptolemy intended to step down and transfer the kingship to Philadelphus,<sup>136</sup> but Demetrius dissuaded him, saying "If you give it to another, you will not have it yourself." At the time when Demetrius was being accused in Athens, Menander the comic poet,<sup>137</sup> as I have also learned, barely escaped indictment for no other reason than that he was a friend of Demetrius. But Telephus, the cousin of Demetrius, interceded for him.

In the quantity of his books and the total number of lines written, he surpassed nearly all his contemporary Peripatetics. For his learning and experience are unequalled. Some of his works are historical, some political; some deal with poetry, some with rhetoric. There are also speeches given in the assembly and on embassies, as well as collections of Aesop's fables and many other works. His books include:

80

*On Legislation at Athens*, five books  
*On the Constitutions of Athens*, two books  
*On Leadership of the People*, two books  
*On Politics*, two books  
*On Laws*, one book  
*On Rhetoric*, two books  
*Treatise on Strategy*, two books  
*On the "Iliad,"* two books  
*On the "Odyssey,"* four books

81

134 Ptolemy had married both Eurydice, daughter of the legendary statesman Antipater, and Berenice, Antipater's niece. He also had a Persian wife named Artakama.

135 Busiris was a city in lower Egypt; Diospolis was another name for Thebes.

136 Ptolemy I's son by Berenice; he would indeed succeed his father, in 285.

137 The comic playwright Menander was born in 342 BC, about eight years after Demetrius; both men studied under Theophrastus.

*Ptolemy*, one book  
*On Love*, one book  
*Phaedonidas*, one book  
*Maedon*, one book  
*Cleon*, one book  
*Socrates*, one book  
*Artaxerxes*, one book  
*On Homer*, one book  
*Aristides*, one book  
*Aristomachus*, one book  
*Hortatory*, one book  
*In Defense of the Constitution*, one book  
*On My Decade*, one book  
*On the Ionians*, one book  
*On Diplomacy*, one book  
*On Belief*, one book  
*On Gratitude*, one book  
*On Fortune*, one book  
*On Magnanimity*, one book  
*On Marriage*, one book  
*On Opinion*, one book  
*On Peace*, one book  
*On Laws*, one book  
*On Customs*, one book  
*On Opportunity*, one book  
*Dionysius*, one book  
*On Chalcis*, one book  
*An Attack on the Athenians*, one book  
*On Antiphanes*, one book  
*Historical Introduction*, one book  
*Letters*, one book  
*An Assembly Bound by Oath*, one book  
*On Old Age*, one book  
*Rights*, one book  
*Aesop's Fables*, one book  
*Maxims*, one book

82 His style is philosophical, combining rhetorical vigor and force. When he heard that the Athenians had destroyed his statues, he said: “But not the virtue that caused them to be erected.” He used to say that though the eyebrows are only a small part of the face, they have the power to darken the whole of life. He said that not only was wealth blind, but also luck, its guide. Everything that iron achieves in war is achieved in politics by speech. Noticing a young spend-thrift, he said, “Behold a four-square Hermes—with robe, belly, genitals, and

beard!”<sup>138</sup> When men are arrogant, he said we should take away their stature, but leave them their spirit. He said that at home the young should honor their parents, when out of doors everyone they meet, and in solitude themselves. In prosperity friends do not depart unless bidden, whereas in adversity they do so of their own accord. All these sayings seem to be attributed to him. 83

There have been twenty noteworthy men named Demetrius: the first was an orator from Chalcedon, older than Thrasymachus; the second our present subject; the third a Peripatetic from Byzantium; the fourth, known as Graphicus, a lucid narrator (he was also a painter);<sup>139</sup> the fifth a native of Aspendus,<sup>140</sup> a student of Apollonius of Soli; the sixth a native of Callatis who wrote a work about Asia and Europe in twenty books; the seventh a native of Byzantium, who wrote a history of the migration of the Gauls from Europe to Asia in thirteen books, and another work, in eight books, about Antiochus and Ptolemy and their administration of Libya; the eighth the sophist who lived at Alexandria, an author of handbooks on rhetoric; the ninth a grammarian from Adramyttium, nicknamed Ixion<sup>141</sup> because he was thought to be unjust with regard to Hera; the tenth a grammarian from Cyrene, nicknamed Wine-Jar, a distinguished man; the eleventh a native of Scepsis, a wealthy, well-born man, deeply devoted to learning and literature; he also advanced the career of his countryman Metrodorus; the twelfth a grammarian from Erythrae, enrolled as a citizen of Temnos; the thirteenth a Bithynian, the son of Diphilus the Stoic and a student of Panaetius of Rhodes;<sup>142</sup> and the fourteenth an orator from Smyrna. So much for the prose authors. Of the poets who shared his name, the first was a poet of the Old Comedy; the second an epic poet whose only surviving lines are addressed to the envious: 84

Scorned when alive, he’s missed when he’s gone;  
And for the sake of his tomb and lifeless image  
Strife seizes cities, and the people are at war;

the third a native of Tarsus, a writer of satires; the fourth a writer of iambic verse, a bitter man; the fifth a sculptor mentioned by Polemon; and the sixth a native of Erythrae, a versatile author, who also wrote historical and rhetorical works. 85

138 An allusion to the square stone pillars with a carved bust of Hermes at the top, called herms. Genitals and beard were standard features of these monuments; the belly and robe are added here to make a “four-square” figure (the word *tetragōnos* normally referred to the placement of herms at four-way street intersections).

139 The Greek word that forms this man’s nickname, *graphikos*, means “painter.”

140 A city in southwest Asia Minor.

141 The original Ixion was the mythical king of the Lapiths, who attempted to rape the goddess Hera. For this he was punished by being bound for eternity to a revolving wheel.

142 A Stoic philosopher (c. 180–109 BC).

## HERACLIDES

86 Heraclides, son of Euthyphro, born at Heraclea in Pontus,<sup>143</sup> was a man of wealth. At Athens he studied first with Speusippus<sup>144</sup> but also attended the lectures of the Pythagoreans and admired the doctrines of Plato; he later became a student of Aristotle, as Sotion says in his *Successions*. He wore elegant clothes and was enormously fat, and consequently the Athenians called him not Ponticus, but Pompicus.<sup>145</sup> His gait was gentle and dignified. The best and most beautiful writings are attributed to him. His ethical {dialogues} include:

- On Justice*, three books
- On Temperance*, one book
- On Piety*, five books
- On Courage*, one book
- 87 Combined in one volume: *On Virtue*, one book and another work
- On Happiness*, one book
- On Power*, one book
- Laws*, one book and subjects related to laws
- On Names*, one book
- Agreements*, one book
- On the Involuntary*, one book
- On Love*
- Clinias*, one book
- On Nature*
- On Mind*
- On Soul*
- Separately, another *On Soul*
- On Nature*
- On Images*
- Against Democritus*
- On Celestial Bodies*, one book
- On Those in Hades*
- On Ways of Life*, two books
- The Causes of Diseases*, one book
- On the Good*, one book
- Against the Doctrines of Zeno*, one book
- Against the Doctrines of Metron*, one book

143 Pontus was the largely Hellenized region along the south shore of the Black Sea.

144 Head of the Academy after Plato. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 4.1–5.

145 The Greek word *pompikos* can be used to mean “pompous” or “showy.” Heraclides was normally referred to as Ponticus (“from Pontus”) to distinguish him from several other literary figures with the same name.

## Works on Grammar and Literary Criticism:

*On the Age of Homer and Hesiod*, two books*On Archilochus and Homer*, two books

## Works on the Arts:

*On Passages in Euripides and Sophocles* < . . . >, three books*On Music*, two books*Solutions of Homeric Problems*, two books*On Contemplation*, one book*On the Three Tragic Poets*, one book*Characters*, one book*On Poetry and Poets*, one book*On Intuition*, one book*On Prognostication*, one book*Expositions of Heraclitus*, four books*Expositions Against Democritus*, one book*Solutions of Eristic Problems*, two books*Logical Proposition*, one book*On Species*, one book*Solutions*, one book*Advice*, one book*Against Dionysius*, one book

88

## A Work on Rhetoric:

*On Public Speaking* or *Protagoras*

## Works on History:

*On the Pythagoreans* and*On Discoveries*

Some of these works are in the comic style—for example, *On Pleasure* and *On Temperance*; others in the tragic style—for example, *On Those in Hades*, *On Piety*, and *On Authenticity*.

He also has a style between poetry and prose that he uses when philosophers, generals, and statesmen converse with one another. He also wrote works on geometry and dialectic, and is everywhere versatile and noble in style, and remarkably adept at charming the reader.

It seems that he liberated his native city from tyranny by assassinating its monarch,<sup>146</sup> as Demetrius of Magnesia says in his *Men of the Same Name*.

89

146 Diogenes and his source, Demetrius of Magnesia, may here have confused this Heraclides with a different man of the same era, Heraclides of Aenus, who (as we know from other sources) overthrew a Thracian king named Cotys. There is no other evidence that Heraclides of Pontus performed such a deed.

Demetrius also tells the following story about him: “From boyhood, and when he grew up, he kept a pet snake. And when he was about to die he ordered one of his trusted servants to conceal his corpse and place the snake on his bier, so that he might appear to have departed to the gods. All of this was done. And while the citizens were escorting Heraclides’ bier and singing the man’s praises, the snake, hearing the uproar, popped up out of the shroud, creating mass confusion. Later, however, all was revealed, and Heraclides was seen not as he appeared, but as he really was.”

My verses about him run as follows:

You wished to leave all men with the rumor, Heraclides,  
 That at your death you resumed life as a snake.  
 But you were deceived, sophist. For the snake was indeed a beast,  
 But *you* were detected as a beast, not a sage.

This story is also told by Hippobotus.

Hermippus reports that when a famine ravaged their territory, the people of Heraclea asked the Pythian priestess<sup>147</sup> for relief. But Heraclides bribed the envoys sent to the shrine and the above-mentioned priestess to reply that they would be freed from the scourge if Heraclides, son of Euthyphro, were crowned with a golden crown in his lifetime and received a hero’s honors after his death. The pretended oracle was brought home, but its forgers reaped no benefit from it. For as soon as Heraclides was crowned in the theater he suffered a stroke, and the sacred envoys were stoned to death. And the Pythian priestess too, descending at that very hour to the shrine, stepped on one of the snakes,<sup>148</sup> was bitten, and instantly breathed her last. These are the tales told about his death.

Aristoxenus the musician says that Heraclides also wrote tragedies and titled them works by Thespis. Chamaeleon claims that Heraclides’ work on Hesiod and Homer was plagiarized from his own. And Antidorus the Epicurean censures him in a polemic against his work *On Justice*. And Dionysius the Turncoat<sup>149</sup> (or Spintharus, according to some), when he wrote the *Parthenopaeus*, entitled it a play by Sophocles; and Heraclides, who suspected nothing, cited passages from it in one of his own treatises, in the belief that it was by Sophocles. When Dionysius noticed this, he confessed what had happened; but when Heraclides refused to believe him, Dionysius wrote to him, advising him to ex-

147 The priestess of the oracle of Delphi.

148 The oracle at Delphi was thought to have been guarded in mythic times by Pytho, an enormous serpent, and apparently snakes were kept somewhere in the shrine.

149 After being afflicted with a disease of the eyes, the Stoic philosopher Dionysius of Heraclea (c. 328–248 BC) joined the hedonist Cyrenaics, earning himself the epithet “Turncoat.” Diogenes discusses his life and views at 7.166–67.

amine the acrostic; and it contained “Pancalus”; this was the name of Dionysius’ beloved. When Heraclides remained unconvinced and said that such a thing might have happened by chance, Dionysius wrote to him again: “You will also find these lines:

- A. An old monkey is not caught in a trap.
- B. He’s caught all right; it just takes time.

as well as:

Heraclides is ignorant of literature.”

And Heraclides was ashamed.

There have been fourteen men named Heraclides: the first was our present subject; the second a fellow citizen of his, an author of collections of war dances and fooleries; the third a native of Cyme, who wrote about Persia in five books; the fourth another native of Cyme, who wrote manuals on rhetoric; the fifth a native of Callatis or Alexandria, who wrote the *Successions* in six books and a work entitled *Lembeuticus*, for which he was nicknamed Lembus; the sixth a native of Alexandria, who wrote *On the Unique Features of Persia*; the seventh a dialectician from Bargylis, who wrote against Epicurus; the eighth a doctor of the school of Hicesias; the ninth a native of Tarentum, a doctor of the empiric school; the tenth a poet who wrote exhortations; the eleventh a sculptor from Phocaea; the twelfth a pleasant writer of epigrams; the thirteenth a native of Magnesia, who wrote about Mithridates;<sup>150</sup> and the fourteenth the compiler of an astronomy.

94

150 There were a number of ancient kings and aristocrats named Mithridates; it is unclear which is referred to here.



# BOOK 6

ANTISTHENES

C. 445–C. 365 BC

DIOGENES

C. 412/03–C. 324/21 BC

MONIMUS

LATE 4TH AND EARLY 3RD CENT. BC

ONESICRITUS

FL. 325 BC

CRATES

C. 368/65–288/85 BC

METROCLES

LATE 4TH CENT. BC

HIPPARCHIA

LATE 4TH CENT. BC

MENIPPUS

EARLY 3RD CENT. BC

MENEDEMUS

3RD CENT. BC

## ANTISTHENES

1 Antisthenes, son of Antisthenes, was an Athenian, though it was said he was not of legitimate birth.<sup>1</sup> Hence his reply to someone who reproached him for it: “The mother of the gods also is a Phrygian.”<sup>2</sup> For his mother was thought to have been from Thrace. And consequently when he had won renown at the Battle of Tanagra he gave Socrates occasion to declare that had both of Antisthenes’ parents been Athenians, he would not have turned out so brave.<sup>3</sup> Antisthenes also rebuked the Athenians who plumed themselves on being born from the soil, saying that that did not make them any more well-born than snails or locusts.<sup>4</sup>

2 At first Antisthenes was a pupil of Gorgias the orator,<sup>5</sup> which explains why he employed the rhetorical style in his dialogues, particularly in *Truth* and in his *Precepts*. Hermippus says that at a public gathering at the Isthmian games Antisthenes had been intending to both blame and praise the citizens of Athens, Thebes, and Sparta, but asked to be excused when he saw many people arriving from <those> cities.<sup>6</sup>

Later on, however, he became a follower of Socrates and derived so much benefit from him that he would advise his own disciples to become fellow disciples of Socrates. Living in the Piraeus, he used to walk five miles every day to listen to him. He adopted the man’s hardiness and emulated his impassivity, and thus he originated the Cynic way of life.<sup>7</sup> And with his *Great Heracles* and

1 The Greek word *ithagenēs* can mean “born out of wedlock,” though Diogenes seems to use it here to indicate noncitizen status. Athenian law at the time required that citizens be born from Athenian parents on both sides. Antisthenes was excluded from citizenship since his mother was foreign.

2 A reference to the Anatolian goddess Cybele, also known as the *Magna Mater*, or Great Mother. Her chief sanctuary was in Phrygia.

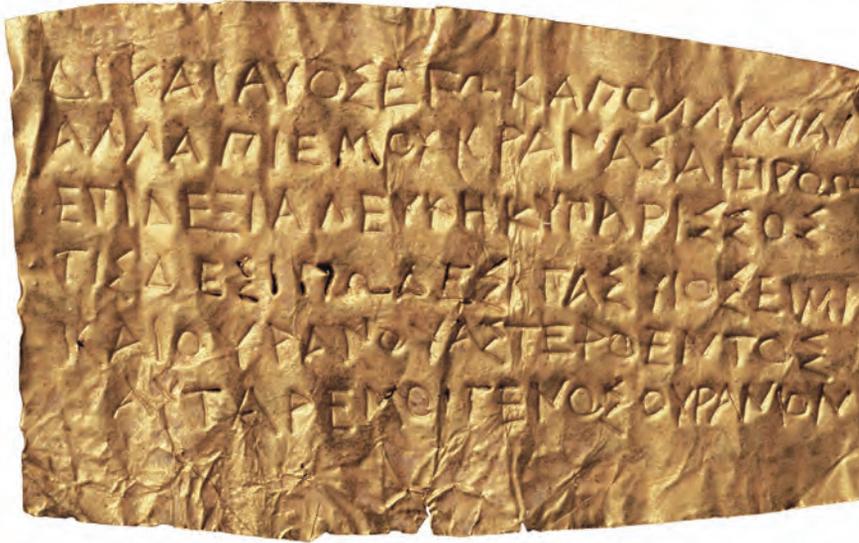
3 Thracians were known in Greece for their courage and ferocity, and Athens employed Thracian mercenaries in its armed forces. The battle referred to here is probably an engagement between Athenian and Spartan forces in the 420s BC.

4 The Athenians believed that their mythical ancestor, Erechthonius, had been born from the earth itself, a metaphor for their own legendary autochthony. Snails and locusts were similarly thought to be born out of the earth.

5 Gorgias of Leontini (c. 485–380 BC) was an influential Sophist and teacher of rhetoric at Athens. Some of his speeches survive in partial form.

6 The Isthmian games, held near Corinth, attracted spectators from all over the Greek world, like the more famous Olympic contests. The games included contests in oratory.

7 It is not clear that Antisthenes called himself a Cynic or was so called by others during his lifetime. Later Greeks regarded him as the founder of the Cynic school, largely because of his asceticism



Lamella Orphica, second half of fourth century BC. Flat rectangular gold sheet. The inscription reads: “I [masculine] am parched with thirst and am dying; but grant me to drink from the ever-flowing spring. On the right is a white cypress. ‘Who are you? Where are you from?’ I am a son of Earth and starry sky. But my race is heavenly” (Fritz Graf and Sarah Iles Johnston, *Ritual Texts for the Afterlife*).

*Cyrus* he established that suffering is a good thing, drawing one exemplar from the Greek world, the other from the barbarians.

He was the first to define “concept,” saying, “A concept is that which reveals what a thing was or is.” He often said, “I would rather go mad than feel pleasure” and “One should lie with such women as will be grateful for it.” When a young lad from Pontus<sup>8</sup> who was about to attend his lectures asked what he needed, Antisthenes replied, “A new book, a new pen, and a new tablet,” by which he implied that intelligence was needed.<sup>9</sup> When someone asked him what sort of woman he should marry, he answered, “If she’s beautiful, you’ll have to share her; if ugly, you’ll have to bear her.”<sup>10</sup> On hearing that Plato was speaking ill of him, he said, “It’s the fate of royalty to do good and be maligned.”

3

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and perhaps also because of the place where he taught, Cynosarges (see 6.13). Diogenes claims that Antisthenes should be considered the founder of the Stoic school as well (see 6.14–15 and 6.19).

8 A mountainous region of northern Asia Minor that included the southern coast of the Black Sea.

9 The Greek word for new is *kainou*, which sounds like the phrase *kai nou*, meaning “and a mind” or “and intelligence.” Diogenes also attributes this pun to Stilpo at 2.118.

10 Bion makes a similar remark at 4.48.

4 When he was being initiated into the Orphic mysteries,<sup>11</sup> and the priest said that the initiates would partake of many good things in Hades, Antisthenes said, “Then why don’t you die?” When reproached because both of his parents were not freeborn, he said, “Nor were they both wrestlers; yet *I* am a wrestler.” When asked why he had so few pupils, he said, “Because I drive them away with a silver staff.” Asked why he chastised his students so harshly, he said, “Doctors do the same with their patients.” Catching sight of an adulterer fleeing, he said, “Unlucky fellow, what danger you might have avoided at the cost of an obol!”<sup>12</sup> According to Hecaton in his *Anecdotes*, Antisthenes used to say that it was better to fall in with crows (*korakas*) than with flatterers (*kolakas*); for you are devoured by the former when dead, but by the latter while you are alive.

5 When asked what was man’s greatest blessing, he said, “To die happy.” When an acquaintance complained to him that he had lost his notes, Antisthenes replied, “You should have inscribed them on your mind instead of on paper.” Just as iron is eaten away by rust, so, he said, are envious men consumed by their own disposition. Those who wished to be immortal must, he maintained, live piously and justly. He said that cities are doomed when they cannot distinguish good men from bad. Once when he was being praised by rogues, he said, “I’m worried I’ve done something wrong.”

6 He said the comradeship of brothers who are of one mind is stronger than any fortress. He said the right traveling case is the one that will float with you if you are shipwrecked. Reproached one day for associating with worthless men, he said, “Doctors associate with patients without falling into a fever themselves.” He said it was odd that we separate out the darnel from the grain,<sup>13</sup> and in war the unfit, but in public life do not exempt worthless men from service. When asked what advantage he enjoyed from philosophy, he said, “To be able to live in company with oneself.” When someone at a drinking party said, “Sing!” he replied, “Accompany me on the flute!” When Diogenes<sup>14</sup> asked him for a coat, Antisthenes advised him to double his cloak.

7 When asked what knowledge is the most necessary, <he said, “How to rid oneself of the need to unlearn anything.”> He advised men who are maligned to bear it more stoutly than if they were pelted with stones.

11 The Orphic mysteries were loosely inspired by the mythical figure Orpheus, who was supposed to have left behind mystical writings revealing the secrets of the universe. Initiates were promised advantages in the afterlife.

12 Antisthenes implies that an obol could have been used to pay for a prostitute.

13 Darnel was nicknamed “false wheat” because of its close resemblance to the grain; as an inedible weed, it had to be separated from the true harvest.

14 Diogenes the Cynic (c. 412/03–c. 324/21 BC), whose life and views are discussed at 6.20–81.



Three views of a standing youth, Greek, mid-fifth century BC.

He used to jeer at Plato for being arrogant. One day, observing a high-tempered horse at a parade, he said to Plato, “It strikes me that *you* would have been a proud-blooded steed.” (This was because Plato was constantly praising horseflesh.) Visiting Plato one day and seeing a basin into which Plato had vomited, he said, “I see bile there, but no pride.”

He used to advise the Athenians to elect asses to be horses. When they considered this absurd, he said, “Yet some of your generals had no training; they had only to be elected.” To someone who said, “Many are praising you,” he replied, “Why, what have I done wrong?” When he turned the torn part of his cloak so that it was visible, Socrates caught sight of it and said, “I discern your love of glory through your cloak.” Phantias, in his work *On the Socratics*, says that when someone asked Antisthenes what he should do to be good and noble, he replied, “You should learn from the knowledgeable that the faults you possess can be avoided.” To someone praising luxury he said, “May your enemies’ children live in luxury.”

To a young man posing for a sculptor he said, “Tell me, if the bronze could speak, <what do you suppose> it would pride itself on?” When the lad replied, “On its beauty,” Antisthenes said, “Aren’t you ashamed to delight in the very same thing as an inanimate object?” When a young man from Pontus promised to treat him very well once his boat arrived with its cargo of salt fish, Antisthenes took the young man and an empty sack to a flour merchant, filled the sack, and was going away. When the woman asked to be paid, Antisthenes said, “The young man will pay when his cargo of salt fish arrives.”

8

9

10 He himself was thought to have been responsible for the banishment of Anytus and the execution of Meletus.<sup>15</sup> Lighting upon some young men from Pontus whom Socrates' fame had drawn to Athens, Antisthenes brought them to Anytus, remarking that the man was wiser in moral conduct than Socrates, whereupon those who were standing near Anytus grew so incensed that they drove him from the city. Whenever Antisthenes saw a woman decked out with ornaments, he would proceed to her house and order her husband to bring out his horse and weapons. If the man possessed them, Antisthenes would let the man's extravagance alone, since with these he could mount a defense. But if the man had none, Antisthenes urged him to get rid of the finery.

11 His favorite notions were the following. He used to prove that virtue could be taught and that only the virtuous are noble. He held that virtue is sufficient for happiness, since it needs nothing but the strength of a Socrates;<sup>16</sup> that virtue is a matter of deeds and requires no abundance of words or learning; that the wise man is self-sufficient, since all the things of others are his; that ill repute is a good thing and analogous to suffering; that the wise man will conduct himself in public life not by the established laws, but by the law of virtue; that he will marry (uniting himself to women of the best nature) for the sake of begetting children; and that he will experience passion, since only the wise man knows who deserves to be loved.

12 Diocles records some of his sayings: To the wise man nothing is foreign or inappropriate. The good man deserves to be loved. Good men are friends. Make allies of men who are both brave and just. Virtue is a weapon that cannot be taken away. It is better, with <a few good men>, to fight against all the wicked, than with a multitude of the wicked to fight against a few good men. Pay attention to your enemies; for they are the first to notice your mistakes. Cherish a just man more than a kinsman. The virtue of a man and that of a woman are the same. Good things are beautiful, bad things ugly. Regard everything base as foreign. Wisdom is the safest rampart, for it neither falls in ruins nor is betrayed. Defenses must be built upon our own incorruptible reasoning.

13 Antisthenes used to converse in the gymnasium of Cynosarges,<sup>17</sup> a short distance from the gates, and it is supposed by some that the Cynic school took its name from this gymnasium. Antisthenes himself was nicknamed Haplocy-

15 Two of the primary accusers at Socrates' trial. Here and at 2.43, Diogenes claims that Anytus was exiled and Meletus was executed, but Plutarch (*Moralia* 537f–538a) says that they were only socially ostracized.

16 Strength was much admired among the Cynics; they looked to the asceticism and hardihood of figures like Socrates and the mythic Heracles for inspiration.

17 Located outside the walls of Athens, within a sanctuary of Heracles. The name literally means "white dog."



Marble portrait head of Antisthenes.  
Roman copy of a Greek original of late third or second century BC.

on. And he was the first, as Diocles says, to double his cloak, to use only one garment, and to take up a staff and a knapsack. Neanthes too claims that Antisthenes was the first to make his mantle single.<sup>18</sup> Sosicrates, however, in his third book of *Successions*, says this was done by Diodorus of Aspendus,<sup>19</sup> who also let his beard grow and used a staff and a knapsack.

Antisthenes alone, among all the Socratics, elicits praise from Theopompus, who says that he was a clever man and could with his witty discourse subdue anyone at all. This is clear from his writings and from Xenophon's *Symposium*.<sup>20</sup> He seems to have originated the most manly branch of the Stoic school. Hence Athenaeus the epigrammatist writes about them thus:

14

You who are adepts in Stoic learning,  
And have committed to your tablets the finest doctrines,

18 There are many uncertainties about this passage. The garment Neanthes speaks of is a *himation*, a piece of outerwear normally worn over a tunic, so to wear this “single” must mean to forgo the tunic underneath. The same idea, confusingly, is represented by Diocles as a “doubling” of the *tribōn*, another piece of outerwear, folded double so as to make an inner garment unnecessary, or so as to also furnish a mat for sleeping on the ground, as at 6.22. (Some editors resolve this confusion by changing the word *haplōsai* in Neanthes’ statement to *diplosai*, such that both he and Diocles refer to “doubling” the outerwear.) Additional confusion results from the nickname Haplocyon applied to Antisthenes; it might connote the wearing of a single-fold cloak (with a soft tunic underneath), and is used that way by other authors, but here it seems to mean “wearing *only* a cloak.”

19 Pythagorean philosopher who lived in the fourth century BC.

20 Antisthenes appears as a speaker in Xenophon’s dialogue; his speech stresses the importance of spiritual rather than material wealth (*Symposium* 4.34–44).

Teaching the soul's virtue is the only good.  
 For it alone protects the lives and cities of men.  
 But pleasure of the flesh, an end adored by other men,  
 Only one of the daughters of Memory attains.<sup>21</sup>

- 15 Antisthenes provided the inspiration for Diogenes' impassivity, Crates' self-control, and Zeno's hardiness, he himself having laid the groundwork for the city.<sup>22</sup> Xenophon says he was the pleasantest of men to converse with and the most self-disciplined in everything else.

His writings are contained in ten volumes. The first includes:

*On Diction* or *On Styles*  
*Ajax* or *The Speech of Ajax*  
*Odysseus* or *On Odysseus*  
*A Defense of Orestes*  
*On the Forensic Writers*  
*Isography* <and> *Desias* or *Isocrates*<sup>23</sup>  
*A Reply to Isocrates' Speech "Without Witnesses"*

The second contains:

*On the Nature of Animals*  
*On Procreation* or *On Marriage: A Discourse on Passion*  
*On the Sophists: A Discourse on Physiognomy*  
 16 *On Justice and Courage: A Hortatory Work*, three books  
*On Theognis*, books four and five<sup>24</sup>

The third contains:

*On the Good*  
*On Courage*  
*On Law* or *On Government*  
*On Law* or *On Honor and Justice*  
*On Freedom and Slavery*  
*On Belief*  
*On the Guardian* or *On Obedience*  
*On Victory: A Treatise on Management*

21 A reference to Erato, muse of lyric and erotic poetry.

22 The Greek word used here, *polis* ("city"), is odd, and some editors emend it to *politeia* ("constitution" or "regime"). Diogenes of Sinope, Crates of Thebes, and Zeno of Citium (discussed at 6.20–81, 6.85–93, and 7.1–160, respectively) each composed a work entitled *Politeia*, in imitation of Plato (whose work of this title is better known to English readers as the *Republic*).

23 The text of this title is probably corrupt.

24 Possibly a continuation of the previous work.

The fourth contains:

*Cyrus*

*Heracles Major* or *On Strength*

The fifth contains:

*Cyrus* or *On Sovereignty*

*Aspasia*

The sixth contains:

*Truth*

*On Discussion: A Treatise on Debate*

*Sathon*

*On Contradiction*, three books

*On Argument*

The seventh contains:

*On Education* or *On Names*, five books

17

{*On Dying*

*On Life and Death*}

*On the Use of Names* or *A Treatise on Eristics*<sup>25</sup>

*On Questioning and Answering*

*On Opinion and Knowledge*, four books

*On Dying*

*On Life and Death*

*On What Happens in Hades*

*On Nature*, two books

*A Question about Nature*, two books

*Opinions* or *A Treatise on Eristics*

*Problems about Learning*

The eighth contains:

*On Music*

*On Commentators*

*On Homer*

*On Injustice and Impiety*

*On Calchas*

*On the Scout*

*On Pleasure*

The ninth contains:

*On Odysseus*

*On the Wand*

*Athena* or *Telemachus*

<sup>25</sup> Eristics was a branch of rhetoric concerned with formulating arguments so as to defeat an opponent in debate.

- 18 *On Helen and Penelope*  
*On Proteus*  
*Cyclops or On Odysseus*  
*On the Use of Wine or On Drunkenness or On the Cyclops*  
*On Circe*  
*On Amphiaraus*  
*On Odysseus and Penelope*  
*On the Dog*

The tenth contains:

- Heracles and Midas*  
*Heracles or On Wisdom and Strength*  
*The Master<sup>26</sup> or The Beloved*  
*The Master or The Scouts*  
*Menexenus or On Ruling*  
*Alcibiades*  
*Archelaus or On Sovereignty*

These are his written works.

- 19 Timon, disparaging Antisthenes for writing so much, calls him “a prolific babbler.” He was wasting away toward death at the very moment when Diogenes, who had come in, said, “Any need for a friend?”<sup>27</sup> On one visit Diogenes had brought a dagger. And when Antisthenes cried, “Who would free me from my pains?” Diogenes said, “This,” showing him the dagger. To which Antisthenes replied, “I said from my pains, not from my life.” He was thought to have borne his illness without fortitude, wanting so much to live. Here are my verses about him:

So much the natural dog in life, Antisthenes,  
 You lacerated the heart with words and not with teeth.  
 But you died of consumption. Perhaps one might say,  
 What of it? We must surely have a guide to Hades.

There have been three other men named Antisthenes: one was a follower of Heraclitus,<sup>28</sup> the second a native of Ephesus, and the third a historian from Rhodes.

Since we have reviewed the pupils of Aristippus and Phaedo, let us now proceed with an account of the Cynics and Stoics who derive from Antisthenes. And let us adopt the following order.

26 In this title and the next, the text of the first word is probably corrupt.

27 In light of the anecdote that follows, Diogenes' question might contain a sly hint at euthanasia.

28 A Pre-Socratic philosopher (fl. 500 BC). His life and views are discussed at 9.1–17.



Silver drachm, fourth century BC. *Left* (obverse): head of nymph. *Right* (reverse): eagle riding on the back of a dolphin, ΙΚΕΣΙΟ (magistrate's name) below wing, ΣΙΝ (Sinope) below dolphin.

## DIOGENES

Diogenes of Sinope was the son of Hicesias, a banker.

20

Diocles says that Diogenes went into exile when his father, who was in charge of the public treasury, restamped the coinage.<sup>29</sup> Eubulides,<sup>30</sup> however, in *On Diogenes* says that Diogenes did this himself and went into exile along with his father. But what is more to the point, Diogenes himself, in his *Portlandus*,<sup>31</sup> admits that he restamped the coinage. Some say that when he became a magistrate he was urged to do this by his clerks, and that he went to Delphi, or to the Delian oracle, in the homeland of Apollo,<sup>32</sup> and inquired whether he should do what he had been urged to do. But when the god permitted him to change the civic currency,<sup>33</sup> Diogenes, misunderstanding, adulterated

29 Each Greek city ran its own mint and issued its own currency, and Hicesias must have been in charge of this operation. The phrase “restamp the currency” (*paracharattein to nomisma*) bears a double meaning, explored by Diogenes in what follows. *Nomisma* can refer not just to coinage, but to social customs, and to “restamp” these can mean to violate custom or innovate in the social sphere. Presumably Hicesias “restamped” in the literal sense, perhaps by mistake.

30 Eubulides of Miletus (fl. fourth century BC) was a philosopher of the Megarian school and a pupil of Euclides of Megara. He is best known for his philosophical paradoxes.

31 The title of this work, presumably a dialogue, is typical of Diogenes’ bawdy humor: it derives from a word for flatulence.

32 The island of Delos in the Aegean was said to be the birthplace of the god Apollo; like Delphi, it was home to an oracle.

33 In the original, Apollo’s phrase *politikon nomisma* contains a further ambiguity, since *politikon* can mean “of a (single) city” or “of civic life (generally).”

the actual coinage. When caught he was banished, as some say, though others maintain that he took fright and voluntarily withdrew from the city.

21 Some say that when his father had entrusted him with the coinage Diogenes adulterated it, and that after his father died in prison he fled and went to Delphi to inquire not whether he should restamp the coinage, but what he should do to become surpassingly famous, and it was then that he received the oracle.

On reaching Athens he met Antisthenes.<sup>34</sup> And though he was rejected (since Antisthenes did not take pupils), Diogenes prevailed by sheer obstinacy. On one occasion, when Antisthenes menaced him with a staff, Diogenes offered his head and said, “Strike, for you’ll not find wood hard enough to keep me away from you, as long as I think you have something to say.” From then on he was Antisthenes’ disciple, and adopted, since he was an exile, a simple life.

22 From watching a mouse running about (as Theophrastus reports in his Megarian dialogue), not seeking a shelter or avoiding the dark or searching for any of the things that are generally thought desirable, Diogenes found a way to manage his plight. He was the first, according to some, to double his cloak, since he had to both wear and sleep in it; he carried a knapsack in which he kept his food; and he made use of every place for every purpose: breakfasting, sleeping, and conversing. He used to say, when pointing to the Stoa of Zeus and the Pompeion,<sup>35</sup> that the Athenians had provided him with places in which to live.

23 He took to leaning on a staff after he had grown feeble, and from then on carried it constantly (not in town, but on the road)—that and his knapsack, as we are told by Athenodorus the Athenian magistrate, Polyeuctus the orator, and Lysanias, son of Aeschrio. And when he had sent word to someone to provide him with a little house, and the man delayed, he took as his dwelling the tub<sup>36</sup> in the Metröon,<sup>37</sup> as he makes clear in his letters. In summer he would roll himself over hot sand, and in winter would embrace snow-covered statues, training himself to bear every sort of hardship.

24 He was also adept at heaping scorn on others. He called the school (*scholēn*) of Euclides<sup>38</sup> “bile” (*cholēn*), Plato’s discourse (*diatribēn*) a “waste

34 Diogenes Laertius discusses the life and views of Antisthenes (c. 445–c. 365 BC) at 6.1–19. Diogenes the Cynic was about fifty when Antisthenes died.

35 Two public buildings in Athens. The Stoa of Zeus was a colonnade at the northwest corner of the agora; the Pompeion, to judge by its name, was a place for the storage of professional gear.

36 A large, earthenware pot originally intended for wine. Thanks to Diogenes, it became a symbol of the Cynic lifestyle, which was known as *zoe pithou*, or “the life of the tub.”

37 A temple in Athens dedicated to the mother goddess; it was also used as an archive and a council hall.

38 Euclides of Megara (c. 450–380 BC), a follower of Socrates and founder of the Megarian School. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 2.106–12.



*Diogenes and Plato*, by Mattia Preti, 1649.

of time” (*katatribēn*), the contests at the Dionysia<sup>39</sup> “a spectacle for morons,” and the demagogues “lackeys of the mob.” He used to say that when he saw pilots, physicians, and philosophers at their work he regarded man as the wisest of all animals; but when he observed dream interpreters, prophets, and those who listen to them, or those who are puffed up with fame or wealth, he found no creature more foolish than man. He often remarked that to get through life one needed either reason (*logon*) or a noose (*brochon*).

One day, at a lavish banquet, he noticed Plato eating olives,<sup>40</sup> and said, “How is it that you, the philosopher who sailed to Sicily for the sake of these dishes, don’t enjoy them now, when they are set before you?”<sup>41</sup> And when Plato

25

39 A festival held yearly at Athens in honor of the god Dionysus, which included festal processions and performances of tragedy and comedy.

40 Because olives were abundant, they were considered fare for the poor. Diogenes the Cynic jokes about this at 6.50.

41 Plato traveled to Sicily on three occasions in the 360s BC, and lived for a time at the court of the wealthy tyrant Dionysius II (see 3.18–23). Some of his contemporaries believed that he had accepted handouts from Dionysius, as implied here in the quips about olives.

replied, “But, by the gods, Diogenes, even *there* I lived mainly on olives and things of that sort,” Diogenes said, “Then why did you have to sail to Syracuse? Or didn’t Attica produce olives then?” Favorinus, however, in his *Miscellaneous History*, attributes the remark to Aristippus.<sup>42</sup> And on another occasion, while eating dried figs, he ran into Plato and said, “Let me share them with you.” And when Plato had accepted and eaten them, Diogenes said, “I said you could share them, not eat them all.”

26 One day, when friends from the court of Dionysius had been invited to Plato’s house, Diogenes, while trampling on his carpets, said, “I trample on Plato’s pomposity,” to which Plato replied, “How much vanity you expose, Diogenes, by not appearing to be vain.” Others relate that Diogenes said, “I trample on Plato’s vanity,” to which Plato replied, “Yes, Diogenes, with another form of vanity.” (Sotion, however, in his fourth book, claims that Plato himself said to the Cynic, “You are acting the dog, Diogenes.”<sup>43</sup>) On one occasion Diogenes asked Plato for wine, and later for some dried figs. And when Plato sent him an entire jar, Diogenes said, “So if you are asked how much are two and two, do you answer, ‘Twenty’? It seems you neither give what is requested nor answer what is asked.” (This was his way of mocking Plato’s long-windedness.)

27 When asked where in Greece he saw good men, he said, “Good men nowhere, but good lads in Sparta.”<sup>44</sup> On one occasion, when he was speaking about serious matters and no one drew near, he started to babble; and when a number of people gathered round he reproached them for flocking eagerly to hear nonsense, but dawdling carelessly when the things being discussed were important. He used to say that people exerted themselves to outdo one another when exercising at the gymnasium<sup>45</sup> but made no effort when it came to strengthening character. And he marveled that the scholars investigated Odysseus’ failings but remained unaware of their own; that the musicians took the trouble to tune their lyres but left their souls in a discordant state; that the mathematicians gazed at the sun and moon but ignored what lay at their feet; that the orators exerted themselves to speak about justice but not to practice it; and that the avaricious, while railing about money, loved it to excess.

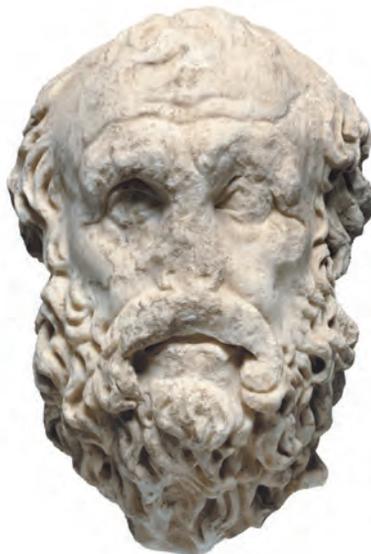
28

42 Aristippus of Cyrene was a follower of Socrates and founder of the Cyrenaic school of philosophy. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 2.65–104.

43 The term “Cynic” is derived from the Greek *kuōn*, “dog,” and Cynic sages were often called “dogs.”

44 The quip gives preference to Spartan militarism over Athenian sophistication, but also, like many of Diogenes’ remarks (see, e.g., 6.33), draws a contrast between the rarely encountered “men”—virtuous, autonomous beings—and lesser creatures such as slaves and children.

45 The Greek phrase here rendered as “exercising at the gymnasium” literally means “digging and kicking”: the digging of trenches was an element of athletic training and of gymnastic sporting contests in ancient Greece.



Two portraits of Diogenes, almost two thousand years apart.

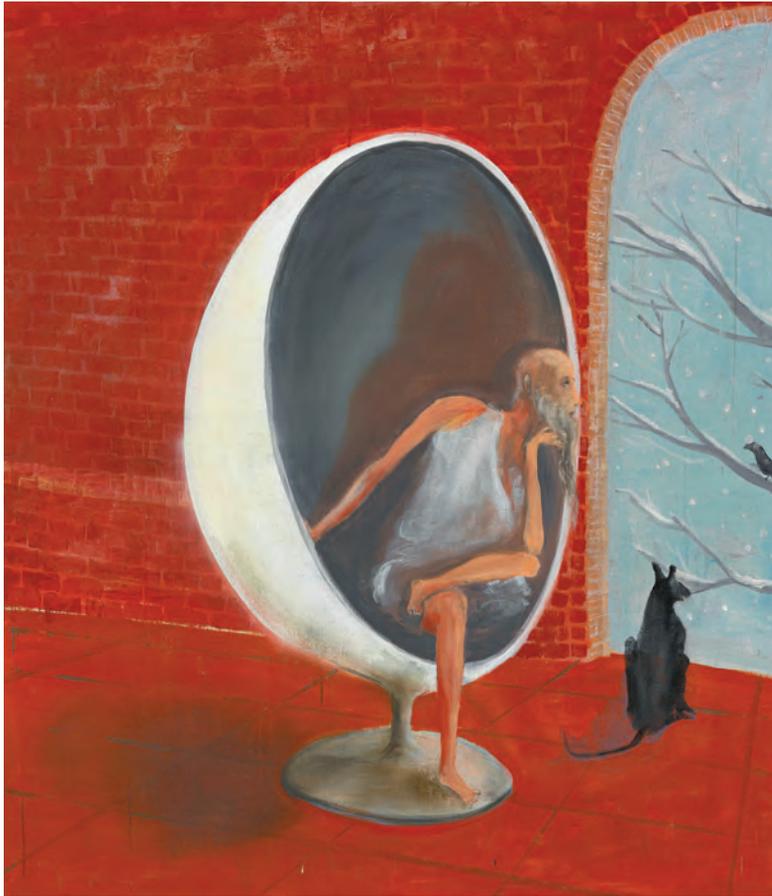
*Left:* A hanging scroll painting, with barrel visible behind the philosopher, by Shimomura Kanzan, 1903–1905. *Right:* Portrait head of Diogenes, Roman, late second century.

He also condemned those who, while praising just men for being unaffected by wealth, envied the rich. He found it vexing that people perform sacrifices for the sake of their health but at those very sacrifices feast in a manner injurious to health. He was amazed that slaves who observed their masters' gluttony did not filch any of their food.

He praised those who planned to marry and did not, those who proposed to sail and did not, those who were intending to pursue a political career and did not, those who planned to rear children and did not, and those who were preparing to consort with potentates and did not. He used to say that one ought to extend a hand to one's friends without clenching one's fingers. Menippus says in his *Sale of Diogenes* that when captured and put up for sale Diogenes was asked what he was good at. He replied, "Ruling over men," and said to the herald, "Spread the word in case anyone wants to buy himself a master." When forbidden to sit, he said, "It makes no difference; fish are bought no matter how they are arrayed." He said he marveled that when buying a pot or pan we test its soundness by seeing if it rings, but when a human being is for sale we consider only his or her appearance. He told Xeniadēs, his purchaser, that he must be obeyed, though he was a slave; for if a doctor or pilot were a slave he would be obeyed. Eubulus, in the work entitled *The Sale of Diogenes*, describes

29

30



*Diogenes*, by Norbert Schwontkowski, 2013. Oil on canvas, 150 x 130 cm.

how he trained the sons of Xenocrates. After their other studies, he taught them how to ride, shoot with the bow, sling stones, and hurl the javelin; and later, at the palaestra,<sup>46</sup> he prevented the athletics master from training them beyond what sufficed to maintain a rosy complexion and good health.

- 31 Xenocrates' sons memorized many passages from the works of poets and writers, including Diogenes' own treatises, and he trained them in every shortcut for committing words to memory. At home he taught them to attend to their own needs, to live on plain food and water, to wear their hair short and unadorned, to go barefoot and without a tunic, and to be silent and keep their eyes lowered when walking in the streets. He also took them

<sup>46</sup> A low building with a central courtyard where boys were taught the rules of wrestling.

hunting. They paid close attention to Diogenes and often asked their parents to let him attend to them. He himself says that he grew old in the house of Xeniadēs, and that he asked to be buried with his sons. When Xeniadēs asked how he should bury him, Diogenes replied, “Face down.” And when Xeniadēs asked why, he replied, “Because before long up and down are going to be reversed.” (Here he was referring to the recent victory of the Macedonians,<sup>47</sup> who, formerly humble, were now omnipotent.) 32

When someone brought him to a sumptuous house and warned him not to spit, he cleared his throat and spat in the man’s face, saying he couldn’t find a worse place to leave his spittle. (Others tell this story of Aristippus.) On one occasion, after shouting, “Come this way, fellows,” and people had gathered, he attacked them with his staff, saying, “It was men I was calling for, not trash,” as Hecaton<sup>48</sup> reports in the first book of his *Anecdotes*. Alexander is reported to have remarked, “Had I not been Alexander, I would like to have been Diogenes.”

He used to say that it is not the deaf and blind who are impaired (*an-aperous*), but those who have no knapsack (*pera*).<sup>49</sup> One day, when he had entered a young men’s drinking party half-shaven (as Metrocles relates in his *Anecdotes*), he was given a beating; but later, after writing the names of his attackers on a gypsum tablet, he walked about with it around his neck until he had brought discredit upon them, making them objects of public scorn and disgrace. He used to say that though he was a dog of the kind that men admire, none of his admirers dared to take him along on a hunt. To a man who said, “I defeat other men at the Pythian games,”<sup>50</sup> he replied, “On the contrary, it is *I* who defeat men; *you* defeat slaves.” 33

To those who said, “You’re an old man. Take it easy from now on,” he would reply, “Whatever for? If I were running a distance race, would I slow down when approaching the finish line? Wouldn’t I do better to speed up?” Invited to a dinner, he said he would not go, since the last time around he had not been thanked. 34

He used to go barefoot in winter, and endured all the other hardships mentioned earlier; he even tried to eat meat raw, but found he could not digest it. One day he approached Demosthenes the orator,<sup>51</sup> who was having lunch at a tavern; and when the man drew back, Diogenes said, “You’ll only be that much

47 Likely a reference to the Battle of Chaeronea (338 BC), which gave Philip of Macedon near complete dominion over Greece.

48 A late-second-century Stoic philosopher from Rhodes and a student of Panaetius.

49 A knapsack was, along with the rough cloak called *tribōn*, part of the characteristically spare gear of a Cynic (see 6.23).

50 Held every four years at Delphi in honor of Apollo, these games included musical and athletic contests.

51 Demosthenes (384–322 BC) was the leading Athenian orator of the fourth century BC.

further in the tavern.” When foreigners wanted to get a glimpse of Demosthenes, Diogenes pointed him out with his middle finger<sup>52</sup> and said, “There you have the demagogue of Athens.” When someone dropped a loaf of bread and was  
 35 ashamed to pick it up, Diogenes admonished the man by tying a rope to the neck of a wine-jar and dragging it through the Cerameicus.<sup>53</sup>

He used to say he was imitating the chorus trainers; for they would set their pitch a little sharp so that everyone else would hit the right note. He maintained that most people fell short of being insane by a finger’s breadth; for anyone who walked about with his middle finger extended would be regarded as insane, but would not be so regarded if he were extending his index finger. He would say that valuable things were exchanged for what was worthless, and vice versa: for a statue was sold for three thousand drachmas, but a quart of barley for two coppers.

36 To Xenaiades, the man who purchased him, he said, “Be sure to do as I tell you.” And when Xenaiades replied, “Springs flow back to their sources,”<sup>54</sup> he said, “If you had been ill and purchased a doctor, would you not obey him, but instead say to him ‘Springs flow back to their sources?’”

Someone wanted to study philosophy with him, whereupon Diogenes handed the man a fish and told him to follow him. The man, thinking he’d been insulted, threw the fish away and departed. Later, on running into him, Diogenes laughed and said, “A fish has destroyed our friendship.” (Diocles, however, has reported the encounter as follows. When someone had said, “Give us your orders, Diogenes,” Diogenes took the man along and gave him a half obol’s worth of cheese to carry; and when the man refused, Diogenes said, “A half obol’s worth of cheese has destroyed our friendship.”<sup>55</sup>)

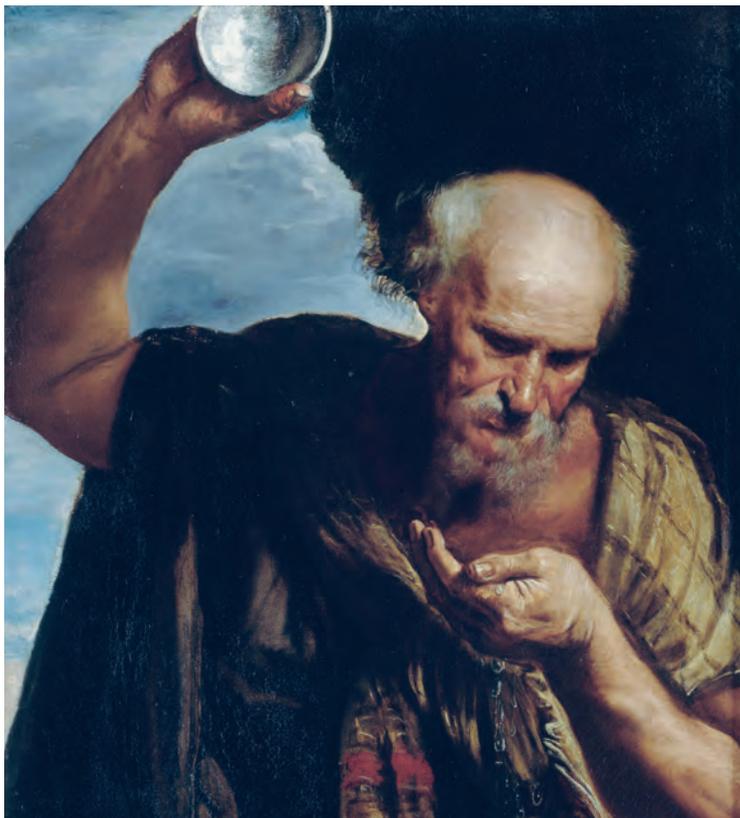
37 One day, after seeing a boy drinking with his hands, Diogenes threw away the cup he kept in his knapsack, saying, “A child has outdone me in frugality.” He also threw away his bowl under similar circumstances, after seeing a boy with a broken bowl scooping up his lentils with a hollowed-out morsel of bread. He reasoned this way: all things belong to the gods; the wise are friends of the gods, and the possessions of friends are held in common; therefore all things belong to the wise.

52 The gesture of extending the middle finger in the ancient Greek world seems to have had an obscene meaning, as it does today.

53 The potter’s district of Athens.

54 A part of line 410 of Euripides’ *Medea*, in which the chorus describes the power of Medea’s magic to turn the world upside down. Xenaiades suggests that a slave’s commanding his master involves a similar reversal of the natural order.

55 A half obol’s worth of cheese would be a small amount, since an obol was only one sixth of a typical day’s wage for an unskilled worker.



*Diogenes Drinking*, by Girolamo Forabosco, seventeenth century.

Once he saw a woman bowing down to the gods in an indecent posture. Wanting to dispel her superstitiousness, according to Zoilus of Perga, he approached her and said, “Don’t you worry, ma’am, that to a god standing behind you—for all things are full of gods—you are assuming a shameful pose?” To Asclepius he offered a gamecock who dashed up to those who were prostrating themselves and mauled them.<sup>56</sup>

38

He often said that he’d been visited by <all> the tragic curses; at any rate, he was

Without city, without home, robbed of his native land,  
A wanderer begging for his daily bread.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>56</sup> It was customary for those in search of good health to offer a cock at the shrine of Asclepius, the Greek god of medicine. Here Diogenes’ gift mocks the piety of those visiting the shrine.

<sup>57</sup> Lines from an unknown tragedy.



*Alexander and Diogenes*, by Jacques Gamelin, 1763.

But he also used to say that he countered luck with courage, convention with nature, and emotion with reason. When he was lying in the sun at the Craneum,<sup>58</sup> Alexander came up to him and said, “Ask whatever you desire,” to which Diogenes replied, “Stand out of my light.” When someone was reading aloud at great length and then pointed toward the end of the book where there was no writing, Diogenes said, “Courage, men. Land ho!” When someone proved by argument that he had horns,<sup>59</sup> Diogenes touched his brow and said, “Well, I, for one, don’t see any.” Likewise when someone asserted that motion did not exist, Diogenes stood up and walked about.

39

To someone who was discussing celestial phenomena he said, “How long have you been back from the sky?” When a wicked man<sup>60</sup> had the motto “May nothing evil enter here” inscribed on his house, Diogenes said, “But then how is its master to get in?” After anointing his feet with myrrh, he said that the myrrh wafted from his head to the air, and from his feet to his nose. When

58 A hill in the city of Corinth that Diogenes liked to frequent.

59 A well-known paradox ran as follows: “What you haven’t lost, you still have; you haven’t lost horns; therefore, you have horns” (see 2.11).

60 The text of some manuscripts reads “an evil eunuch.”

the Athenians thought he should be initiated into the Mysteries,<sup>61</sup> and said that initiates get special treatment in Hades, he said, “It would be laughable if Agesilaus and Epaminondas live in the mire, while nobodies inhabit the Isles of the Blessed because they’ve been initiated.”<sup>62</sup>

To the mice who skittered across his table he said, “Lo and behold! Even Diogenes keeps parasites.” When Plato surnamed him “the Dog,” Diogenes said, “Very true, since I returned to those who sold me.” As he was leaving the baths, and someone asked him whether many men were bathing, he answered no; but to someone else who asked whether there was a large crowd, he answered yes. When Plato had defined man as an animal with two legs and no feathers, and was applauded, Diogenes plucked the feathers from a cock, brought it to Plato’s school, and said, “Here is Plato’s man.” (This was why “having broad nails” was added to the definition.)<sup>63</sup> To someone who asked him at what hour one should take lunch, he said, “If you’re rich, whenever you like; if poor, whenever you can.”

Noticing that in Megara the sheep were protected with leather skins, but the boys went without them, he said, “It’s better to be a Megarian’s ram (*krion*) than his son (*huion*).” To someone who hit him with a beam and then said, “Look out!” Diogenes said, “Why? Are you going to strike me again?” He used to say that the demagogues were lackeys of the mob, and their crowns the pustules of fame. On lighting a lamp in broad daylight, he walked about saying, “I am looking for a man.” One day, when he was being drenched with water, and some bystanders were feeling sorry for him, Plato, who was among them, said, “If you want to spare him, stand somewhere else”—an allusion to Diogenes’ concern for his reputation.

When someone punched him, he said, “Heracles! How could I have forgotten to walk out without my helmet?” But when Medias had assaulted him and said, “Here are three thousand drachmas to your credit,” Diogenes replied the next day, when he had donned boxing gloves and trounced Medias, “Here are three thousand to *your* credit.” When Lysias the apothecary asked if he believed in gods, Diogenes replied, “How could I *not*, when I see you are so much out of their favor?” (Some, however, attribute this retort to Theodorus.<sup>64</sup>) When he

61 The Eleusinian Mysteries were celebrated in Athens and dedicated to the worship of Demeter and her daughter Persephone.

62 Agesilaus, a Spartan king, and Epaminondas, a Theban general, were considered exemplary men of virtue by their contemporaries. The Isles of the Blessed is a mythic locale where the souls of virtuous heroes were thought to enjoy a supremely happy afterlife.

63 Plato’s curriculum required students, as a first step toward genuine knowledge, to offer a clear definition of key terms.

64 Theodorus belonged to the school of hedonistic philosophy founded by Aristippus of Cyrene. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 2.97–104.

had seen someone performing a ritual purification, he said, “Don’t you realize that by sprinkling yourself you can no more correct your mistakes in life than your errors in grammar?” He faulted men for their prayers, saying that they asked for what they imagined was good, rather than for what was truly good.

43 To those who were disturbed by their dreams he used to say that they paid no attention to what they did in a waking state, but were inquisitive about the visions they saw in their sleep. When a herald at the Olympic games announced, “Dioxippus has defeated the other men,” Diogenes retorted, “On the contrary! *He* defeats slaves, while *I* defeat men.”

Still, he was admired by the Athenians. At any rate, when a young fellow had broken Diogenes’ tub they gave the boy a flogging and presented Diogenes with a new tub. Dionysius the Stoic says that after the Battle of Chaeronea Diogenes was arrested and brought to Philip; and when asked who he was, he replied, “A spy of your insatiable greed,” for which he was admired and set free.

44 Once when Alexander had sent a letter to Antipater<sup>65</sup> in Athens through one “Athlios” (Wretched), Diogenes, who was present, said

Wretched message from a wretch to a wretch, carried by a wretch.<sup>66</sup>

When Perdiccas<sup>67</sup> threatened to have Diogenes killed unless he came to him, Diogenes said, “Small wonder, since a beetle or a poisonous spider might pose the same threat.” He thought Perdiccas would have threatened him more effectively by saying, “Without you in my life, I could be a happy man.” He often thundered that the gods had made it possible for men to live easily, but this had been lost sight of, because we demand honey cakes, perfumes, and the like. Hence he said to someone who was having his shoes put on by a servant, “You won’t be content until he wipes your nose for you; but that day will come, once you’ve lost the use of your hands.”

45 One day, noticing the temple magistrates leading away a steward who had filched a votive bowl, he said, “The big thieves are leading away the little one.” Another day, observing a boy tossing stones at the cross of a gallows, he said, “Well done! You’ll get there yet!”<sup>68</sup> To some boys standing nearby and saying, “Let’s take care he doesn’t bite us,” he said, “Fear not, boys; a dog won’t eat

65 A Macedonian nobleman (c. 397–319 BC) who served both Philip II (the victor at Chaeronea in 338 BC) and his son, Alexander the Great, and governed Macedon while Alexander was on campaign in Asia.

66 Diogenes’ verse uses the Greek word *athlios* four times.

67 A Macedonian nobleman (d. 321 BC) who served under Alexander the Great and, after Alexander’s death, briefly became regent of the empire.

68 A phrase with double meaning: “You’ll hit the target” and “You’ll end up hanged.”



*Diogenes Looking for an Honest Man (Portrait History of the Steyn Family),*  
by Caesar van Everdingen, 1652.

beets.”<sup>69</sup> To a man preening in a lion’s skin he said, “Don’t disgrace the garments of courage.” To someone who said that Callisthenes<sup>70</sup> was lucky, since he lived in luxury as a member of Alexander’s entourage, Diogenes said, “On the contrary, it’s an ill-starred man who breakfasts and dines whenever Alexander sees fit.”

When short of money he would tell his friends he was not asking them to give him money, but to give it back.<sup>71</sup> When masturbating in the marketplace,<sup>72</sup>

46

69 Nearly the same expression is found at 6.61, in a context suggesting that beets were linked to unmanly behavior. Elsewhere in Greek lore, beets were considered an aphrodisiac when consumed by women.

70 A Greek historian (360–328 BC) and nephew of Aristotle. He accompanied Alexander on his expedition of conquest and published an account of it, now lost.

71 This anecdote should be understood in the light of 6.37, where Diogenes proved by syllogism that the sage can lay claim to all property.

72 Since he mentions it again at 6.69, Diogenes Laertius clearly thought this recourse to public masturbation was not some perverse personal quirk of Diogenes the Cynic, but rather an especially dramatic way to challenge conventional inhibitions and taboos.

he said, “If only one could relieve hunger by rubbing one’s belly.” Noticing a young fellow going off to dine with satraps,<sup>73</sup> Diogenes dragged him away, brought him to the boy’s friends, and told them to keep an eye on him. To an effeminately dressed youth who asked him a question, Diogenes said he would not reply unless the fellow pulled up his clothes and showed whether he was a woman or a man. To a young fellow playing cottabus at the baths, he said, “The better you play, the worse you are.”<sup>74</sup> At a dinner some guests were throwing bones to him, as one would to a dog; accordingly, in the manner of a dog, he urinated on the guests as he was leaving.

47 He called the orators and all who sought to win fame with their eloquence “thrice-human,” meaning “thrice-wretched.” He called an ignoramus who was rich “a sheep with a golden fleece.” Seeing a for sale sign on the house of a spendthrift, he said, “I knew that after your debauch you’d easily vomit forth the owner.” To a young man who complained that his crowd of admirers was annoying, Diogenes said, “Then stop flaunting your perverted desires.” At a filthy bathhouse he said, “Where are people who have bathed here supposed to wash themselves?” When a stout lyre player was universally maligned, only Diogenes sang his praises; when asked why, he said, “Because  
48 big though he is, he’s a lyre player and not a robber.”

48 Whenever he met the lyre player who was invariably abandoned by his audience, he hailed him with the phrase, “Greetings, rooster!” And when asked why he did so, he said, “Because when you sing you make everyone get up.” When a young man was displaying his oratory, Diogenes, who had filled the bosom of his robe with beans, was gulping them down right in front of him. And when he had attracted the crowd’s notice, he said he was surprised that they shifted their attention from the speaker to himself. When a highly superstitious man said to him, “With one blow I will break your head,” Diogenes replied, “While I, by sneezing to the left, will make you tremble.”<sup>75</sup> When Hegesias had asked him for one of his treatises, Diogenes said, “What an ass you are, Hegesias! For you do not choose painted figs, but real ones; yet you neglect real training, and rush to read about it instead.”

49 To someone who had reproached him for being an exile, he said, “But it’s thanks to that, you fool, that I became a philosopher.” And when, in the same vein, someone remarked, “The Sinopeans sentenced you to exile,” he replied, “And I sentenced *them* to stay at home.” One day, noticing an Olympic victor

73 Satraps were governors of Persian provinces, and notorious for their libidinous ways. It’s not clear why or when a group of them would have been in mainland Greece.

74 Cottabus was a game in which participants tossed the dregs at the bottom of a cup of wine toward a target; those who played it had, presumably, first imbibed the contents of the cup.

75 Unusual activity on the left, such as a sudden sneeze, was considered an evil omen.

tending sheep, he said, “You were quick, my dear fellow, to migrate from Olympia to Nemea.”<sup>76</sup> Asked why athletes are stupid, he said, “Because they are built up of mutton and beef.” He once begged alms from a statue, and when asked why he did so he said, “To get practice in being turned down.” Begging someone for alms—he did this originally because of his poverty—he said, “If you’ve given to another, give also to me; but if not, begin with me.”

Asked by a tyrant what kind of bronze is good for a statue, he said, “The kind from which Harmodius and Aristogeiton<sup>77</sup> were forged.” Asked how Dionysius<sup>78</sup> treated his friends, he said, “Like sacks: when they’re full he hangs them up, when empty he discards them.” When a newly married man had his house inscribed with the words:

Heracles, the gloriously triumphant son of Zeus,  
Dwells within. May nothing evil enter here.

Diogenes added, “After the war, the alliance.”<sup>79</sup> He said that avarice was the motherland of all vices. Seeing a spendthrift eating olives at an inn, he said, “If you’d had fare like this for breakfast, you wouldn’t be having it for supper.”

Good men he called images of the gods, and love the occupation of the idle. Asked what in life was pitiable, he answered, “An old man who’s poor.” Asked which of the animals had the worst bite, he said, “Of the wild beasts, the sycophant; of the tame, the flatterer.” Seeing two very badly painted centaurs, he asked, “Which of them is Cheiron?”<sup>80</sup> He likened ingratiating speech to honey you could choke on. He used to say that the belly was the Charybdis<sup>81</sup> of one’s livelihood. On hearing that the flute player Didymon had been convicted of adultery, he said, “He deserves to be hanged by his name.”<sup>82</sup> Asked why gold is pale, he said, “Because it’s the target of many plotters.” Seeing a woman being carried in a litter, he said, “It’s the wrong type of cage for the quarry.”

One day, seeing a runaway slave sitting on the edge of a well, he said, “Take care you don’t fall in, lad.”<sup>83</sup> Seeing a boy stealing clothes at the baths, he said,

76 Olympia and Nemea were sites of Panhellenic athletic contests. The joke hinges upon the similarity between the words *Nemea* and *nemein*, meaning “to tend sheep”: the man has gone from Olympic victor to yokel.

77 Athenian heroes (both died in 514 BC) honored for their attempt to liberate Athens from the Pisistratid tyrants Hipparchus and Hippias.

78 Presumably Dionysius II (c. 396–c. 343 BC), tyrant of Syracuse.

79 The opaque quip perhaps interprets the young man’s courtship of his wife as a battle worthy of Heracles.

80 Or, interpreted differently, “Which is worse?” Cheiron is the name of the centaur who taught Achilles and other famous heroes, as well as the Greek word for “worse.”

81 In mythology, Charybdis was a giant whirlpool that threatened to swallow any ship that passed.

82 “Didymon” is also the Greek word for “testicles.”

83 The verb “fall in” in Greek can also denote “falling into” legal trouble or incarceration.



*Diogenes*, by Jules Bastien-Lepage, nineteenth century.

“Are you after unguent (*aleimnation*) or another cloak (*allo himation*)?” Seeing women who had been hanged from an olive tree, he said, “Would that all trees bore such fruit.” Seeing a {trustworthy} clothes stealer, he said,

What are you up to, my fine fellow?  
Are you hoping to despoil a corpse?<sup>84</sup>

Asked if he had a little girl or boy, he said, “No.” “So if you die, who will carry you out for burial?” “Whoever wants my house,” he replied.

53 When he saw a handsome youth asleep in an unprotected spot, he nudged him and said, “Wake up!

Lest someone fix a spear in your back while you sleep.”<sup>85</sup>

To someone who was purchasing expensive delicacies, he said,

Won’t you be short-lived, my boy, if you buy such things?<sup>86</sup>

84 *Iliad* 10.343, 387. The verses occur in the episode where Odysseus and Diomedes, while spying for the Greeks, encounter Dolon, a Trojan scout.

85 Diogenes has altered a line from the *Iliad* (5.40), substituting “while you sleep” for “as you turn to flee.” The phrase “fix a spear in your back” takes on a sexual double meaning in this context.

86 A play on a famous line (*Iliad* 18.95). In the original version, Achilles’ mother, Thetis, is

When Plato was discoursing about the forms, and using the words “tablehood” and “cuphood,” Diogenes said, “For my part, Plato, I can see a table and a cup, but not tablehood and cuphood,” to which Plato replied, “And that makes sense; since you have the eyes with which to see a cup and a table, but not the mind with which to comprehend tablehood and cuphood.”

When asked when one should marry, Diogenes said, “If a young man, not yet; if elderly, not ever.” Asked what he would take to be thrashed, he said, “A helmet.” Seeing a young fellow adorning himself, he said, “If men are your objects, you’re a failure; if women, a scoundrel.” One day, seeing a boy blushing, he said, “Cheer up! Yours is the complexion of virtue.” After listening to two lawyers wrangling, he condemned them both, saying that whereas the one had undoubtedly stolen, the other had not lost anything. Asked what wine he enjoyed, he said, “Somebody else’s.” To someone who said, “Many people laugh at you,” he replied, “Yet I am not laughed down.”

To someone who declared that life is an evil, he said, “Not living itself, but living badly.” To those who were plotting to track down his runaway slave, he said, “It would be absurd if Manes can live without Diogenes, but Diogenes can’t live without Manes.” Breakfasting on olives embedded in a flat cake, he tossed the cake away and said,

Friend, get out of the tyrants’ way!<sup>87</sup>

And on another occasion he said,

He whipped an olive!<sup>88</sup>

Asked what breed of dog he was, he said, “When hungry, a Maltese terrier; when fattened, a Molossian mastiff—breeds most people praise but wouldn’t dare take along on a hunt, for fear of fatigue; you are likewise unable to live with me, for fear of what you would suffer.”

Asked whether the wise eat flat cakes, he replied, “They eat cakes of all sorts, <but not> like the rest of mankind.” Asked why people offer money to beggars but not to philosophers, he said, “Because they assume they may someday be lame and blind, but never expect to take up philosophy.” When

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lamenting her son’s promise to kill Hector: “You will be short-lived, my son, if you say such things.” Diogenes’ version exploits the similarity between the words for “say” (*agoreueis*) and “buy” (*agorazdeis*).

87 Euripides, *Phoenician Women* 40, referring to the moment when Oedipus was ordered out of the road by his father Laius, moments before Oedipus killed him. The point of the quote seems to be simply the ludicrous crossing of contexts.

88 *Iliad* 5.366 and *Odyssey* 6.82. *Elaan*, the word rendered here as “olive,” has a doublet in the infinitive *elaan*, “to charge,” so that the Homeric line translates as “he whipped [the steeds] to make them charge.”

he begged alms from a stingy man, and the man hesitated, Diogenes said, “I’m asking you for food, not funeral expenses.” Reproached one day for having restamped the currency, he said, “I did so at a time when I was the sort of man that you are now; but the sort I am now, *you* will never be.” And to someone else who reproached him for the same reason, he said, “I also used to wet my bed, but not anymore.”

57 Visiting Myndus<sup>89</sup> and noticing that its gates were enormous, but the city small, he said, “Men of Myndus, you locked your gates to keep the city from running away.” Seeing a stealer of purple dye apprehended, he said,

Caught by purple death and irresistible fate.<sup>90</sup>

When Craterus<sup>91</sup> wanted Diogenes to come for a visit, he declined, saying, “I’d rather lick salt in Athens than enjoy rich fare at Craterus’ table.” Approaching Anaximenes<sup>92</sup> the orator, a fat man, he said, “Give us beggars something of your paunch; for your load will be lightened, and you’ll do us a good turn.” Once when Anaximenes was discoursing, Diogenes held up a smoked fish and distracted the audience; and when the orator was vexed, Diogenes said, “A fish worth an obol has disrupted Anaximenes’ lecture.”

58 Reproached one day for eating in the marketplace, he said, “It was in the marketplace that I got hungry.” Some say that he also made the following retort: When Plato noticed him washing lettuces, he approached and quietly said, “If you courted Dionysius,<sup>93</sup> you would not be washing lettuces,” to which Diogenes replied just as quietly, “And if you washed lettuces, you wouldn’t have courted Dionysius.” To someone who said, “Most people laugh at you,” he said, “And perhaps donkeys laugh at *them*; but they pay no heed to donkeys, nor do I pay heed to *them*.” Noticing a youth studying philosophy, he said, “Well done, Philosophy! You’re turning lovers of the body’s beauty toward beauty of mind.”

59 When some people were admiring the votive offerings at Samothrace, he said, “There would have been many more of them if the men who weren’t saved had made offerings.” (Some attribute this remark to Diagoras of Melos.<sup>94</sup>) To a handsome youth on his way to a drinking party, he said, “You will return a worse man.” And when the youth returned and said on the following day,

89 A Dorian colony on the southeast coast of Asia Minor.

90 *Iliad* 5.83, describing the death of Hypsenor.

91 A Macedonian officer (c. 370–321 BC) of Alexander the Great.

92 Anaximenes of Lampsacus (c. 380–320 BC) was a rhetorician and historian; he accompanied Alexander on his Asiatic expedition.

93 Another reference to Dionysius II, tyrant of Syracuse, who received Plato at his court in the 360s BC, and, according to contemporary gossip, enriched him with handouts.

94 A lyric poet, active in the last quarter of the fifth century BC, Diagoras was notorious for his atheism.

“I returned and did not become a worse man,” Diogenes said, “A worse man (*cheirōn*) no, but a stouter man (*eurytion*) certainly.”<sup>95</sup> When he was begging alms from an ill-tempered man, and the man said, “<I’ll give you something> if you persuade me,” Diogenes replied, “If I could persuade you, I’d persuade you to hang yourself.” When he was on his way back from Sparta to Athens, and someone asked him where he was going and where he had come from, he said, “From the men’s quarters to the women’s.”

On his way home from Olympia, he replied to someone who asked if there was a large crowd there, “A large crowd, yes; but few men.” He said that spend-thrifts resembled figs growing on a cliff; for their fruit is not enjoyed by men, but by crows and vultures. When Phryne had dedicated a golden Aphrodite at Delphi,<sup>96</sup> they say that Diogenes wrote upon it, “From the intemperance of the Greeks.” Once when Alexander came to him and said, “I am Alexander, the Great King,” he replied, “And I am Diogenes, the Dog.” When asked what he had done to get nicknamed the Dog, he said, “I fawn on those who give me something, bark at those who don’t, and bite the wicked.”

While gathering figs, he was told by a watchman that a man had recently been hanged at that very spot. To this Diogenes said, “Well, in that case I’ll purify the place.”<sup>97</sup> On seeing an Olympic victor staring intently at a prostitute, he said, “See how the head of a war-frenzied ram is being twisted about by a common strumpet.” He used to say that good-looking courtesans resembled a lethal honey-drink. As he was breakfasting in the marketplace, a group of bystanders were calling him “dog.” “It’s you who are the dogs,” he replied, “since you stand around me while I’m breakfasting.” When two cowards were hiding from him, he said, “Don’t you worry: a dog doesn’t munch on beets.”<sup>98</sup> Asked where a boy who had become a prostitute was from, he said, “From Tegea.”<sup>99</sup> Noticing that a dull-witted wrestler was practicing medicine, he said, “What are you up to? Are you now sending to the other world those who once defeated you?” When he saw a courtesan’s son throwing a rock at a crowd, he said, “Take care you don’t hit your father.”

When a boy had shown Diogenes a dagger he’d received from a lover, Diogenes said, “A lovely sword, but the hilt is ugly.”<sup>100</sup> When some people were praising a man who had given him alms, Diogenes said, “Yet you don’t praise

95 Diogenes is punning on the names of two well-known centaurs. Cheiron was reputed to be wise, Eurytion lustful.

96 Phryne was a beautiful Athenian courtesan, able to subsidize gold statues from out of her earnings.

97 Meaning that he will denude the tree of figs.

98 Nearly the same expression is found at 6.45: beets were apparently considered an unmanly food.

99 A play on words: Tegea was a city in Arcadia; *tegos* is Greek for “brothel.”

100 Another pun, using the double meaning of *labē*—a hilt, as well as an opportunity to seize a prize—to impugn the giver’s motives.

me, who deserved to receive them.” When someone asked Diogenes to return his cloak, he said, “If it was a gift, I’m keeping it; if a loan, I’m using it.” When a suppositious son said that he carried gold in his cloak, Diogenes said, “No  
 63 doubt! And for the same reason, you sleep with it under you.”<sup>101</sup> Asked what he got out of philosophy, he said, “If nothing else, I’m prepared for whatever happens.” Asked where he came from, he replied, “I’m a citizen of the world.”<sup>102</sup> When some parents were sacrificing in the hope that a son might be born to them, he said, “But aren’t you sacrificing with an eye to how he’ll turn out?” When asked for a contribution by the host of a potluck supper, he said,

Despoil the others, but lay no hands on Hector.<sup>103</sup>

He referred to the courtesans of kings as queens, since they made the kings do as they commanded. When the Athenians voted Alexander the title of Dionysus, Diogenes said, “Then let me be called Sarapis.”<sup>104</sup> To someone who reproached him for going to unclean places, he said, “The sun, too, visits dung heaps without being defiled.”

64 When he was dining in a temple, some filthy loaves were brought in; flinging them out, he said that nothing unclean should enter a temple. To someone who said, “Though you know nothing, you philosophize,” he said, “Even if I do pretend to wisdom, that in itself is philosophy.” To someone who introduced his son and said the boy was talented and of strong character, he said, “Then what do you need *me* for?” He said that those who utter fine words but don’t act on them resembled a harp, since a harp can neither hear nor understand. He was entering a theater as everyone else was leaving it; when asked why he did so, he replied, “This has been my practice all my life.”

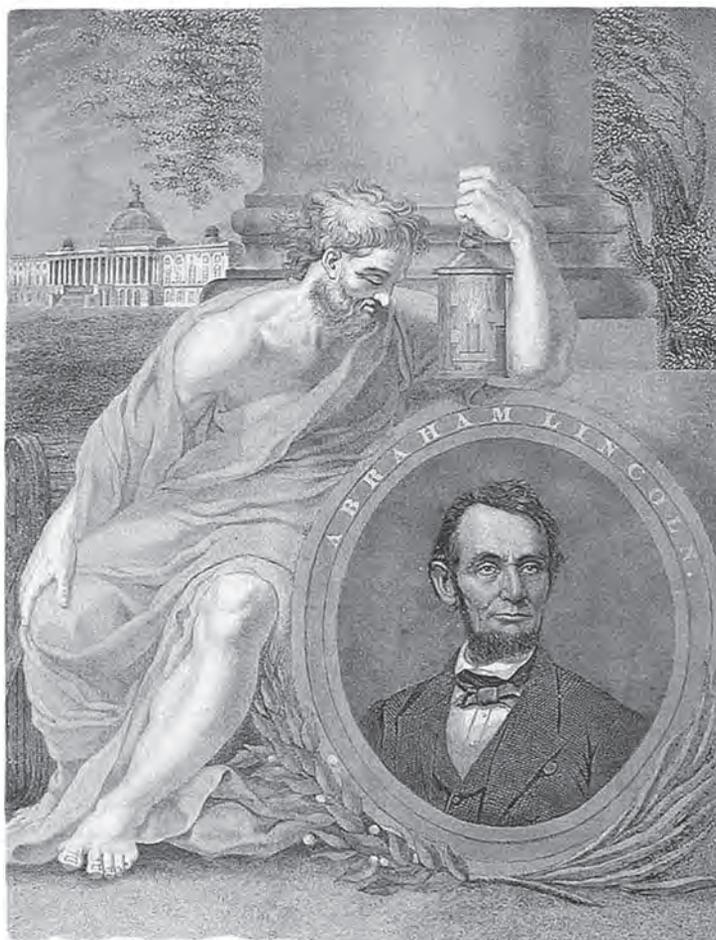
65 Seeing a lad behaving effeminately, he said, “Aren’t you ashamed to fall short of nature’s intentions for you? For she made you a man, but you’re making yourself play the woman.” Seeing a foolish fellow tuning a harp, he said, “Aren’t you ashamed to tune a wooden instrument, while you fail to bring your soul into harmony with your life?” To someone who claimed to be inept at philosophy, he said, “Then why do you live, if it’s not your concern to live well?” To someone who was disparaging his own father, Diogenes said, “Aren’t you

101 A “suppositious son” was one passed off on another set of parents, presumably to avoid family scandal. Diogenes makes an untranslatable pun on the word *hypobēblēmenos*, which can mean both “passing as” and “lying under.”

102 The Greek word that Diogenes uses is *cosmopolitēs*, the root of the English “cosmopolitan.”

103 *Enaridzō* means “despoil”; *eranidzō* means “host a potluck supper.” Diogenes framed the wordplay in the form of a Homeric hexameter, though the line here given is not found in surviving texts of Homer.

104 A deity said to be a combination of the Egyptian gods Osiris and Apis. His worship was just reaching the Greek world during the later part of Diogenes’ life.



*Diogenes His Lantern Needs No More, an Honest Man Is Found—The Search Is O'er,*  
by Henry Bryan Hall, 1864.

ashamed to disparage him who affords you the chance to think yourself so superior?” Seeing a handsome youth chattering in an unseemly manner, he said, “Aren’t you ashamed to draw from an ivory scabbard a dagger made of lead?”

Reproached for drinking in a tavern, he said, “I also get my hair cut in a barbershop.” Reproached for accepting a cloak from Antipater, he said,

66

The glorious gifts of the gods are not to be cast aside.<sup>105</sup>

105 *Iliad* 3.65, spoken by the Trojan prince Paris about the “gifts” he has received from Aphrodite, good looks and an aptitude for soft living. The quote casts Antipater’s cloak as part of the same decadent lifestyle.



Hellenistic high relief of Alexander the Great and Diogenes.

When someone hit him with a beam and then said, “Look out!” Diogenes struck the man with his staff and said, “Look out yourself!” To someone soliciting a courtesan, he said, “Why, poor wretch, do you want to get what you’d be better off *not* getting?” To someone anointing himself he said, “Take care that the sweet smell from your head does not give a foul smell to your life.” He said that servants were the slaves of their masters, and unworthy men the slaves of their passions.

67        Asked why servants were called footmen, he said, “Because they have the feet of men, and the souls of questioners such as yourself.” When he begged a mina from a spendthrift, and the man asked why he begged others for an obol,<sup>106</sup> but asked *him* for a mina, he said, “Because I expect to get something from them next time; but whether I’ll ever again get something from you lies in the lap of the gods.” Reproached because he begged, when Plato did not, he said, “He begs too, but

Holding his head close, that the others might not hear.”<sup>107</sup>

106 The value of a mina was about six hundred times that of an obol.

107 *Odyssey* 1.157 and 4.70.

After watching a bad archer, he sat down next to the target, saying “so I won’t be hit.” He said that lovers were unlucky when it came to pleasure.<sup>108</sup>

Asked if death is an evil, he said, “How could it be an evil, since in its presence we are unaware of it?” When Alexander came to him and said, “Don’t you fear me?” he replied, “What do you mean? Are you good or evil?” When Alexander answered, “Good,” Diogenes said, “Well, who fears what is good?” He said that education was for the young an instiller of temperance, for the elderly a consolation, for the poor a richness, and for the rich an ornament. Once when the adulterer Didymon was curing a girl’s eye, he said, “Take care that while treating the eye you don’t ruin the pupil.”<sup>109</sup> When someone said that his own friends were plotting against him, Diogenes said, “What is one to do, if friends and enemies must be treated alike?”

Asked what was the most beautiful thing in the world, he said, “Freedom of speech.” Entering a school and seeing many images of the Muses but few students, he said, “With the help of the gods, schoolmaster, you have plenty of students.” He regularly performed in public the acts associated with Demeter and Aphrodite.<sup>110</sup> He used to make the following sort of argument: “If to take breakfast is not absurd, then in the marketplace it’s not absurd; and it is *not* absurd to take breakfast; so to do so in the marketplace is *not* absurd.” Frequently masturbating in public, he said, “If only one could relieve hunger by rubbing one’s belly.” Many other sayings are attributed to him, which it would take too long to recount.

He used to maintain that training<sup>111</sup> was twofold, encompassing both mind and body; that in the case of physical training, ideals are engendered that foster the suppleness needed to perform virtuous deeds; and that neither facet was complete without the other, since health and strength are equally essential for training both the mind and the body. He would offer proofs that exertions in the gymnasium readily give rise to virtue, and declared that one could see in the mechanical and other arts that their practitioners acquire extraordinary dexterity from practice, citing the degree to which flute players and athletes acquire surpassing skill through constant application, and asserting that if these men had shifted their attention to the training of the mind, their efforts would not have been useless and incomplete.

108 The point of the remark is unclear.

109 The Greek word translated as “pupil” has a doublet that means “girl.” The word “ruin” takes on a sexual meaning if the latter word is understood here.

110 Demeter was the goddess of grain (and hence of food generally), Aphrodite of sexual love.

111 The word Diogenes Laertius uses is *askēsis*, the root of the modern “ascetism.” The word literally means “training,” a discipline of both mind and body. We see Diogenes the Cynic adhering to this *askēsis* in his rejection of bodily comforts, and in forcing himself to perform tasks like embracing statues covered in snow, or walking across hot sand.

71 He used to say that no success can be achieved in life without training, which he said could overcome anything. Therefore if men would live happily, they should choose, in place of useless toils, those that are in keeping with nature. But instead, through their own folly, they live wretched lives. And in fact the contempt for pleasure, if it has become habitual, is exceedingly pleasurable. Just as those who have been accustomed to living pleasurably find the opposite unpleasant, so do those who have engaged in the opposite practice find that despising pleasures gives them more pleasure than would the pleasures themselves. Such were his views and he clearly acted in accordance with them, thereby truly “restamping the currency,” since he assigned to convention none of the value he assigned to nature, and said that the life he lived was characteristic of Heracles,<sup>112</sup> who preferred freedom to everything.

72 He declared that all things belong to the wise, and advanced the sort of argument we outlined earlier: all things belong to the gods; the gods are friends of the wise; the possessions of friends are held in common; and therefore all things belong to the wise. As for law, he held that without it one cannot live the life of a citizen. For he declares that without the city there is no means of obtaining the advantages of civilized life. The city is a civilized thing; its advantages cannot be enjoyed without law; and therefore law is a civilized thing. He would make fun of good breeding, reputation, and all such things, calling them the vulgar trappings of vice, and held that the only true commonwealth was that which was commensurate with the universe. He also maintained that women should be held in common, regarding no union as a marriage but that of a man and a woman who have persuaded each other. And for this reason he maintained that sons, too, should be held in common.<sup>113</sup>

73 He declared that there was nothing wrong with taking something from a temple or tasting the flesh of any animal; nor was it even offensive to the gods to consume human flesh, as was clear from other peoples’ customs. He held that according to right reason, all things contain and are permeated by all things. For meat is found in bread, and bread in vegetables; and all forms of matter, through unseen passages and particles, penetrate and unite with all other matter in vaporous form, as he makes clear in his *Thyestes*,<sup>114</sup> if the tragedies are his and not the work of his friend Philiscus of Aegina or of Pasiphon,

112 With his primitivism, ruggedness, and fierce devotion to autonomy, Heracles was a kind of ethical model for the Cynics.

113 These ideas appeared in the most notorious of Diogenes’ works, his *Republic*. It is now lost but its contents were summarized by Philodemus of Gadara, a prominent Epicurean active in Rome in the first century BC.

114 In mythology, Thyestes was tricked into consuming his own children as a stew. The tragedy Diogenes mentions presumably used this episode to illustrate the arbitrariness of cannibalism taboos.



*Diogenes Searching for an Honest Man*, by Jacob Jordaens, 1642.

{son of Lucian,}<sup>115</sup> who, according to Favorinus in his *Miscellaneous History*, wrote them after Diogenes' death. Diogenes neglected music, geometry, astrology, and other such studies, judging them useless and unnecessary.

He proved quite witty in debate, as is clear from what we have related.

74

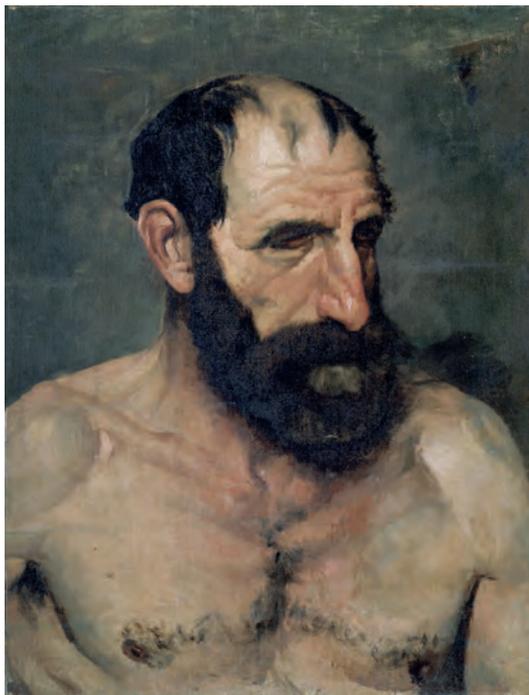
And he endured being sold into slavery with great dignity. On a voyage to Aegina he was captured by pirates under Scirpalus<sup>116</sup> command, transported to Crete, and put up for sale. And when the herald asked him what he was good at, he replied, "Ruling over men." Pointing to an affluent Corinthian, the above-mentioned Xeniadēs, he said, "Sell me to *him*; he needs a master." Thus Xeniadēs purchased him, took him home to Corinth, put him in charge of his own sons, and entrusted him with his entire household. And Diogenes performed all his duties in such a manner that Xeniadēs went about saying, "A kindly deity has entered my house."

Cleomenes, in *On Pedagogy*, says that Diogenes' friends wanted to ransom him, for which he called them imbeciles. For he maintained that lions are not the slaves of those who feed them; it is the feeders, rather, who are the

75

115 The word translated "son of Lucian" is probably corrupt.

116 No Scirpalus is known from this era. It is possible the name arose as a corruption of Harpalus, the Macedonian nobleman who served as Alexander the Great's treasurer, then absconded with some of his funds and briefly led a mercenary army.



*Sketch of Diogenes, by Eduardo Rosales, nineteenth century.*

76 lions' slaves. For fear is the mark of a slave, and wild beasts make men fearful. Diogenes possessed astonishing powers of persuasion, and hence could easily sway anyone he liked with his arguments. It is said, at any rate, that an Aeginetan, one Onesicritus, sent one of his two sons, Androsthenes, to Athens, and that the boy, on becoming a student of Diogenes, remained there; the father then sent along his older son, Philiscus, whom I mentioned earlier, and Philiscus was equally captivated; and Onesicritus himself, the third to arrive, shared equally in his sons' love and pursuit of philosophy. Such was the spell cast by Diogenes' words. Phocion, surnamed the Good, was also a student of his,<sup>117</sup> as was Stilpo of Megara<sup>118</sup> and many other public men.

It is said that he had reached the age of ninety when he died. There are conflicting accounts about his death. Some say that after eating an octopus

117 Phocion, a prominent Athenian general and statesman during most of the fourth century BC, had philosophic ambitions and also studied with Plato.

118 A philosopher of the Megarian school (c. 380–300 BC) and teacher of Zeno of Citium, the founder of Stoicism. Diogenes Laertius discusses the life and views of Stilpo at 2.113–20.

raw he was stricken by cholera and died of it; others maintain that he died by holding his breath. One of the latter is Cercidas of Megalópolis (or of Crete), who in his lyric iambics says,

No more the erstwhile denizen of Sinope,  
The famous staff bearer,  
Double-cloaked, feeding on air;  
He has ascended to heaven,  
Fixing his lips against his teeth  
And holding his breath;  
For which he was aptly named  
Diogenes, son of Zeus, a hound of heaven.

77

Others say that while dividing an octopus among some dogs he was bitten so badly on the tendon of his foot that he died. Yet his friends, according to Antisthenes in his *Successions*, guessed that he had deliberately stopped his breath. For he happened to be living in the Craneum, the gymnasium that stands in front of Corinth. His friends, as was their habit, arrived and found him wrapped in his cloak and thought he might be napping. But since he was not one to nap or get drowsy, they pulled his cloak aside. And on finding him no longer breathing, they guessed that he had taken steps to escape whatever remained of his life.

At that point, it is said, a quarrel arose among his friends as to who would bury him, and they actually came to blows. But when the chief and foremost citizens arrived, Diogenes was buried, on their authority, beside the gate that opens toward the Isthmus. Over his grave they stood a column, on which they placed the statue of a dog carved in marble from Paros. In the course of time his fellow citizens also honored him with bronze statues, on which they carved this inscription:

78

Bronze grows old with time, but all eternity,  
Diogenes, will not erase your fame; for you alone gave  
Mortals the lesson of self-reliance and the  
Easiest path through life.

There are also our own verses in the proceleusmatic meter:<sup>119</sup>

79

A. Diogenes, tell us what fate took you  
To Hades. B. A dog's savage tooth.

Some say that as he was dying he instructed his friends to throw him out unburied, so that every wild beast might feed on him, or thrust him into a pit and heap a little dust over him (others, however, say that they were told to

119 A poetic meter where each foot has four short syllables, giving the impression of swift forward motion.

throw him into the Ilissus<sup>120</sup>), so he might prove useful to his brothers.<sup>121</sup>

Demetrius, in *Men of the Same Name*, says that Alexander, in Babylon, and Diogenes, in Corinth, died on the same day.<sup>122</sup> Diogenes was an old man in the 123rd Olympiad.<sup>123</sup>

80 These are the works attributed to him:

Dialogues:

*Cephalion*

*Icthyas*

*Jackdaw*

*Pardalis*

*The Athenian Democracy*

*Republic*

*Art of Ethics*

*On Wealth*

*On Love*

*Theodorus*

*Hypsias*

*Aristarchus*

*On Death*

Letters

Tragedies:

*Helen*

*Thyestes*

*Heracles*

*Achilles*

*Medea*

*Chrysippus*

*Oedipus*

Sosicrates, in the first book of *The Succession*, and Satyrus, in the fourth book of his *Lives*, say that Diogenes left nothing in writing. Satyrus says that the tragedies were written by Philiscus of Aegina, a friend of Diogenes. Sotion, in his seventh book, says that only the following were written by Diogenes: *On Virtue*, *On Good*, *On Love*, *A Beggar*, *Tolmaeus*, *Pardalis*, *Casandrus*, *Cephalion*, *Philiscus*, *Aristarchus*, *Sisyphus*, *Ganymedes*, *Maxims*, and *Letters*.

120 A river that ran through Athens.

121 The brothers referred to are probably dogs, who are imagined taking nourishment from the flesh of Diogenes' corpse. Cynic philosophers were often referred to as "dogs" in antiquity.

122 That is, on the same calendrical date in different years.

123 This Olympiad began in 288 BC.



*Diogenes Reading a Newspaper*, by Honoré Daumier, c. 1870. Color lithograph.

There have been five men named Diogenes. The first, from Apollonia, was a natural philosopher whose treatise begins, “At the start of every discourse, it seems to me, one should lay down a premise that is indisputable”; the second, from Sicyon, wrote *On the Peloponnese*; the third was our present subject; the fourth was a Stoic, born in Seleucia and surnamed the Babylonian because of Seleucia’s proximity to Babylon; and the fifth, from Tarsus, was an author who wrote about poetical problems, which he undertook to solve.

81

Athenodorus, in the eighth book of his *Lectures*, says that the philosopher always had a glowing appearance because he anointed himself with oil.

## MONIMUS

82 Monimus of Syracuse was a student of Diogenes, and the servant of a Corinthian banker, as Sosicrates says. Xeniadēs, who had purchased Diogenes,<sup>124</sup> visited the banker constantly, and by describing the virtue the philosopher manifested in word and deed he inspired in Monimus a passion for Diogenes. Instantly feigning madness, Monimus began tossing about all the coins and money on the banker's table, until his master dismissed him. Monimus at once devoted himself to Diogenes. He often followed Crates the Cynic<sup>125</sup> as well, and adopted similar habits; seeing this, his master was even more convinced that Monimus was mad.

83 He became a distinguished man; so much so that he is even mentioned by Menander, the comic poet. In one of his plays, *The Groom*, Menander speaks thus of Monimus:

A. There was a man named Monimus, Philo, a sage,  
 Though a bit obscure. B. The one with the knapsack?  
 A. In fact he had three. But he never uttered a motto  
 Like "know thyself" or any such catchphrases.  
 He was above such things, our unwashed beggar,  
 And declared all man's surmises humbug.

Monimus was so grave that he disdained mere opinion and sought only the truth.

He wrote playful verses in which earnestness was surreptitiously blended, as well as two books, *On Impulses* and an *Exhortation*.

## ONESICRITUS

84 Some say that Onesicritus was an Aeginetan, though Demetrius of Magnesia claims that he was from Astypalaea.<sup>126</sup> He too was one of Diogenes' distinguished students. His career resembles that of Xenophon.<sup>127</sup> For Xenophon

124 This episode is described at 6.30–32 and 6.74.

125 The life and views of Crates of Thebes (c. 368/65–288/85 BC) are discussed at 6.85–93.

126 One of the islands in the southeastern Aegean.

127 An Athenian soldier (c. 430–c. 354 BC), historian, essayist, and admirer of Socrates. His most famous surviving work, *Anabasis*, recounts the march of the Ten Thousand, a mostly Greek mercenary troop hired by Cyrus the Younger, from Cunaxa, near Babylon, back to Greece. Diogenes Laertius discusses his life and views at 2.48–59.

served in the campaign of Cyrus, while Onesicritus served with Alexander.<sup>128</sup> And Xenophon wrote the *Education of Cyrus*,<sup>129</sup> while Onesicritus wrote about how Alexander was raised.<sup>130</sup> The one wrote an encomium of Cyrus, the other of Alexander. And their styles were similar, except that Onesicritus, being an imitator, falls short of his model.

Diogenes' other pupils include Menander,<sup>131</sup> who was nicknamed Drymus ("Oakwood"), an admirer of Homer; Hegesias of Sinope, nicknamed Cloeus ("Dog-Collar"); and Philiscus of Aegina, as we mentioned earlier.

## CRATES

Crates, son of Ascondas, was a Theban. He too was one of the Cynic's<sup>132</sup> distinguished students. Hippobotus, however, says that Crates was not a student of Diogenes, but of Bryson the Achaean. These playful verses are attributed to Crates: 85

There is a city, Pera,<sup>133</sup> in the middle of a wine-dark mist,  
Lovely and fertile, rich in dirt, possessing nothing,  
Into which sails neither stupid parasite,  
Nor glutton exulting in the buttocks of a harlot;  
Instead it bears thyme and garlic and figs and loaves,  
For the sake of which men do not fight each other,  
Nor take up arms for fame or fortune.

There is also his well-known account book, which runs as follows: 86

Put down ten minas for the butcher, a drachma for the doctor,  
Five talents for a flatterer, smoke for an adviser,  
For a harlot a talent, for a philosopher three obols.

He was nicknamed Door-Opener from his practice of entering every house and admonishing its occupants. Here is another sample of his verse:

128 Alexander employed Onesicritus as a top officer in the fleet that he built to sail down the Indus River and westward along the coast of Iran, in 325 BC. Many fragments survive of Onesicritus' account of India, thanks to quotations by the geographer Strabo.

129 The *Cyropaedia* or *Education of Cyrus*, extant today, describes the life of Cyrus the Great of Persia, ruler in the sixth century BC, not that of Cyrus the Younger, under whom Xenophon served.

130 This work has not survived.

131 A different person than the famous playwright.

132 Meaning Diogenes of Sinope, discussed at 6.20–81.

133 Crates' imaginary city is named after the knapsack often carried by Cynics as a sign of their disdain for material goods. The paradisaical description that follows is written in Homeric meter and style.

What I have is what I have learned and pondered,  
The noble lessons I imbibed from the Muses;  
But vanity stalks abundant wealth.

And he says that what he has gained from philosophy is

A quart of lupines<sup>134</sup> and to care for nothing.

This too is attributed to him:

Hunger ends love, but if not, time will do it.  
And if neither remedy helps, there's the noose.

87 He flourished in the 113th Olympiad.<sup>135</sup>

Antisthenes,<sup>136</sup> in his *Successions*, says that Crates took an interest in Cynic philosophy when he saw Telephus in a certain tragedy carrying a small basket and in an utterly wretched state;<sup>137</sup> and that after converting his property into money (for he belonged to a prominent family) he took the two hundred talents<sup>138</sup> he had amassed and distributed it among his fellow citizens. Antisthenes adds that Crates pursued philosophy so avidly that even Philemon the comic poet mentions him. For he says:

In summer he wore a thick cloak, to emulate Crates,  
And in winter a tattered robe.

88 Diocles says that Diogenes persuaded Crates to turn his fields into a grazing ground for sheep, and toss any money he had into the sea. The house of Crates, says Diogenes, < . . . > by Alexander,<sup>139</sup> and that of Hipparchia<sup>140</sup> by Philip. Often when some of his kinsmen visited and tried to divert him from his purpose, Crates would chase them away with his staff and preserve his integrity.

134 A Mediterranean perennial that produces a yellow legume.

135 This Olympiad began in 328 BC.

136 Not the philosopher discussed at the start of this book, but Antisthenes of Rhodes (fl. c. 200 BC).

137 Telephus, a son of Heracles, was depicted in a lost tragedy by Euripides going about in the guise of a beggar, seeking a cure for a spear wound that would not heal.

138 The precise amount is given differently in different manuscripts. A talent comprised six thousand drachmas, or the wages of over fifteen years' labor for an unskilled worker.

139 The gap in the text has been variously filled by editors with verbs meaning "visited" or "destroyed." In favor of the latter is the fact that Alexander the Great razed the city of Thebes in 335 BC; Crates had by that time relocated to Athens but his house was presumably leveled (see 6.93). However, Philip, Alexander's father, was dead before the time of Hipparchia's birth, so he could have neither visited her house nor destroyed it. Thus no emendation seems able to make good sense of the sentence.

140 A sister of Metrocles and wife of Crates, Hipparchia was a significant philosopher in her own right. She was admired for her passionate adherence to the principles of Cynic virtue. Diogenes discusses her life at 6.96–98.



Crates throwing his money into the sea, by Palma Giovane, sixteenth century.

Demetrius of Magnesia says that Crates deposited a sum of money with a certain banker on the understanding that if his sons turned out to be ordinary, he should pay it to them; but if they became philosophers, it should be distributed among the people. For if they were philosophers they would need nothing. Eratosthenes says that Crates had a son by Hipparchia, of whom we will speak. The boy was named Pasicles, and when he had completed his ephebic training<sup>141</sup> Crates brought him to the house of a prostitute and told him that this was the sort of marriage his father had in mind for him. For the marriages of adulterers, he said, are the stuff of tragedy, having exile and murder as rewards; but those of men who ally themselves with courtesans smack of comedy, for their amorous madness arises from prodigality and drunkenness. Crates had a brother named Pasicles, a student of Euclides.<sup>142</sup>

89

Favorinus, in the second book of his *Reminiscences*, recounts a charming story about Crates. He says that when requesting something of the head of the gymnasium, Crates clasped him by his hips; and when the man grew vexed, Crates said, “What, aren’t these as much yours as your knees?”<sup>143</sup> He used to say that it is impossible to find anyone who has no flaw; for just as in a pomegranate,

141 “Ephebe” denotes a youth in late adolescence, on the verge of adulthood. Such youths were required by many Greek cities to undergo military training.

142 Euclides of Megara (c. 480–380 BC) founded the Megarian school. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 2.106–12.

143 Grasping someone by their knees was a gesture of supplication in the ancient world.

there is always a rotten seed. On provoking Nicodromus the musician, Crates  
 90 was given a black eye. He then applied a plaster to his face and on it wrote the  
 words “The work of Nicodromus.” He constantly reproached the courtesans,  
 training himself to endure their abuse.

When Demetrius of Phalerum<sup>144</sup> sent him loaves and wine, Crates re-  
 proached him, saying, “Would that the springs brought forth bread as well as  
 water.” Thus it was clear that he was a water drinker. Censured by the mag-  
 istrates for wearing muslin, he said, “I’ll show you that even Theophrastus<sup>145</sup>  
 wears muslin.” And when they doubted him, he led them to a barbershop and  
 showed them Theophrastus being shaved. He was flogged in Thebes by the  
 head of the gymnasium (though some say it was in Corinth by Euthykrates);  
 and when dragged by the foot, he commented dryly,

Seizing him by the foot, he dragged him over the divine threshold.<sup>146</sup>

91 Diocles, however, says that Crates was dragged by Menedemus of Ere-  
 tria.<sup>147</sup> As Menedemus was handsome and was thought to be intimate with  
 Asclepiades the Phliasian, Crates grabbed him by the thighs and said, “As-  
 clepiades is in there.” Indignant, Menedemus seized Crates and dragged him  
 along, at which point he recited the verse quoted above.

Zeno of Citium,<sup>148</sup> in his *Anecdotes*, says that Crates once heedlessly  
 sewed a sheepskin to his cloak. He was ugly to look at, and when exercising  
 used to be laughed at. He was in the habit of raising his hands and saying,  
 92 “Fear not, Crates, for your eyes and the rest of your body. You’ll see these men  
 who are laughing at you shriveled up by disease before long and thinking you  
 blessed, and blaming themselves for their laziness.”

He used to say that we should study philosophy to the point where we  
 discern that our generals are mere donkey drivers. He maintained that those  
 who surround themselves with flatterers are as friendless as calves among  
 wolves; for neither the former nor the latter have anyone to protect them, but  
 only the sort who plot against them. Sensing that he was dying, he soothed  
 himself with this charm:

144 Demetrius of Phalerum (b. c. 350 BC) was an Athenian politician, orator, and Peripatetic philoso-  
 opher who studied under Theophrastus. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 5.75–85.

145 A disciple of Aristotle, Theophrastus became head of the Lyceum after Aristotle’s death. Dio-  
 genes discusses his life and views at 5.36–57.

146 Homer, *Iliad* 1.591, in which the god Hephaestus recalls how his father, Zeus, hurled him from Olympus.

147 Menedemus of Eretria (c. 339–265 BC), a pupil of Stilpo and Phaedo, was the founder of  
 the Eretrian school of philosophy. His life and works are discussed at 2.125–44. He should be  
 distinguished from the Cynic Menedemus discussed at 6.102–5.

148 The founder of Stoicism. Diogenes discusses the life and views of Zeno at 7.1–160.



Diogenes and Crates of Thebes, from the *Book of Good Morals*, by Jacques le Grant, fourteenth century.

You are departing now, dear hunchback,  
And approaching the house of Hades, bent by age.<sup>149</sup>

For he was stooped by the years.

When Alexander asked if he wanted his native city to be rebuilt, he said, “Why should it be? Perhaps another Alexander will again raze it to the ground.”<sup>150</sup> He had as his native land, he said, obscurity and poverty; and he said that he was a fellow citizen of Diogenes, who was not liable to envious attacks. Menander mentions him in his *Twin Sisters* as follows.

93

You will stroll about with me, wearing your cloak,  
Just as his wife once walked with Crates the Cynic.

149 The text of the second line is uncertain.

150 Alexander had destroyed Thebes after its rebellion against Macedonian rule in 335 BC. It was later rebuilt under Alexander’s successors.

And as he himself says, when he gave his daughter  
In marriage, he offered her on trial for thirty days.

His students:

## METROCLES

94 Metrocles was the brother of Hipparchia.<sup>151</sup> Formerly a student of Theophrastus the Peripatetic,<sup>152</sup> he had been so corrupted that on one occasion, when he farted in the course of rehearsing a speech, he was deeply mortified and shut himself up at home, intending to starve himself to death. When Crates learned what had happened, he visited the man (he had been asked to do so) after purposely eating some lupines.<sup>153</sup> He sought to persuade Metrocles by argument that he had done nothing wrong, since something terrible might have happened had he not expelled the air naturally. At last, breaking wind himself, he heartened Metrocles, who was consoled by the similarity of their behavior. From then on, he was Crates' student and became proficient in philosophy.

95 According to Hecaton, in his first book of *Anecdotes*, Metrocles burned his own writings with the words,

These are only phantoms of infernal dreams,

that is, mere trash. Others, however, say that when setting fire to his notes of Theophrastus' lectures, Metrocles said,

Come forth, Hephaestus; Thetis needs you now.<sup>154</sup>

There are some things, he said, that are bought with money, like a house, and others that are acquired by time and effort, like education. He said that wealth is harmful unless it is put to good use.

He died of old age, having suffocated himself.

His students were Theombrotus and Cleomenes. Theombrotus had Deme-  
trius of Alexandria as a student; Cleomenes had Timarchus of Alexandria and

151 The Cynic philosopher and wife of Crates of Thebes. Her life and views are discussed at 6.96–98.

152 Theophrastus (c. 370–288/86 BC) was a follower of Aristotle and became head of the Lyceum after Aristotle's death. His life and views are discussed at 5.36–57.

153 Mediterranean perennial that produces a yellow legume.

154 The verse is from Homer's *Iliad* 18.392; it occurs in the passage where Achilles' mother, Thetis, asks the god Hephaestus to make her son a new set of armor. "Hephaestus" is here used by metonymy for fire.

Echeclus of Ephesus. But Echeclus also studied with Theombrotus, whose lectures were attended by Menedemus, of whom we will speak. Menippus of Sinope also became well-known among them.

## HIPPARCHIA

Metrocles' sister, Hipparchia, was also captivated by their doctrines.<sup>155</sup> 96  
 Brother and sister were both from Maroneia.<sup>156</sup> Hipparchia fell in love with Crates and with his discourses and his life, and paid no attention to any of her other suitors, or to wealth, or noble birth, or beauty. Instead, Crates was everything to her. And what is more, she even threatened her parents, saying that she would kill herself unless she were given to him. Crates, therefore, when entreated by her parents to dissuade their daughter, did all he could; but at last, failing to persuade her, he stood up, took off his clothes in front of her, and said, "This is the bridegroom, and this his property; think it over! For you will be no companion for me unless you adopt my way of life."

The girl accepted and, after adopting the same dress, went about with her husband and consorted with him in public and attended dinners with him. 97  
 One time they went to a drinking party at the house of Lysimachus,<sup>157</sup> where she got the better of Theodorus,<sup>158</sup> surnamed the Atheist, by means of the following sophism: Anything Theodorus does that is not said to be wrong would not be wrong if done by Hipparchia. But Theodorus, when he strikes himself, does no wrong; so neither does Hipparchia when she strikes Theodorus. Theodorus could find no answer to her argument, but tried to pull up her dress. Hipparchia was neither alarmed nor distressed as some women might be. And 98  
 when he said to her, "Is this she

who forsakes her shuttle and loom?"<sup>159</sup>

she replied, "It is I, Theodorus. But do you imagine that I have not taken proper thought about myself, if the time I might have spent on the loom I

155 That is, those of the Cynics.

156 A city in Thrace.

157 One of Alexander's former generals, Lysimachus (c. 355–281 BC) became king of Thrace and, eventually, Macedonia.

158 Theodorus belonged to the school of hedonist philosophy founded by Aristippus of Cyrene. His life and views are discussed at 2.97–104.

159 The verse is from the climax of Euripides' *Bacchae* (line 1236); Agave, mother of Pentheus, proudly describes herself this way after she goes over to the worship of Dionysus and, in a deluded state, tears apart the body of her son.

have devoted to my education?” These and countless other stories are told of the lady-philosopher.

A book of Crates’ *Letters*, now in circulation, includes excellent philosophy in a style similar to that of Plato.<sup>160</sup> He also wrote tragedies marked by a high-flown kind of philosophy, as in the following passage:

A single tower is not my homeland, nor a single roof,  
But its citadel is the whole earth,  
A home prepared wherein we may dwell.

He died in old age and was buried in Boeotia.

## MENIPPUS

99 Menippus, also a Cynic, was by origin a Phoenician<sup>161</sup>—a slave, as Achaïcus says in his *Ethics*. Diocles also mentions that his master was a native of Pontus<sup>162</sup> and was named Baton. By persistent begging (for he was avaricious), he succeeded in becoming a citizen of Thebes.<sup>163</sup> There is nothing earnest about him; but his books are full of laughter and very like those of his contemporary Meleager.<sup>164</sup>

Hermippus says that Menippus was a lender of money on daily interest—a *hemerodaneistēs*—and this became his nickname. For he used to make loans to shipmasters, whose ships were pledged as security, and he thereby  
100 amassed a considerable fortune. But finally he was plotted against and robbed of everything, and in despair ended his life by hanging himself. We have composed some playful verses about him:

Phoenician by birth, but a Cretan dog,<sup>165</sup>  
A *hemerodaneistēs* (for this was his nickname)  
Perhaps you know Menippus.  
But then his house in Thebes was burgled

160 The original letters of Crates do not survive, though a large number of extant pseudepigraphical letters bear his name.

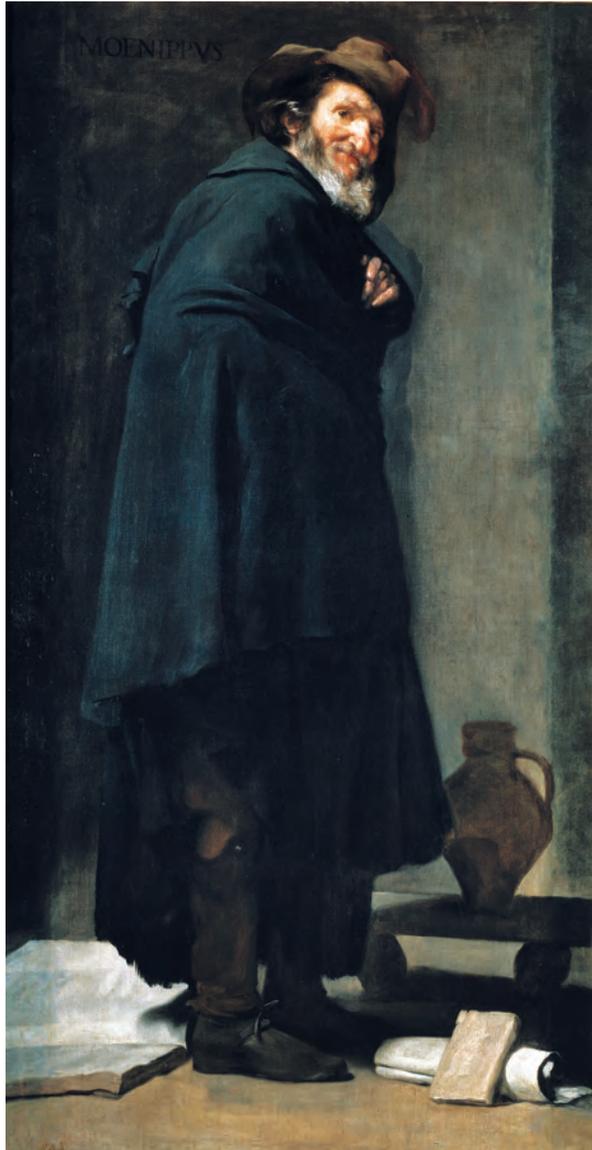
161 The Phoenicians were a Semitic people dwelling principally on the Levantine coast of the Mediterranean.

162 A Greek-speaking region on the southern edge of the Black Sea.

163 That is, he amassed a sum large enough to buy his own freedom and to qualify for citizenship (or, perhaps, to bribe his way onto the citizen rolls).

164 Menippus was the originator of Menippean satire, a humorous mixture of poetry and prose. Meleager of Gadara wrote satires in the first century BC and hence was not at all contemporary with Menippus.

165 The term “dog” is used here for Cynic. Menippus is not elsewhere associated with Crete.



*Menippus*, by Diego Velázquez, c. 1638.

And he lost everything; nor did he understand the character of a dog:  
For he hanged himself.

Some maintain that he did not write the books that are attributed to him,  
and claim that they were the works of Dionysius and Zopyrus of Colophon,

who wrote them in jest and turned them over to Menippus in the belief that he could dispose of them profitably.

101 There have been six men named Menippus; the first is the author who wrote about the Lydians and who abridged Xanthus; the second is our present subject; the third was a sophist from Stratonicea, a Carian by descent; the fourth a sculptor; the fifth and sixth painters, both of whom are mentioned by Apollodorus.

The Cynic's books, thirteen in number, include:

*Communing with the Dead*

*Wills*

*Invented Letters Attributed to the Gods*

*Against the Physicists and Mathematicians and Grammarians*

*On the Family of Epicurus*

*The Epicureans' Observances in Honor of the Twentieth Day*

and other works.

## MENEDEMUS<sup>166</sup>

102 Menedemus was a student of Colotes of Lampsacus.<sup>167</sup> According to Hipobotus, he took wonder working to such lengths that he went about in the guise of a Fury, saying he had come from Hades to detect transgressions, and would go back and report them to the deities below. This was his attire: a full-length gray tunic, at his waist a crimson girdle; on his head an Arcadian hat embroidered with the twelve signs of the zodiac; and the *cothurnus*<sup>168</sup> of tragedy. He wore an immense beard, and carried an ashwood staff.

103 These are the lives of the various Cynics. We will also set down the doctrines they held in common, since we judge that Cynicism is also a school of philosophy, and not, as some say, merely a way of life. They are content, then, to reject the subjects of logic and physics, like Ariston of Chios,<sup>169</sup> and to devote

166 This Menedemus should be distinguished from Menedemus of Eretria, discussed at 2.125–44.

167 A disciple of Epicurus known for composing several critiques of other philosophies, arguing that it was impossible to live by their doctrines.

168 A kind of high boot, worn by tragic actors on stage.

169 A Stoic philosopher (c. 320–c. 250 BC) whose life and views are discussed at 7.160–64.

themselves solely to ethics. And what some say of Socrates, Diocles reports of Diogenes, portraying him as saying, “We must inquire into

what evil and what good has been done in your halls.”<sup>170</sup>

They also dispense with general education. Antisthenes, at any rate, said that those who had attained wisdom should not study literature, lest they be perverted by alien influences. They also reject geometry and music and all such studies. Diogenes, at any rate, said to somebody who showed him a clock, “A useful device to keep one from being late for dinner.” To somebody who played music for him he said, 104

By men’s minds are their cities and houses well-ordered,  
Not by twangings and thrummings.

They also hold that the goal is to live in accordance with virtue, as Antisthenes says in his *Heracles*<sup>171</sup>—exactly like the Stoics. For these two schools have much in common. Hence it has been said that Cynicism is a shortcut to virtue. And it was in the manner of the Cynics that Zeno of Citium<sup>172</sup> lived his life.

They also think that one should live frugally, eating only for nourishment and wearing only the cloak;<sup>173</sup> and they despise wealth, fame, and noble birth. Some, at any rate, eat nothing but vegetables, drink nothing but cold water, and use whatever shelters or tubs they find, like Diogenes, who used to say that it was characteristic of the gods to need nothing, and of godlike men to need very little. 105

They hold that virtue can be taught, as Antisthenes says in his *Heracles*, and when once acquired cannot be lost; that the wise man is worthy of love, has no flaw, and is a friend to his like, and that nothing should be entrusted to fortune. They maintain, like Ariston of Chios, that what is intermediate between virtue and evil is indifferent.

These, then, are the Cynics. We must turn to the Stoics, whose founder was Zeno, a student of Crates.

170 Homer, *Odyssey* 4.392.

171 The work does not survive. At 6.16–17, Diogenes lists among the writings of Antisthenes several works whose titles refer to Heracles.

172 The life and views of the Stoic Zeno of Citium (335–263 BC) are discussed at 7.1–160.

173 The *tribōn*, a rough outer garment, would normally be worn over a softer tunic or chiton, but Cynics were known for wearing it against the skin (see 6.13 and corresponding note).



# BOOK 7

ZENO

335-263 BC

ARISTON

C. 320-C. 250 BC

HERILLUS

3RD CENT. BC

DIONYSIUS

C. 328-248 BC

CLEANTHES

331-232 BC

SPHAERUS

3RD CENT. BC

CHRYSIPPUS

C. 280-207 BC

## ZENO

1 Zeno, son of Mnaseas (or of Demeas), was a native of Citium in Cyprus, a Greek city that had received Phoenician settlers. He had a neck that bent to one side, as Timotheus of Athens says in his work *On Lives*. And Apollonius of Tyre says that he was lean, longish, and swarthy; hence someone called him an Egyptian vine, as Chrysippus says in the first book of his *Proverbs*. He was thick-legged, flabby, and weak. This was why, as Persaeus says in his *Convivial Reminiscences*, he declined most dinner invitations. He delighted, they say, in green figs and sunbathing.

2 He was a student, as was mentioned earlier, of Crates.<sup>1</sup> Next, they say, he attended the lectures of Stilpo<sup>2</sup> and Xenocrates<sup>3</sup> for ten years, according to Timocrates in his *Dion*; and those of Polemon<sup>4</sup> as well. Hecaton, and Apollonius of Tyre in the first book of his work *On Zeno*, say that when he consulted an oracle about what he should do to live the best life, the god replied that he should have intercourse with the dead. Grasping the oracle's meaning, he read the works of the ancients.

3 He became a student of Crates under the following circumstances. Transporting a cargo of purple dye from Phoenicia to the Piraeus, he was shipwrecked. On reaching Athens (he was then a man of thirty), he sat down in a bookseller's shop. The bookseller was reading aloud the second book of Xenophon's *Memorabilia*,<sup>5</sup> and Zeno was so pleased that he asked where such men could be found. At that very moment, fortunately, Crates happened to be walking past. Pointing him out, the bookseller said, "Follow *him*." From then on he studied with Crates, proving in other respects well suited for philosophy, though he was bashful about adopting Cynic shamelessness. Hence Crates, who wanted to cure him of this, gave him a pot of lentil soup to carry through the Cerameicus.<sup>6</sup> And when he saw that Zeno was ashamed and tried

1 Crates of Thebes (c. 368/65–288/85 BC), the Cynic whose life and views are discussed at 6.85–93.

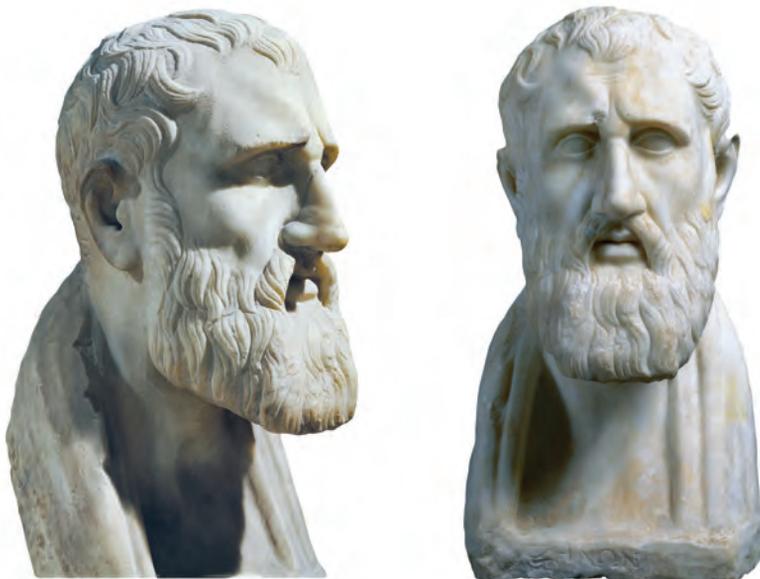
2 Diogenes discusses Stilpo's life and views at 2.113–20.

3 Xenocrates (c. 396–c. 314 BC) succeeded Speusippus as head of the Platonic Academy. His life and views are discussed at 4.6–15.

4 Head of the Academy from 314 to c. 276 BC. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 4.16–20.

5 Xenophon was an Athenian historian, essayist, and admirer of Socrates (the *Memorabilia* consists largely of a set of Socratic dialogues). Diogenes discusses his life and views at 2.48–59.

6 A large neighborhood in Athens, so named because it included the potters' district.



Two views of a marble portrait bust of Zeno, third century BC.

to keep it hidden, he struck the pot with his cane and broke it. As Zeno was running away, the soup streaming down his legs, Crates said, “Why run away, little Phoenician? Nothing terrible has happened to you.”

For a time he studied with Crates; and when, at that period, he had written his *Republic*, some said in jest that he had written it on the tail of the dog.<sup>7</sup> In addition to the *Republic*, he wrote the following works:

4

*On Life According to Nature*  
*On Impulse or On Human Nature*  
*On the Passions*  
*On Duty*  
*On Law*  
*On Greek Education*  
*On Sight*  
*On the Universe*  
*On Signs*

<sup>7</sup> *Cynosura* (“the dog’s tail”) was the name of a promontory near Athens, but the joke comes from the double meaning of “dog” (*kuōn*), which can also mean “Cynic philosopher.” The “tail of the dog” thus refers both to *Cynosura* and to Crates’ mentorship. Zeno’s *Republic*, modeled on that of Plato, does not survive.

*Pythagorean Studies*  
*Universals*  
*On Expressions*  
*Homeric Problems*, five books  
*On the Recitation of Poetry*

He also wrote:

*Handbook*  
*Solutions*  
*Refutations*, two books  
*Reminiscences of Crates*  
*Ethics*

5 These are his books. He finally left Crates and studied with the above-mentioned men for twenty years. Hence he is reported to have said, “I had a good voyage when I was shipwrecked.” Others, however, claim that Zeno said this in reference to his time with Crates. Some say he was spending time in Athens when he heard that his ship was wrecked, and he said, “Fortune does well to drive me to philosophy.” But others say that it was after he had sold his wares in Athens that he turned his attention to philosophy.

He used to give his lectures while walking up and down in the Painted Stoa (which is also called the Stoa of Peisianax, though it got its name—“Painted Stoa”—from the painting of Polygnotus),<sup>8</sup> hoping to keep the place clear of crowds. It was there that under the Thirty, fourteen hundred citizens had been put to death.<sup>9</sup> People now went there to hear Zeno, and this is why they were called Stoics. The same name was given to his followers, who had originally been called Zenonians, as Epicurus<sup>10</sup> says in his letters. According to Eratosthenes in the eighth book of his work *On Ancient Comedy*, the name had formerly been given to the poets who spent their time there; it was they who made the name “Stoic” even more famous.

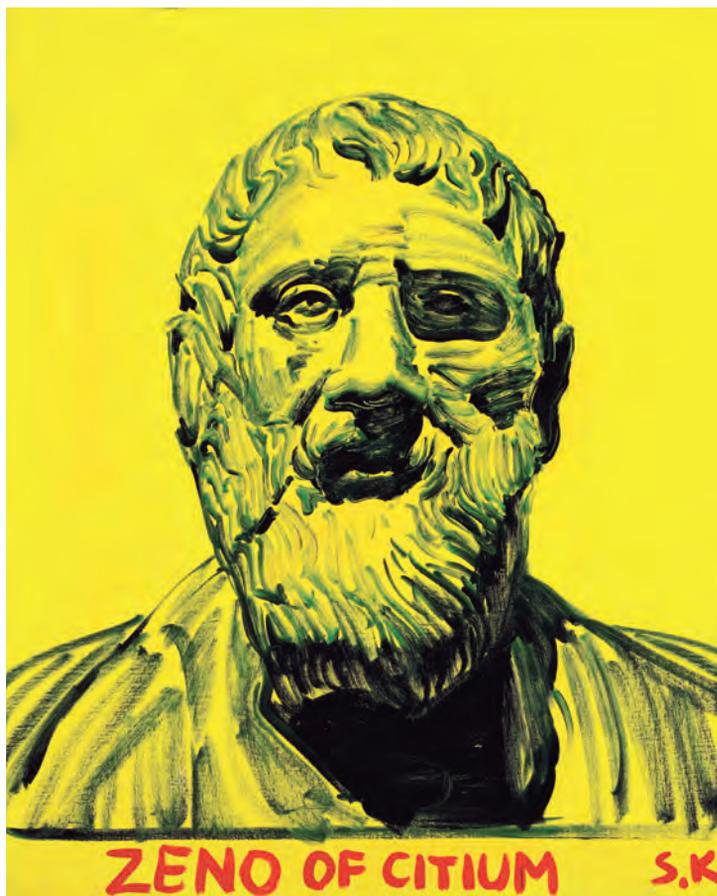
6 The Athenians held Zeno in such high regard that they deposited with him the keys of the city walls and honored him with a golden crown and a bronze statue. This latter honor was also accorded him by his fellow citizens,<sup>11</sup> who regarded the man’s statue as an ornament of their city. Natives of Citium who lived

8 A stoa is a covered public walkway. Polygnotus of Thasos collaborated with an Athenian painter, Micos, to cover this stoa with murals depicting mythic and historical battles; the stoa thereafter was known as *poikilē*, “dappled” or “multicolored,” usually rendered “painted” in this context. Peisianax was supposedly responsible for the construction of the stoa, which ran along the north side of the agora.

9 After Sparta’s defeat of Athens in the Peloponnesian War (404 BC), the Spartans established an oligarchy in Athens, the so-called Thirty; this regime promptly conducted a bloody purge of its enemies.

10 The founder of Epicureanism. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 10.1–154.

11 Namely, his Phoenician compatriots living in Citium.



*Zeno of Citium*, by Sam Kaprielov, 2016. Oil on canvas, 76 × 61 cm.

in Sidon<sup>12</sup> also claimed him as their own. Antigonus<sup>13</sup> favored him, and whenever he came to Athens would attend his lectures and often invited him to his court. This offer Zeno declined, though he sent Antigonus one of his friends, Persaeus, son of Demetrius, a native of Citium, who flourished in the 130th Olympiad,<sup>14</sup> at which time Zeno was an old man. Antigonus' letter, according to Apollonius of Tyre in his work *On Zeno*, runs as follows:<sup>15</sup>

12 A Phoenician city on the Levant, today part of Lebanon.

13 Antigonus II Gonatas (c. 320–239 BC), a king of Macedonia who sought to fill his court at Pella with philosophers, poets, and intellectuals.

14 This Olympiad began in 260 BC.

15 Although they perhaps incorporate details transmitted in the biographical tradition, the letters that follow are probably not authentic.

7 King Antigonus to Zeno the philosopher, greetings.  
 In fortune and fame I consider myself your superior, but in reason and education your inferior, as well as in the perfect happiness you have attained. Therefore I have decided to ask you to come to me, in the belief that you will not refuse the request. Make every effort to join me, on the understanding that you will be the instructor not only of myself but of all the Macedonians collectively. For it is clear that whoever instructs the ruler of Macedonia and guides him on the path of virtue will also be training his subjects to be good men. For the leader's character is likely, for the most part, to determine that of his subjects.

Zeno replied as follows:

8 Zeno to King Antigonus, greetings.  
 I welcome your love of learning insofar as you strive for that true education that aims at advantage, and not the common sort that tends to pervert men's characters. The man who has yearned for philosophy and shied away from the notorious pleasure that renders effeminate the souls of certain young men, is manifestly inclined to nobility of character not only by nature but by deliberate choice. A noble nature that has received, in addition to appropriate training, the benefit of an ungrudging instructor will easily  
 9 attain perfect virtue. But I am subject, due to old age, to bodily weakness. For I am eighty years old, and for that reason am unable to join you. But I am sending you some of my fellow scholars, whose souls are not inferior to mine, while their bodily strength is superior. If you associate with them you will not fall short of the conditions that contribute to perfect happiness.

He sent Persaeus and Philonides the Theban, both mentioned by Epicurus, in his letter to his brother Aristobulus, as associating with Antigonus.<sup>16</sup> I have decided to append the decree<sup>17</sup> that the Athenians passed concerning him. It runs as follows:

10 In the archonship of Arrhenides, in the fifth prytany of the tribe Acamantis, on the twenty-first day of Maemacterion,<sup>18</sup> at the twenty-third sovereign assembly of the prytany, one of the presidents, Hippon, son of Cratistoles, of the deme Xypetaeon, and his co-presidents put the question to the vote; Thraso, son of Thraso, of the deme of Anacaea, moved: Whereas Zeno of Citium, son of Mnaseas, has for many years engaged in philosophy in the city, and in all other respects has continued to be an honorable man, exhort-

<sup>16</sup> This letter does not survive.

<sup>17</sup> The wording and form suggest that this decree is probably authentic (if fragmentary).

<sup>18</sup> Arrhenides was archon in 262 BC. The term "prytany" denotes a portion of the year during which a particular Athenian tribe was given executive control over the Assembly. The twenty-first of Maemacterion would fall sometime in November.



Painted limestone funerary stele with a seated man and two standing figures, late fourth to early third century BC, Greek.

ing to virtue and temperance the young who come to him for instruction, directing them toward what is best, and providing in his own way of life a pattern of conduct consistent with his doctrines, the people have seen fit— and may it turn out well—to praise Zeno of Citium, son of Mnaseas, and to crown him with a golden crown according to the law, for his virtue and temperance, and to build him a tomb in the Cerameicus at public expense.

11

And for the making of the crown and the building of the tomb, it will now elect five citizens of Athens as commissioners; and the Clerk of the City will inscribe the decree on two pillars, and will be permitted to set up one in the Academy, the other in the Lyceum.<sup>19</sup> And the magistrate who presides over the administration will apportion the expense incurred for the pillars, so that all may know that the people of Athens honor good men during their lives and after their death. For the building's construction, Thraso of Anacaea, Philocles of the Piraeus, Phaedrus of Anaphlystus, Mendon of Acharnae, and Smicythus of Sypalettus have been elected commissioners.

12

Such is the decree.

<sup>19</sup> The locations of the Platonic and Aristotelian schools, respectively.

13 Antigonus of Carystus says that the philosopher never denied that he was a citizen of Citium.<sup>20</sup> For when he joined those who were contributing to the restoration of the bathhouse, and his name was being inscribed on the pillar as “Zeno the philosopher,” he requested that “of Citium” be added. He fashioned a hollow lid for an oil flask and used to carry money around in it, so that his teacher Crates might have a supply at hand for his necessities. They say that he had an estate of more than a thousand talents<sup>21</sup> when he came to Greece, and that he invested this money in nautical ventures. He used to eat small loaves and honey, and drink a little fragrant wine. He procured young boys rarely; on one or two occasions he might have procured a young girl in order not to seem a misogynist. He shared the same house with Persaeus; and when the latter brought him a little flute girl, he brought her right back to Persaeus.<sup>22</sup>

14 He was so accommodating, they say, that Antigonus the king would often burst in on him with a party of revelers, and once took him along to Aristocles the kithara player for a drinking party, though Zeno soon slipped away. Antigonus of Carystus says that Zeno used to avoid being near people, and would therefore seat himself at the end of a bench, thus sparing himself one half, at any rate, of that annoyance.<sup>23</sup> Nor would he walk about with more than two or three companions. Sometimes he would even demand a copper coin from bystanders, so that people who were reluctant to give would not crowd around him, as Cleanthes<sup>24</sup> says in his work *On Bronze*. When several people stood about him in the Stoa, he would point up to the wooden fence around the altar and say, “That fence used to be located in the center, but because it was found to be a hindrance it was placed apart. Accordingly, by withdrawing from the center, you yourselves will be causing us less annoyance.”

15 Demochares, son of Laches, greeted him and bid him only to mention or write for anything he needed to Antigonus, since the king would grant Demochares’ every request;<sup>25</sup> after hearing this, Zeno would no longer associate with him. After Zeno’s death Antigonus is reported to have said, “What an

20 Since Citium was a largely Phoenician city, Zeno admitted to non-Greek origins by acknowledging it as his birthplace.

21 A vast fortune. A talent consisted of six thousand drachmas.

22 Flute girls in Athens were often considered freely available as sexual partners.

23 Because at the end of a bench he could have only one person next to him, not two.

24 Cleanthes of Assos, Zeno’s successor as head of the Stoa. Diogenes discusses his life and work at 7.168–76.

25 Demochares was an Athenian politician (c. 360–275 BC) and nephew of the more famous statesman Demosthenes. Apparently he had established a close alliance with King Antigonus Gonatas of Macedonia, who exercised hegemony over the Greek world during the mid-third century BC and dispensed largesse to influential Athenian speakers.

audience I have lost!” Hence he employed Thraso as an intermediary to request that the Athenians bury Zeno in the Cerameicus.<sup>26</sup> And when asked why he admired the man he said, “Because despite the many large gifts he received from me, he was never vain, nor did he ever appear submissive.”

He was devoted to inquiry and reasoned with precision on all subjects. Hence the words of Timon in his *Lampoons*:

I saw as well an old Phoenician woman greedily longing,  
In her darksome pride, for everything; but her basket, being small,  
[overflowed with stuff,  
And she had no more sense than a *kindapsos*.<sup>27</sup>

He used to debate very rigorously with Philo the dialectician<sup>28</sup> and study with him. Hence Zeno, who was the younger man, admired Philo no less than he did his own teacher, Diodorus. He surrounded himself with ragamuffins,<sup>29</sup> as Timon says in these lines: 16

Meanwhile he assembled a cloud of paupers,  
The most beggarly and insignificant of townsmen.

Zeno himself was sullen and curt and of a shriveled countenance. He was also extremely frugal, his thrift cloaking a barbarous stinginess. If he rebuked anyone, he did so tersely, without elaborating, and keeping his distance. I allude, for example, to the remark he once made about a fop. When the man was taking great care as he stepped across a gutter, Zeno said, “He does right to look askance at the mud, since he can’t behold his reflection in it.” When a Cynic said he had no oil in his flask and asked him for some, Zeno turned him down. But as the man was going away Zeno asked, “Which of us is the more shameless?” 17

Infatuated with Chremonides,<sup>30</sup> and sitting beside him with Cleanthes, he got up. When Cleanthes expressed surprise, Zeno said, “I hear from good doctors that the best remedy for a tumid inflammation is rest.” When he was

26 The state-sponsored cemetery in the Cerameicus was used to inter war dead and other honored public servants. At 7.11, Zeno was awarded an honorary tomb in the Cerameicus not at Antigonus’ request but by decree of the Assembly.

27 A Greek nonsense word that also sometimes refers to a stringed instrument.

28 A philosopher and logician from the Dialectical school and, like Zeno, a student of Diodorus Cronus (not to be confused with the more famous Philo, the Hellenized Jewish writer Philo of Alexandria).

29 The compound Greek word *gymnorruparoi* signifies men who were both dirty and too poor to afford decent clothes.

30 An Athenian statesman. The Greek word here translated “infatuated” makes clear that Zeno’s attraction was a sexual one.

18 sharing a couch at a dinner party, the man next to Zeno kicked one of the guests on the couch next to theirs. Zeno then nudged his partner with his knee; and when the man turned around, Zeno said, “How do you think your neighbor liked what you did to *him*?” Of a pederast he said, “Just as spending all their time with boys impairs the intelligence of schoolmasters, so it does with those people.”<sup>31</sup>

He used to say that the highly precise expressions used by purists resembled the coins minted by Alexander: these were pleasing and well rounded like the coins, but not more valuable on that account. Words of the opposite kind he likened to the Attic tetradrachms,<sup>32</sup> which are struck crudely and without care; these discourses carried more weight than the more polished phrases. When his student Ariston<sup>33</sup> discoursed at length and gracelessly, and in some instances rashly and recklessly, Zeno would say, “It could only mean that your father was drunk when he sired you.” Hence he called Ariston a chatterbox, he himself being concise in speech.

19 There was a glutton who left nothing for his tablemates. One day, when a large fish was served, Zeno raised it up as if he would devour it himself. When the man looked at him, he said, “What do you suppose your tablemates suffer every day, if you can’t put up with my gluttony just this once?” When a young fellow was posing a question more zealously than became his years, Zeno led him to a mirror and told him to look in it. He then asked whether the boy thought it suitable for someone who looked like that to ask such questions. Someone claimed not to agree with Antisthenes on many points,<sup>34</sup> whereupon Zeno presented the man with a maxim of Sophocles’ and asked whether he thought it was any good. When the man said he did not know, Zeno said, “Aren’t you ashamed to pick out and cite something bad said by Antisthenes, but to make no effort to retain something good?”

20 When someone said he thought the maxims of the philosophers seemed brief, Zeno said, “You are right. And their syllables should be shortened as well, if possible.” When someone talking to him about Polemon<sup>35</sup> said that the man announced one topic but spoke on another, Zeno frowned and said, “What of it? Do you not value what was offered?” He said that one who

31 The referent of “those people” is vague; presumably, pederasts are meant, though elsewhere Zeno appears to belong to this category (see 7.13).

32 The Attic four-drachma coin was made of silver and bore the image of an owl.

33 Ariston of Chios (c. 320–c. 250 BC), the Stoic whose life and views Diogenes discusses at 7.160–64.

34 Antisthenes (c. 445–c. 365 BC) is considered the forerunner of the Cynic sect. His life and views are discussed at 6.1–19.

35 Head of the Platonic Academy for more than forty years starting about 314 BC. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 4.16–23.



*Left:* A silver tetradrachm (four-drachma coin) with the head of Alexander, minted in Amphipolis, Thrace, late fourth or early third century BC. *Right:* An Attic tetradrachm from the mid-fifth century BC. Athenian “Owls,” as they were called, were minted in Athens for over four hundred years, beginning in 512 BC. Although the style evolved, the coins retained the same basic design of Athena on the obverse and the owl, her symbol, on the reverse.

converses intelligently should possess, like actors, a powerful voice and great strength; but he should not open his mouth too wide; that’s what people do who chatter at length but say impossible things. He said that able speakers, like good artisans, need not pause to have their skills appreciated; on the contrary, the listener should be so caught up in the discourse that he has no time to take notes.

When a young man was babbling at length, he said, “Your ears have merged with your tongue.” To the handsome fellow who said he thought the wise man would not fall in love, he said, “Then nothing will be more wretched than the condition of beauties like you.” He used to say of the philosophers that most were unwise about many matters, but about small and ordinary things quite learned. He used to cite the saying of Caphisius, who, when one of his music students was trying to blow loudly on the flute, cuffed him and said that playing well does not depend on playing loudly, whereas playing loudly should depend on playing well. When some young man was discoursing rather impudently, he said, “I would rather not say, lad, what comes into my head.”

A certain Rhodian, handsome and rich, but nothing more, became greatly attached to him; but Zeno’s reluctance to put up with him was such that he began by making him sit on the dusty benches, so that he might soil his cloak; then he placed him where the beggars sat, so that he would rub up

21

22

against their rags; and finally the young man departed. He used to say that the most unbecoming of all things was arrogance, especially in the young. He said it was not the words and expressions we should remember, as if we were merely tasting some well-cooked dish or dressing; rather, we should apply our minds to making good use of what we hear. He used to say that the young should behave with perfect propriety in walk, demeanor, and attire, and he was constantly quoting Euripides' verses about Capaneus:

- 23                    Though his fortune was <large>,  
                       He was by no means proud of his wealth; his ambition  
                       Was no grander than that of a poor man.<sup>36</sup>

He used to say that for one who wishes to master the sciences, nothing is so detrimental as conceit, and there is nothing one needs more than time. When asked what is a friend, he replied, "A second self." One day, they say, he was flogging a slave for stealing, and when the man said, "I am fated to steal," Zeno replied, "And to be thrashed." Beauty he called the flower of moderation (though others say that he called moderation the flower of beauty). One day, seeing the slave of one of his friends marked with bruises, he said, "I see the footprints of your anger." To someone who had smeared himself with myrrh,<sup>37</sup> he said, "Who gives off the scent of a woman?" When Dionysius the Turncoat<sup>38</sup> asked him why he was the only student Zeno did not correct, he replied, "Because I cannot trust you." To a lad talking nonsense, he said, "The reason we have two ears and one mouth is so that we may hear more and talk less."

- 24                    Reclining in silence at a drinking party, and asked the reason, he urged his critic to report to the king that there was someone present who knew how to keep silent. He was being questioned by some ambassadors from Ptolemy,<sup>39</sup> and they wished to know what they should say about him to the king. When asked how he felt about abuse, he replied, "As an ambassador feels who is dismissed without an answer." Apollonius of Tyre says that when Crates tried to drag him away from Stilpo by his cloak, Zeno remarked, "Crates, the clever way to seize a philosopher is by his ears.<sup>40</sup> So persuade me and drag me away by *them*. For if you use violence, my body will be with you, but my mind with Stilpo."

36 Euripides' *Suppliant Maidens* 861–63. The lines are spoken by Adrastus, king of Argos, in a description of Capaneus, one of his allies in the war of the Seven Against Thebes.

37 In ancient Greece, heavy use of unguents and scents was considered luxurious and effeminate.

38 A Stoic who, after contracting a painful eye condition, abandoned his school and joined the hedonist Cyrenaics. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 7.166–67.

39 Both Ptolemy I Soter (c. 367–282 BC) and Ptolemy II Philadelphus (308–246 BC) reigned during Zeno's lifetime, but Diogenes likely means the latter here.

40 That is, to use verbal arguments.

According to Hippobotus, he also studied with Diodorus, with whom he worked hard at dialectic. And when he had made some progress he would attend Polemon's lectures, so free was he of arrogance.<sup>41</sup> Consequently Polemon is reported to have said to him, "You do not escape me, Zeno, slipping in by the garden door, stealing my doctrines, and clothing them in a Phoenician style." When a dialectician showed him seven dialectical patterns in the Reaper argument,<sup>42</sup> he asked how much he would charge for them; on hearing "a hundred drachmas," he gave the man two hundred, so devoted was he to learning. They say that he was the first to coin the word "duty"<sup>43</sup> and to write a treatise about it. He is also said to have rewritten Hesiod's lines as follows:<sup>44</sup> 25

He is best of all who follows good advice;  
Noble too is the man who thinks up everything for himself.

For he said that the man capable of listening well to what is said and applying it himself is superior to him who finds everything out for himself. For the latter has merely gained proper understanding, while he who has learned to take advice has also added proper conduct. 26

When asked why, though austere, he relaxed at a drinking party, he said, "Lupines<sup>45</sup> too are bitter, but when soaked they become sweet." Hecaton too, in the second book of his *Anecdotes*, says that Zeno relaxed at such gatherings. He used to say it was better to trip with one's feet than with one's tongue. He said that well-being is attained little by little, yet it is no little thing itself. Some attribute this saying to Socrates.

His powers of endurance and the austerity of his way of life were unequalled; the food he ate was uncooked, and the cloak he wore was thin. Hence it was said of him:

Daunted not by winter's cold, by endless rain,  
By the heat of the sun, by sickness dire,  
Shunning public feasts, never yielding,  
He cleaves to his studies day and night.<sup>46</sup> 27

41 Polemon was a Platonist (see 4.16–20), so Diogenes applauds a philosopher who was willing to study with diverse teachers.

42 One of several well-known logical conundrums of the day (see 7.44).

43 The Greek term *kathêkon* means "what is appropriate" or "what is fitting." Starting with Zeno, Stoics used it to characterize right action or action in accordance with Nature.

44 The verses quoted here rearrange the wording of two lines in Hesiod's *Works and Days* (293 and 295). Diogenes inverts the order of the original, which cast "the man who thinks up everything for himself" as the best of all.

45 A yellow legume; it is high in alkaloids that can be toxic but are easily removed by soaking or boiling.

46 These verses, in the dactylic meter of Greek epic, are probably a quote, but the source is unknown.

In fact the comic poets unwittingly praise him with their jokes. Philemon, for example, in his comedy *Philosophers*, says:

One loaf, dried figs, a cup of water.  
For he propounds a novel philosophy:  
He teaches hunger, and gets pupils.

Some attribute these lines to Posidippus.<sup>47</sup>

Before long he became almost proverbial. At any rate, a saying about him ran as follows:

More temperate than Zeno the philosopher.

Posidippus too, in *Men Transported*, says:

So that for ten days  
He seemed more master of himself than Zeno.

28 For in truth he surpassed everyone in this aspect of virtue, and in dignity, and yes, by Zeus, in happiness. For he was ninety-eight years old when he died, and he had kept healthy and free of illness to the end. Persaeus, however, in his *Ethical Discourses*, says that he died at seventy-two and that he came to Athens at twenty-two. Apollonius says he led his school for fifty-eight years. He died in the following way. As he was leaving the school, he tripped and broke his finger. Smiting the ground with his hand, he uttered the line from the *Niobe*,

29 I am coming. Why do you call for me?<sup>48</sup>

and died instantly by stopping his breath.

The Athenians buried him in the Cerameicus and honored him in the decrees cited above, adding their testimony of his excellence. And Antiphon of Sidon<sup>49</sup> composed this epitaph for him:

Here lies renowned Zeno, dear to Citium, who scaled Olympus,  
Not by piling Pelion on Ossa,<sup>50</sup>  
Nor by toiling at the labors of Heracles. To the stars  
He found the path: that of temperance alone.

47 Posidippus of Cassandreia and Philemon were both comic playwrights of the late fourth and early third centuries BC.

48 A line from a lost poem of Timotheus of Miletus (446–357 BC).

49 Three men named Antiphon are known to us; it's unclear which of them Diogenes is referring to here.

50 An allusion to the myth of the giants who piled one mountain on another in order to scale heaven and fight the gods.



Gem of transparent blue glass paste, engraved with a bust of Zeno, Roman, first to third century.

Zenodotus the Stoic, a student of Diogenes,<sup>51</sup> wrote another:

You invented self-sufficiency,<sup>52</sup> casting aside  
 Haughty wealth, noble Zeno, gray of brow.  
 For you discovered a manly doctrine,  
 And founded a school, a mother of fearless liberty.  
 If Phoenicia was your native land, why should we bear a grudge?  
 Came not Cadmus thence, who gave Greece her books and writing?<sup>53</sup>

30

51 Diogenes the Cynic is discussed at 6.20–81; his student Zenodotus is not otherwise known.

52 *Autarkeia*, a state in which one needs nothing and thus has complete freedom of action, was a goal that both Stoics and Epicureans strove for.

53 Cadmus was a mythical Phoenician prince whose sister, Europa, was abducted by Zeus. Cadmus went in search of her and, after finding her safe in Greece, founded the city of Thebes there, becoming its king. He was thought to have imported the first alphabet into Greece.

And Athenaeus the epigrammatist speaks thus about the Stoics in general:

You who are adepts in Stoic learning,  
 And have committed to your tablets the finest doctrines,  
 Teaching that the soul's virtue is the only good.  
 For it alone protects the lives and cities of men.  
 But pleasure of the flesh, an end adored by other men,  
 Only one of the daughters of Memory attains.<sup>54</sup>

31 We have ourselves, in the *Pammetros*,<sup>55</sup> discussed the manner of Zeno's death:

They say that Zeno of Citium died; weary of an old man's ills,  
 He sought release by fasting;  
 Others say that, stumbling one day, he beat the earth with his hand,  
 Crying, "I am coming of my own accord; why then do you call me?"

For there are some who give this account of his death. So much, then, concerning his death.

32 Demetrius of Magnesia, in *Men of the Same Name*, says that Zeno's father, Mnaseas, being a trader, came often to Athens and brought home many books about Socrates for Zeno, who was still a boy. Thus even in his native place he got good training; and then, on reaching Athens, he attached himself to Crates. And it seems, he adds, that when the <earlier><sup>56</sup> philosophers were unsettled in their views, Zeno defined the goal of human life. They say he used to swear "by the caper"<sup>57</sup> just as Socrates swore "by the dog."

33 There are some, however, including Cassius the Skeptic and his circle, who denounce Zeno on many grounds. They say, first of all, that he declared, at the beginning of his *Republic*, that general education is useless; and secondly, that all persons who are not good are enemies, foes, slaves, and alien to one another: parents to children, brothers to brothers, and kinsmen to kinsmen. Again, in the *Republic*, he claims that only the good are citizens, friends, kinsmen, and free, so that for the Stoics parents and children are enemies, since they are not wise.<sup>58</sup> Also in the *Republic* he holds that wives should be held in common, and at <line> two hundred prohibits the building of temples, law courts, and gymnasia

54 The daughters of Memory are the nine Muses; only one of the nine (Erato) dealt with tales of erotic love.

55 In his *Epigrams*, Diogenes wrote verses about famous figures in a variety of meters, earning it the alternate title *Pammetros*, meaning "[Poems of] All Meters."

56 The word has been added in some editions to repair an apparent gap in the text; "other" is also a possible emendation.

57 Perhaps meaning the tree rather than its fruit. The significance is obscure, as is that of Socrates' swearing "by the dog."

58 The Stoics held that only the wise are proper objects of love and affection (see 7.120).

in cities. As for money, he writes as follows: “We do not think money should be created, either for exchange or for traveling abroad.” He also commands men and women to wear the same clothes and to keep no part of the body entirely hidden.

That the *Republic* is the work of Zeno is confirmed by Chrysippus in his work *On the Republic*. Zeno dealt with erotic matters at the beginning of his work entitled *On the Art of Love*, and writes similar things in his *Talks*. Such are the criticisms of him found not only in Cassius but also in the work of the orator Isidorus of Pergamon. Isidorus also says that the passages of which the Stoics disapproved were excised from his works by Athenodorus the Stoic,<sup>59</sup> who was in charge of the library at Pergamon. These passages were restored when Athenodorus was detected and in danger of prosecution. So much concerning the passages of his work that were rejected as spurious. 34

There have been eight men named Zeno: the first was the Eleatic philosopher, of whom we will speak later;<sup>60</sup> the second our present subject; the third a Rhodian who wrote a local history <in one volume>; the fourth a historian who wrote about Pyrrhus’ military expedition to Italy and Sicily,<sup>61</sup> as well as an epitome of the achievements of Rome and Carthage; the fifth a student of Chrysippus who wrote few books but left a great many students; the sixth a doctor of the school of Herophilus, a competent thinker though a poor writer; the seventh a grammarian to whom epigrams, in addition to other works, are attributed; and the eighth a native of Sidon, an Epicurean philosopher, lucid both in thought and in style. 35

Of Zeno’s many students, the following were renowned: Persaeus, son of Demetrius, of Citium, whom some say was Zeno’s friend, others his servant, one of those sent to him by Antigonus to act as his scribe; he had served as tutor to Antigonus’ son Halcyoneus. One day, when Antigonus wished to test Persaeus, he arranged for false news to be reported to him that his estate had been despoiled by enemies; and when Persaeus’ face fell, Antigonus said, “Don’t you see that wealth is not an indifferent?”<sup>62</sup> 36

The books attributed to him include:

*On Monarchy*

*The Spartan Constitution*

59 Athenodorus of Tarsus (fl. mid-first century BC), a Stoic philosopher at the court of Augustus and a friend of Cicero and Strabo.

60 See 9.25–29.

61 Pyrrhus (319–271 BC), a king of Epirus, led his forces against the Romans and Macedonians in several battles. Since he emerged victorious from one such battle after sustaining terrible losses, his name gives us the modern term “Pyrrhic victory.”

62 According to Stoic doctrine, wealth is neither good nor bad in itself (see 7.104).

*On Marriage*  
*On Impiety*  
*Thyestes*  
*On Love Affairs*  
*Exhortations*  
*Talks*  
*Anecdotes*, four books  
*Memoirs*  
*Against Plato's "Laws,"* seven books

- 37 Ariston,<sup>63</sup> son of Miltiades, of Chios, who introduced the idea of indifference. Herillus of Chalcedon, who made knowledge the end. Dionysius, who converted to the doctrine of pleasure; for owing to his severe ophthalmia, he hesitated to say that pain was a matter of indifference. He was a native of Heraclea. Sphaerus of Bosporus. Cleanthes, son of Phantias, of Assos, who succeeded Zeno as head of the school. Zeno used to compare Cleanthes to hard wax tablets, which, though difficult to write on, retain what is written. Sphaerus became Cleanthes' student after Zeno's death; we
- 38 will speak of him in the life of Cleanthes. The following men, according to Hippobotus, were also students of Zeno: Philonides of Thebes, Callippus of Corinth, Posidonius of Alexandria, Athenodorus of Soli, and Zeno of Sidon.

I have decided to include in the life of Zeno a general account of all the Stoic doctrines, since he was the school's founder. I have given a list of his many works, in which he has spoken as has no other Stoic. His doctrines in general are as follows. Let a summary account suffice, in accordance with our usual practice.

- 39 They say that philosophical doctrine has three parts: the physical, the ethical, and the logical. Zeno of Citium was the first to divide it this way in his work *On Reason*; Chrysippus did the same in the first book of his work *On Reason* and in the first book of his *Physics*, as did Apollodorus Ephelus<sup>64</sup> in the first books of his *Introductions to the Doctrines*, Eudromus<sup>65</sup> in his *Elements of Ethics*, Diogenes of Babylon,<sup>66</sup> and Posidonius.<sup>67</sup>

63 The paragraph that begins here continues the list of Zeno's students and followers begun at 7.36.

64 A little-known Stoic of the first century BC.

65 Otherwise unknown.

66 A pupil (c. 240–152 BC) of Chrysippus, he became head of the Stoa in the early second century BC. In 156 BC he traveled to Rome, where he helped to stimulate interest in Stoicism.

67 Posidonius of Apamea, a historian and polymath (c. 135–c. 51 BC). After studying in Athens under Panaetius, he moved to Rhodes and made the city a second center for Stoic thought.

These parts Apollodorus calls “topics”; Chrysippus and Eudromus call them “species”; others call them “genera.” They compare philosophy to an animal, likening logic to the bones and sinews, ethics to the fleshier parts, and physics to the soul. Or again, they liken it to an egg: the outer parts are logic, the next parts are ethics, and the inmost parts are physics; or to a fertile field, of which logic is the surrounding fence, ethics the fruit, and physics the land or the trees. Or to a city that is well fortified and governed according to reason. 40

No part is separate from another, as some of the Stoics say; instead, the parts are blended together. And they used to teach them in combination. Others present logic first, physics second, and ethics third. Among these are Zeno in his work *On Reason*, as well as Chrysippus, Archedemus,<sup>68</sup> and Eudromus.

For Diogenes of Ptolemais<sup>69</sup> begins with ethics, Apollodorus puts ethics second, and Panaetius<sup>70</sup> and Posidonius begin with physics, as Phantias, a student of Posidonius, says in the first book of his work *Lectures of Posidonius*. Cleanthes says that there are six parts: dialectic, rhetoric, ethics, politics, physics, and theology. But others, like Zeno of Tarsus,<sup>71</sup> say that these are not parts of philosophical discourse, but of philosophy itself. Some say that the logical part is divided into two branches: rhetoric and dialectic.<sup>72</sup> And some add a part concerned with definitions and another that deals with canons and criteria.<sup>73</sup> But others eliminate the part concerned with definitions. 41

They use the branch that deals with canons and criteria as a means of discovering the truth; for it is in that branch that they work out the differences between the impressions. They also use the part that deals with definitions as a means of recognizing the truth; for it is by means of general notions that things are apprehended. Rhetoric they regard as a knowledge of how to speak well in an expository manner, and dialectic as the knowledge of how to discourse correctly in speeches conducted by question and answer; hence they define it as the science of the true, the false, and that which is neither true nor false. 42

They hold that rhetoric itself has three divisions: the deliberative, the forensic, and the panegyric. It is divided into invention, phraseology, 43

68 Archedemus of Tarsus, a Stoic philosopher, was probably a student of Diogenes of Babylon.

69 Otherwise unknown.

70 Panaetius of Rhodes (c. 185–109 BC), author of *On Moral Obligations*, was a Stoic philosopher.

71 Zeno of Tarsus succeeded Chrysippus as head of the Stoa in 204 BC.

72 See Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Mathematicians*, 2.7: “When Zeno of Citium was asked how dialectic differs from rhetoric, he clenched his fist and spread it out again, and said, ‘like this’—characterizing compactness and brevity as the hallmark of dialectic by the clenching, and hinting at the breadth of rhetorical ability through the spreading and extension of his fingers.”

73 Both terms, in their original Greek sense, meant standards for judgment. The Stoics used them especially to mean standards for distinguishing truth from falsehood.

arrangement, and delivery. A rhetorical speech is divided into introduction, exposition, replies to opponents, and conclusion.

44 Dialectic falls under two headings: what is signified and what is uttered. What is signified falls under these headings: impressions and the various things to which they give rise, the sayables that subsist from them consisting of propositions and other complete sayables, predicates and similar terms, active and passive, genera and species, as well as arguments, modes, syllogisms,<sup>74</sup> and sophisms due either to the subject matter or to what is uttered. These include Liar arguments, Truth-teller arguments, Denier arguments, Sorites arguments, related arguments (whether defective, insoluble, or valid), and Veiled Man arguments, Horned arguments, Nobody arguments, and Reaper arguments.<sup>75</sup>

Dialectic also includes the above-mentioned topic of utterance, which encompasses written language and the parts of speech, and deals with solecisms, barbarisms, poetical speech, ambiguities, euphony, music, and, according to some writers, definitions, divisions, and expressions.

45 They say that the study of syllogisms is highly useful, since it reveals what is demonstrable, and this contributes much to the correcting of doctrines, their orderly arrangement, and their retention in memory; it also indicates scientific comprehension.

An argument is itself a framework made up of premises and a conclusion. A syllogism is an argument that derives its conclusion from these elements. Demonstration is an argument that infers things less well apprehended from things better apprehended.

46 An impression is an imprint on the soul, its name appropriately borrowed from the imprints made in wax by a seal ring. Some impressions involve comprehension, others do not. The comprehending impression, which they say is the criterion of reality, is that which arises from an existing object and is imprinted and stamped in accordance with it. The uncomprehending impression is that which does not arise from an existing object, or, if it does, does not accord with it; it is neither clear nor distinct.

47 Dialectic, they say, is indispensable and itself a virtue that encompasses other particular virtues. Freedom from rash judgment is the knowledge of when to give and withhold assent. Circumspection is a mental firmness with regard to the merely probable, so that one is not taken in by it. Irrefutability is strength in argument that prevents one from being brought over to the oppo-

<sup>74</sup> Arguments presented in a standardized form so as to reveal their validity, or general forms for such arguments (see 7.78).

<sup>75</sup> Each of these arguments represents a paradox. The Horned argument, for example, ran: “What you haven’t lost, you still have; you haven’t lost horns; therefore, you have horns” (see 2.108).



Dialectic and Rhetoric, by Giovanni Pisano, detail from the cathedral pulpit, Pisa, 1302–1310.

site side. Earnestness is a disposition to refer impressions to right reason. They say that knowledge itself is either an unerring comprehension or a disposition in the reception of impressions that cannot be altered by argument. They say that without the study of dialectic the wise man will not be infallible in argument. For by means of it he will distinguish between truth and falsehood, and he will discern what is merely plausible and ambiguous. Without it, he will not be able to pose questions and give answers in a methodical manner.

Rashness in judging affects what actually happens, and consequently those who are not well trained in handling impressions tend to be disorderly and thoughtless. In no other way will the wise man show himself to be acute and quick-witted and generally adept in argument. For the same person will be able to converse well and to argue well and to speak to the point about the subject under discussion and to reply to questions; and these are the skills of a man versed in dialectic.

48

This then, in summary, is their logical teaching. And in order to give it in detail as well, let me now discuss the doctrines covered in their introductory handbook. Here I quote what Diocles of Magnesia says in his *Compendium of the Philosophers*:

49 The Stoics like to place first their account of impression and sense perception, given that the criterion by which the truth of things is known is classed as an impression, and given that the account of assent and that of apprehension and thought, while it precedes the rest, cannot be formulated apart from impression. For impression arises first; then thought, which is capable of discourse, articulates the subject's response to the impression.

50 There is a difference between an impression and a figment. For a figment is the sort of fanciful thought that occurs in sleep, whereas an impression is the imprinting of something on the soul, that is, an alteration, as Chrysippus maintains in the second book of his work *On the Soul*. For the imprint should not be taken to be like that of a seal ring, since it is impossible for there to be many such imprints at the same time in the same place. The impression meant is that which comes from an existing object and is imprinted, molded, and stamped in conformity with the existing object, such as could not come from an object that did not exist.

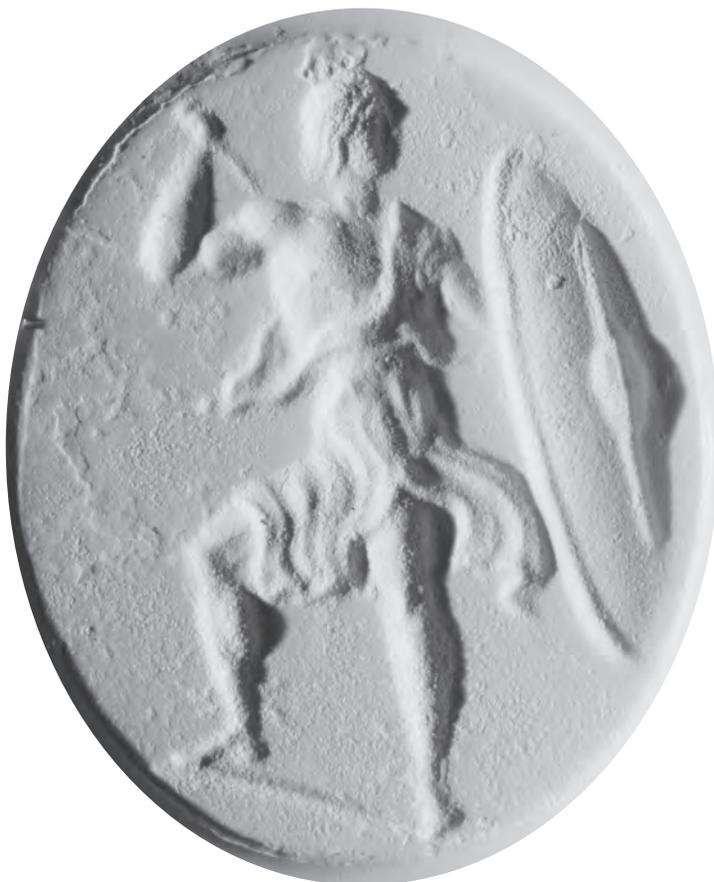
51 According to them some impressions are sensory and others are not. The sensory are those apprehended through one or more sense organs; the nonsensory are those apprehended through thought, as is the case with incorporeal things and everything else that is apprehended by reason. Among sensory impressions, some arise from existing objects and are accompanied by yielding and assent. But some are illusions that arise “as if” from existing objects.

Among the impressions, some are rational and others nonrational. Those of rational creatures are rational; those of nonrational creatures are nonrational. The rational impressions are processes of thought, while the nonrational have no name. And some impressions are technical,<sup>76</sup> others nontechnical. An image, at any rate, is viewed differently by a specialist and by a layman.

52 According to the Stoics, the term “sensation” refers to (1) the breath that extends from the ruling part<sup>77</sup> to the senses, (2) apprehension by means of the senses, and (3) the equipment of the sense organs, which in certain persons is impaired. The activity of these organs is also called sensation. According to the Stoics it is by sense that we grasp white and black and rough and smooth, whereas it is by reason that we grasp the conclusions reached by demonstration, for example the existence of the gods and their providence. For some concepts are conceived by direct contact, some by resemblance, some by analogy, some by transposition, some by composition, and some by opposition.

<sup>76</sup> That is, influenced by specialized knowledge such as that of a painter or doctor.

<sup>77</sup> The heart, which the Stoics identified as the seat of reason (see 7.159).



Iron ring, late fourth or early third century BC, Greek.

It is by direct contact that we conceive of sensory objects; by resemblance we conceive of things that are recognized from something related, like Socrates from a picture of him; by analogy we conceive of things sometimes by enlargement, as in the case of Tityus<sup>78</sup> and the Cyclops,<sup>79</sup> sometimes by diminution, as in the case of the Pygmy.<sup>80</sup> And it is by analogy that the

53

78 A giant and the son of the goddess Gaia (earth), he attempted to rape the nymph Leto, mother of Apollo and Artemis. His punishment was to be bound to stakes in the underworld, where vultures fed upon his liver.

79 One of the Cyclopes, a race of savage, one-eyed giants. The most famous of them is Polyphemus, whose blinding by Odysseus in the *Odyssey* causes Polyphemus' father, Poseidon, to turn against the hero.

80 A mythical race of diminutive men. Their name derives from the Greek *pugme*, a measurement that indicated the length between elbow and knuckle, the supposed height of a pygmy.

notion of the center of the earth arises, on the basis of smaller spheres. By transposition we conceive of things like eyes on the chest. By composition we conceive of the Hippocentaur.<sup>81</sup> By opposition we conceive of death. Some things are also conceived of by deduction,<sup>82</sup> like sayables and place. The concept of something just and good arises by nature. And concepts may arise from deprivation, for example the handless man. Such are their doctrines about impression, sensation, and thought.

54 The criterion of truth, they say, is the comprehending impression, that is, the impression arising from an existing object, as Chrysippus says in the twelfth book of his *Physics*, as do Antipater<sup>83</sup> and Apollodorus. Boethus,<sup>84</sup> on the other hand, admits additional criteria, namely intellect, sense perception, desire, and scientific knowledge. Chrysippus, contradicting himself in the first book of his work *On Reason*, says that sense perception and preconception are the criteria. (Preconception is an innate grasp of universals.) Some of the older Stoics admit right reason as a criterion, as Posidonius says in his work *On the Criterion*.

55 In their theory of dialectic, most of them agree in taking voice as their starting point. Voice is a striking of the air, or the proper object of the sense of hearing,<sup>85</sup> as Diogenes of Babylon says in his handbook *On Voice*. The voice of an animal is a striking of air that arises from an impulse, whereas the voice of a human being is articulate and, as Diogenes says, issues from thought; it reaches maturity at the age of fourteen. And according to the Stoics voice is a body, as Archedemus says in his work *On Voice*, as do Diogenes and Antipater, as well as Chrysippus in the second book of his *Physics*. For everything that acts is a body; and voice acts when it reaches those who hear it from those who utter it.

56 According to the Stoics, as Diogenes says, speech is vocal sound that can be committed to writing, for example, “day.” An assertion is a meaningful use of voice that issues from thought, for example, “It is day.” And dialect is speech that is stamped as belonging to the Greek world as distinct from other nations, or it is a variety peculiar to a particular region, that is to say, it has a certain linguistic quality. For example, one uses *thalatta* in Attic or *hemere* in Ionic.<sup>86</sup>

81 Another word for centaur.

82 That is, by inference from things evident to the senses.

83 Antipater of Tarsus was a second-century BC Stoic philosopher and teacher of Panaetius.

84 Boethus of Sidon was a second-century Stoic philosopher and student of Diogenes of Babylon.

85 The Greek term here translated as “voice” can refer to any sound.

86 Scholars have identified five different dialects of Greek in the ancient world; the ancients themselves usually spoke of four (Attic, Doric, Ionic, and Aeolian).

The elements of speech are the twenty-four letters. But “letter” refers to three things: the phonetic element, the written character, and its name—for example, *alpha*. Seven of the letters are vowels—alpha, epsilon, eta, iota, omicron, upsilon, and omega; and there are six mutes—beta, gamma, delta, kappa, pi, and tau. Voice and speech differ in that voice includes mere noise, but speech must be articulate. <Speech differs from assertion in that assertion always signifies something>; speech may be meaningless, like the word *blituri*,<sup>87</sup> but an assertion cannot be. And making an assertion differs from giving utterance; for vocal sounds are uttered, but things meant are asserted, and it is these that are sayable. 57

There are five parts of speech, as Diogenes says in his work *On Voice*, as does Chrysippus: proper name, common noun, verb, conjunction, and article. Antipater, in his treatise *On Speech and Meaning*, also includes the adverb. 58

A common noun, according to Diogenes, is a part of speech that signifies a common quality, like “man,” “horse.” A proper name is a part of speech that indicates a quality particular to an individual, like “Diogenes,” “Socrates.” A verb is a part of speech that signifies an uncompounded predicate, as Diogenes says, or, as others define it, an indeclinable element of speech signifying that which can be linked to one or more subjects, for example, “(I) write,” or “(I) speak.” A conjunction is an indeclinable part of speech that coordinates the parts of speech. An article is a declinable part of speech that distinguishes the genders and numbers of nouns, like *ho, he, to, hoi, hai, ta*.<sup>88</sup> 59

There are five virtues of speech: pure Greek, clarity, conciseness, propriety, and distinction. Pure Greek is diction that is flawless grammatically and free of vulgar usage. Clarity is a style that presents what is thought in an intelligible way; conciseness a style that encompasses precisely what is necessary for elucidating the subject matter. Propriety lies in a style appropriate to the content; distinction is a style that avoids banality. Among vices of style, barbarism is speech that violates the common usage of distinguished Greeks, while in a solecism what is signified is incongruous. 59

A poetical phrase, as Posidonius says in his elementary treatise *On Style*, is one that possesses meter and rhythm and purposely avoids prose. An example of a rhythmical phrase is: 60

Mightiest earth and Zeus’ sky.

And if such poetical phraseology conveys meaning and includes a representation of matters divine and human, it is poetry.

87 The sound of a harp string, something like the English word “twang.”

88 These are the subject forms of the definite article in Greek: masculine, feminine, and neuter singular, followed by the plural forms.

A definition, as Antipater says in the first book of his work *On Definitions*, is an assertion corresponding precisely to its object, or, as Chrysippus says in his work *On Definitions*, a rendering of what is distinctive. An outline is an assertion that introduces a topic in summary form, or that conveys the force of a term's meaning more simply than a definition does. A genus is a comprehensive class of several inseparable objects of thought, like "animal"; for this term includes all particular animals.

61 A conception is a figment of thought, and though it is neither an actual something nor an actual attribute, it is a quasi-something and a quasi-attribute like the image of a horse that arises in the absence of a horse.

A species is what is comprised under a genus, as Man is comprised under Animal. The most generic thing of all is the genus that has no genus, like Being; and the most specific thing of all is the species that has no species, like Socrates.

Division is the dissection of a genus into its proximate species, for example, "Among the animals, some are rational and others nonrational." Division by dichotomy dissects the genus into species by contrary qualities, for example, by means of negation: "Among the beings, some are good and others not good." Subdivision is the division of a division, as when we say, "Among the beings, some are good and others not good; and among the not good, some are bad and others indifferent."

62 Partition, according to Crinis,<sup>89</sup> is the classification of genus into topics, for example, "Of the good things, some are mental and some are physical."

Ambiguity occurs when an expression, properly and strictly and in accordance with the same usage, signifies two or more different things, so that at one and the same time the same expression can be taken in several different ways; for example: AULETRISPEPTOKE.<sup>90</sup> For it can signify "a house has fallen three times" (*aule tris peptoke*) or "a flute girl has fallen" (*auletris peptoke*).

Dialectic, as Posidonius says, is the branch of knowledge concerned with what is true, what is false, and what is neither false nor true. Chrysippus says that it is concerned with signifiers and things signified. This, then, is what the Stoics say in their theory of voice.

63 To the topic of things in the sense of things signified is assigned the account of sayables, including those that are complete in themselves, as well as premises and syllogisms, and the account of incomplete expressions and predicates, both direct and reversed.

By "sayable" they mean what subsists in accordance with a rational impression. Among sayables the Stoics say that some are complete and others incom-

89 Crinis (dates unknown) was a Stoic philosopher and author of a work titled *Art of Dialectic*.

90 Ancient Greek was usually written without spaces between words; this has often given rise to confusion.



*Philosopher*, by Albert Tucker, 1939. Oil on cardboard, 45.7 x 51.5 cm.

plete. The incomplete ones are those that have an incomplete enunciation, for example, “writes.” For we inquire, “Who?” The complete sayables are those in which the enunciation is complete, for example, “Socrates writes.” Hence among incomplete sayables are ranged all predicates, whereas among the complete are ranged propositions, syllogisms, questions, and inquiries.

The predicate is what is said of a subject, or a thing that is linked to one or more subjects, as Apollodorus and his followers say, or an incomplete sayable joined with a nominative case in order to generate a proposition. Among the predicates, some are happenings, < . . . > for example, “to sail through the rock.” Some predicates are direct, some reversed, and still others neither. Direct predicates are constructed with one of the oblique cases to generate a predicate, like “hears,” “sees,” and “converses with.” Reversed predicates are constructed with the passive voice, like “(I) am heard” and “(I) am seen.” Some correspond to neither of these, such as “thinks” and “walks.” Reflexive predicates are those that, though classed among the reversed, are nevertheless activities of the subject, like “has his hair cut”; for he who has his hair cut includes himself in the activity. The oblique cases are the genitive, the dative, and the accusative.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Like Latin and Sanskrit, Greek is an inflected language, using a variety of cases to perform different grammatical functions.

A proposition is that which is true or false, or a complete thing that can be affirmed on its own, as Chrysippus says in his *Dialectical Definitions*: “A proposition is that which can be denied or affirmed on its own,” for example, “It is day” or “Dion is walking.” The word for proposition (*axioma*) comes from the verb *axiousthai*, which means “to affirm or to deny.” For one who says, “It is day,” seems to affirm that it is day. And if it is day, the proposition being advanced is true; if not, it is false.

66 Propositions differ from questions, inquiries, imperatives, oaths, prayers, hypotheses, vocatives, and quasi-propositions. For a proposition is what we affirm when we speak, and is either true or false. A question is a thing that is complete in itself, like a proposition, but requiring an answer, for example, “Is it day?” This is neither true nor false; hence “It is day” is a proposition, while “Is it day?” is a question. An inquiry is a thing to which one cannot reply with a gesture, as one can nod “yes” to a question; instead it requires an answer in words, “He lives in such and such a place.”

67 An imperative is a thing we use when we give an order, for example,

As for you, go to the waters of Inachus.<sup>92</sup>

An oath is a thing < . . . > A vocative is a thing we use when addressing someone, for example:

Most glorious son of Atreus, Agamemnon, lord of men.<sup>93</sup>

A quasi-proposition is that which has the form of a proposition, but because of a heightened or emotional tone in one of its parts falls outside the class of propositions, for example:

A thing of beauty is the Parthenon!

How like to Priam’s sons<sup>94</sup> is the cowherd!

68 There is also a dubitative thing, different from a proposition, which one would use when at a loss,

Can it be that life and pain are in some way akin?<sup>95</sup>

But questions, inquiries, and the like are neither true nor false, whereas propositions are always true or false.

92 A river in Argos and the personified river-god who controlled its waters.

93 The reference is to the *Iliad* 9.96. This is how Agamemnon is typically addressed in Homer.

94 Priam was the mythical king of Troy and the father of fifty sons, including the heroes Hector, Paris, and Troilus.

95 A line from *The Lyre Player*, a lost comedy by Menander.

Among the propositions, some are simple, some nonsimple, as the followers of Chrysippus, Archedemus, Athenodorus, Antipater, and Crinis say. Simple ones are those that do not consist of a doubled proposition or of more than one proposition, for example, “It is day.” Nonsimple ones are those that consist of a doubled proposition or of more than one proposition. Thus they may consist of a doubled proposition, for example, “If it is day, <it is day>”; or of more than one proposition, for example, “If it is day, it is light.” 69

Among the simple propositions are included the negative, the denying, the privative, the affirmative, the demonstrative, and the indefinite; among the nonsimple are included the conditional, the affirmative conditional, the conjunctive, the disjunctive, the causal, the comparative that indicates the more, and the comparative that indicates the less. <. . .> and <the negative,> for example, “It is not day.” A species of this is the double negative. By a double negative is meant the negation of a negative, for example, “It is <not> not day,” which posits that it is day.

A denying proposition consists of a denying particle and a predicate, for example, “No one is walking.” A privative proposition consists of a privative particle and a potentially complete proposition, for example, “This one is unkind.” An affirmative proposition consists of a noun in the nominative case and a predicate, for example, “Dion is walking.” A demonstrative proposition consists of a demonstrative in the nominative case and a predicate, for example, “This one is walking.” An indefinite proposition consists of an indefinite particle or indefinite particles and a predicate, for example, “Someone is walking” and “He is in motion.” 70

Among the nonsimple propositions, a conditional, as Chrysippus says in his *Dialectics* and Diogenes in his *Art of Dialectic*, is constructed by means of the conditional conjunction “if.” This conjunction declares that the second follows from the first, for example, “If it is day, it is light.” An affirmative conditional, as Crinis says in his *Art of Dialectic*, is one that is linked by the conjunction “since” and that consists of an antecedent proposition and a consequential proposition, for example, “Since it is day, it is light.” The conjunction declares both that the second follows from the first, and that the first is true. A conjunctive proposition is one that is conjoined by certain coordinating conjunctions, for example, “Both it is day, and it is light.” A disjunctive proposition is one that is disjoined by the disjunctive conjunction “either,” for example, “Either it is day, or it is night.” This conjunction declares that one or the other of the propositions is false. A causal proposition is one constructed by means of the conjunction “because,” for example, “Because it is day, it is light.” For the first is, as it were, the cause of the second. The comparative proposition indicating 71 72

73 the more is constructed with the conjunction that indicates “more” and with “than” placed between the propositions, for example, “It is more day than it is night.” The proposition that indicates the less is the opposite of the preceding one, for example, “It is less night than it is day.” Furthermore, among the propositions, some are opposed to one another with respect to truth and falsehood, where one is the negative of the other, for example, the propositions “It is day” and “It is not day.” A conditional proposition is true if the contradictory of its consequent conflicts with its antecedent, for example, “If it is day, it is light.” This is true; for the opposite of the conclusion, namely “It is not light,” conflicts with “It is day.” A conditional proposition is false if the contradictory of its consequent does not conflict with its antecedent, for example, “If it is day, Dion is walking.” For the proposition “Dion is not walking” does not conflict with “It is day.”

74 An affirmative conditional is true if it has a true antecedent, for example, “Since it is day, the sun is over the earth.” It is false if it has a false antecedent or an invalid consequent, for example, “Since it is night, Dion is walking,” if this is said when it is day.

A true causal proposition is one that reasons from a true antecedent to something that follows, but whose antecedent does not follow from the consequent, for example, “Because it is day, it is light”; for “It is light” follows from “It is day,” but “It is day” does not follow from “It is light.” A false causal proposition is one that either has a false antecedent, or reasons to a consequent that does not follow, or has an antecedent that follows from the consequent, for example, “Because it is night, Dion is walking.” A persuasive proposition is one that is conducive to assent, for example, “If someone gave birth to something, she is the mother of that thing.” This is false; for the hen is not the mother of an egg.

75 Furthermore, some propositions are possible, others impossible; and some are necessary, others nonnecessary. A proposition is possible if it admits of being true, provided that external factors do not oppose its being true, for example, “Diocles is alive.” A proposition is impossible if it does not admit of being true, for example, “The earth flies.” The necessary proposition is that which, besides being true, does not admit of being false, or does admit of being false, but external factors oppose its being false, for example, “Virtue is beneficial.” The nonnecessary is that which is both true and capable of being false if there are no external factors to prevent it from being false, for example, “Dion is walking.” A reasonable proposition is one that has more chances of being true than not, for example, “I will be alive tomorrow.”

76 And there are other differences among propositions, and transformations of them from true to false, and conversions—which we will describe in broad terms.



*Dialectic or Industry* (detail), by Veronese, 1575–1578.

An argument, as Crinis and his followers say, consists of a major premise, a minor premise, and a conclusion, for example, “If it is day, it is light. But it is day. Therefore it is light.” The major premise is “If it is day, it is light.” The minor premise is “But it is day.” The conclusion is “Therefore it is light.” A mode is a sort of outline for an argument, for example, “If the first, the second. But the first. Therefore the second.”

A mode-argument is a combination of the two, for example, “If Plato is alive, Plato breathes. But the first. Therefore the second.” The mode-argument was introduced so that in lengthy systems of arguments we need not repeat the minor premise, if it is long, and then the conclusion, but may draw the conclusion succinctly: “The first; therefore the second.”

77

Of arguments, some are invalid, others are valid. The invalid are those where the contradictory of the conclusion does not conflict with the conjunction of the premises, for example, “If it is day, it is light. But it is day. Therefore Dion is walking.”

78 Of valid arguments, some are called “valid,” after the entire class; others are called “syllogistic.” Syllogistic arguments are those that are either indemonstrable or reducible to the indemonstrables by one or more of the rules of reduction, for example, “If Dion is walking, <Dion is moving. But Dion is walking.> Therefore Dion is moving.” Arguments that are valid in the specific sense are those that reach a conclusion but not syllogistically, for example, “It is false that it is day and that it is night. It is day. Therefore it is not night.” Nonsyllogistic arguments are those that plausibly resemble syllogistic arguments but do not reach valid conclusions, for example, “If Dion is a horse, Dion is an animal. Therefore Dion is not an animal.”

79 Furthermore, some arguments are true, others false. True arguments reach their conclusions by means of true premises, for example, “If virtue is beneficial, vice is harmful. <But virtue is beneficial. Therefore vice is harmful.>” False arguments are those that have falsehood in their premises or are invalid, for example, “If it is day, it is light. But it is day. Therefore Dion is alive.” There are also possible, impossible, necessary, and nonnecessary arguments.

Certain arguments are also called indemonstrable because they require no demonstration. The lists of them vary from author to author. In Chrysippus there are five, by means of which every argument is constructed. These are used  
80 in valid arguments, syllogisms, and mode-arguments. The first indemonstrable is that in which the entire argument is constructed from a conditional and the antecedent of the conditional, with its consequent as conclusion, for example, “If the first, the second. But the first. Therefore the second.” The second indemonstrable is constructed from a conditional and the contradictory of the consequent, and concludes with the contradictory of the antecedent, for example, “If it is day, it is light. <But it is not light. Therefore it is not day.>” For the minor premise is formed from the contradictory of the consequent, and the conclusion from the contradictory of the antecedent. The third indemonstrable is that which, through a negative conjunction and one of the conjuncts, concludes with the contradictory of the other conjunct, for example, “It is not the case that Plato is dead and Plato is alive. But Plato is dead. Therefore Plato  
81 is not alive.” The fourth indemonstrable uses a disjunctive proposition and one of the two disjuncts, and concludes with the contradictory of the other disjunct, for example, “Either the first or the second. But the first. Therefore not the second.” The fifth indemonstrable is the one in which every argument is constructed from a disjunctive proposition and the contradictory of one of the

disjuncts, and concludes with the other disjunct, for example. “Either it is day or it is night. But it is not night. Therefore it is day.”

A truth follows from a truth, according to the Stoics, as “It is light” follows from “It is day.” And a falsehood follows from a falsehood, as “It is dark” follows from “It is night” if the latter is false. And a truth follows from a falsehood, as “The earth exists” follows from “The earth flies.” But a falsehood does not follow from a truth, for “The earth flies” does not follow from “The earth exists.”

There are also certain insoluble arguments: the Veiled Man, the Concealed Men, the Sorites, the Horned Men, and the Nobodies. The Veiled runs as follows < . . . > “It is not true that two are few but that three are not so likewise; and it is not true that two or three are few but four are not so; and so on up to ten. But two are few, therefore so are ten.” < . . . > The Nobody argument is a conditional argument that consists of an indefinite and a definite antecedent, with a minor premise and a conclusion, for example, “If somebody is here, it is not true that he is in Rhodes; but somebody is here, therefore it is not true that somebody is in Rhodes.” 82

Such, then, is the logic of the Stoics, by which they firmly establish that the wise man is always a dialectician. For all things are discerned by means of logical study, whether they belong to the domain of physics or, in turn, to that of ethics. (One need not speak of its utility for logic.) Likewise with regard to the correct use of terms, and how laws have regulated actions, one would not know how to speak without dialectic. Moreover, of the two practices included under dialectical virtue, the one considers what each thing is, and the other what it is called. So much for their logic. 83

They divide the ethical part of philosophy into topics: impulse, things good and bad, passions, virtue, the goal and highest value, actions, duties, exhortations, and dissuasions. This is the subdivision adopted by Chrysippus, Archedemus, Zeno of Tarsus, Apollodorus, Diogenes, Antipater, and Posidonius. Zeno of Citium and Cleanthes, as might be expected of earlier philosophers, treated the subject less elaborately. But they did subdivide logic and physics. 84

They say that an animal’s first impulse is to preserve itself, because nature from the start makes the animal attached to itself, as Chrysippus states in the first book of his work *On Goals*, where he says that for every animal the first thing that belongs to it is its own constitution and its consciousness thereof. For it is not likely that nature would estrange the animal from itself, nor that she would create it and then neither estrange it from itself nor make it attached to itself. Accordingly, we are left to conclude that nature, in constituting the animal, made the animal attached to itself; for in this way it repels what is harmful and pursues what is appropriate. 85

86 What some people say, namely that the primary impulse of animals has pleasure as its object, the Stoics claim is false. For they say that pleasure, if it is actually felt, is a by-product that arises only after nature, by itself, has sought and found what is suitable to the animal's constitution; it is in this way that animals frolic and plants bloom. They say that nature made no distinction between plants and animals, since she regulates the latter as well as the former without impulse and sensation; and even in us certain processes are plantlike. When, in the case of animals, impulse is added, by means of which they pursue what is appropriate for them, then for them what is natural is to be governed by impulse. And when reason, as a more perfect authority, has been bestowed on rational beings, then for them what is natural and proper is to be governed by reason. For reason, like a craftsman, overrides impulse.

87 This is why Zeno, in his work *On Human Nature*, said that the goal is to live in harmony with nature, which means to live according to virtue; for nature leads us to virtue. Likewise Cleanthes in his work *On Pleasure* and Posidonius and Hecaton in their works *On Goals*.

88 Again, to live according to virtue is equivalent to living according to the experience of natural events, as Chrysippus says in the first book of his work *On Goals*. For our natures are parts of the nature of the universe. This is why the goal becomes to live according to nature, that is, according to our own nature and that of the universe, doing nothing that is customarily forbidden by the common law, which is the right reason that pervades all things, and is identical with Zeus, who governs all beings. And this very thing constitutes the virtue and smooth current of the happy life, when everything is done in light of the harmonious accord of each man's guardian spirit with the will of him who governs the universe. Thus Diogenes explicitly states that the goal is to act rationally in the selection of that which accords with nature, while Archedemus says that the goal is to live in the performance of all one's duties.

89 The nature according to which one should live Chrysippus takes to be both universal nature and, in particular, human nature. Cleanthes, however, holds that it is only the universal nature that should be followed, and not that of the particular.

Virtue, according to them, is a harmonious disposition, and should be chosen for its own sake, not out of fear or hope or with reference to anything external; and happiness lies in virtue, since virtue is the state of mind that makes the whole of life harmonious. But the rational being is distorted in some instances by the persuasiveness of external realities, in others by communication with his companions; for nature's starting points are never distorted.

90 Virtue in a general sense is, for every object, a certain perfection, for example, that of a statue. A virtue may be nonintellectual (for example,



*Perseverance*, by Francesco Clemente, 1981.

health) or intellectual (for example, prudence). Hecaton, in the first book of his work *On Virtues*, says that some virtues are scientific and intellectual, namely those that have a structure of theoretical principles, for example, prudence and justice; nonintellectual are those that are conceived by extension from the former, for example, health and strength. For health accompanies and is coextensive with the intellectual virtue of temperance, just as strength results from the building of an arch. They are called nonintellectual because they do not entail the mind's assent, but supervene on it and occur even in base men (for example, health or courage).

91

A proof that virtue exists, says Posidonius in the first book of his treatise *On Ethics*, is the fact that Socrates and Diogenes and Antisthenes made moral progress. And the existence of vice is proved by the fact that it is the opposite of virtue.

That it can be taught (virtue, I mean) is stated by Chrysippus in the first book of his work *On the Goal* and by Cleanthes and by Posidonius in his *Exhortations* and by Hecaton. That it can be taught is clear from the fact that base men become good.

92 Panaetius divides virtue into two kinds, theoretical and practical. Others distinguish three kinds: logical, physical, and ethical. Posidonius posits four divisions, and Cleanthes, Chrysippus, and Antipater even more. Apollonphanes,<sup>96</sup> on the other hand, posits only one, namely wisdom.

Some virtues are primary, others subordinate to these. The following are primary: wisdom, courage, justice, and temperance. Species of these are magnanimity, self-control, endurance, quick-wittedness, and good counsel. They define wisdom as knowledge of things good and bad and of things neither good nor bad, and <courage> as knowledge of what should be chosen, what should be avoided, and what should be neither chosen nor avoided. Justice < . . . ><sup>97</sup>

93 Magnanimity they define as the knowledge or habit that makes one superior to whatever happens, whether good or evil; self-control as a disposition not to be overpowered where right reason is concerned, or a habit that is not compromised by pleasures; endurance as a knowledge or habit regarding what to adhere to and what not to adhere to, and what is indifferent; quick-wittedness as a habit that immediately discovers what ought to be done; and good counsel as knowledge that enables us to examine what to do and how to act expediently.

Likewise with vices, some are primary, others subordinate to these. Thus folly, cowardice, injustice, and intemperance are primary, while lack of self-control, slow-wittedness, and ill-advisedness are subordinate to these. They hold that vices are ignorance of the things of which the virtues constitute knowledge.

94 Good in general is that from which something beneficial comes, and specifically, something that is either identical with or not different from benefit. Hence virtue itself and that which participates in it are said to be good in three senses; as being (1) the source of the benefit; or (2) the manner of the benefit, that is, the virtuous action; or (3) the agent of the benefit, that is, the good man who participates in virtue. A different specific definition of the good is “the natural perfection of a rational being as such.” That is what virtue is like, as are also the participants in virtue, namely virtuous actions and virtuous persons.

95 Its by-products include joy, cheerfulness, and the like. In the same way, vices comprise either folly, cowardice, injustice, and the like; or the participants in vice, comprising vicious actions and inferior persons. Their by-products include despondency, anxiety, and the like.

Furthermore, some goods are goods of the soul, others are external, and still others are neither of the soul nor external. Goods of the soul include virtues

96 Apollonphanes, born in Antioch, was an intimate of Ariston of Chios and is said to have written two works, *Ariston* (about Ariston of Chios) and *On Natural Philosophy*.

97 The passages missing here included Stoic definitions of justice and temperance.



Marble torso of a female figure in motion, 100–50 BC.

and virtuous actions; external goods include having a good country and a good friend and their prosperity. The goods that are neither of the soul nor external include being good and happy in oneself. Among vices, likewise, some are of the soul, namely vices and vicious actions; others are external, namely having a foolish country and a foolish friend and their unhappiness; and still others are neither of the mind nor external, such as to be base and unhappy in oneself. 96

Furthermore, some goods are final, others instrumental, and still others both final and instrumental. Thus a friend and the benefits derived from him are instrumental goods, while confidence, high spirits, liberty, delight, cheerfulness, freedom from pain, and every virtuous action are final. The virtues are goods both instrumental and final. Insofar as they cause happiness they are instrumental goods; and insofar as they fulfill it, so that they are parts of it, they are final. Similarly, some bad things are final, others instrumental, and still others both final and instrumental. 97

One's enemy and the harms one suffers from him are instrumental; but consternation, abasement, slavishness, lack of enjoyment, despondency, profound grief, and every vicious action are final. The vices are both instrumental

and final, since insofar as they cause unhappiness they are instrumental, but insofar as they fulfill it, and thus are parts of it, they are final.

98 Of goods of the soul some are habits, others are dispositions, and still others are neither habits nor dispositions. The virtues are dispositions, while occupations are habits, and activities neither dispositions nor habits. And in general there are mixed goods, for example, having good children and a good old age, whereas knowledge is a simple good. And some goods are permanent like the virtues, while others, like joy and the exercise of walking, are not.

99 Every good is expedient, binding, profitable, useful, serviceable, beautiful, beneficial, desirable, and just. Beneficial because it brings the sorts of things by which we are benefited when they occur; binding because it connects things together when this is needed; profitable because it repays what is spent on it, with the result that the yield from the transaction exceeds the amount expended; useful because it makes available the use of something beneficial; serviceable because it produces a praiseworthy utility; beautiful because it is proportionate to the use made of it; beneficial because by its very nature it confers a benefit; desirable because it is such that to choose it is reasonable; and just because it is in harmony with law and instrumental to social life.

100 They say that the perfect good is beautiful because it encompasses all the elements sought by nature, or is perfectly proportioned. There are four species of the beautiful, namely the just, the courageous, the orderly, and the knowledgeable; for it is under these forms that beautiful actions are achieved. Similarly, there are four species of the ugly, namely the unjust, the cowardly, the disorderly, and the foolish. By the beautiful is meant, in a unitary sense, that which renders its possessors praiseworthy; in another sense it implies a natural aptitude for one's proper function; and in yet another sense the beautiful is that which adorns anything, as when we say that only the wise man is good and beautiful.

101 They say that only the beautiful is good, as Hecaton says in the third book of his work *On Goods* and Chrysippus in his work *On the Beautiful*; and that the beautiful consists of virtue and that which participates in virtue. This is equivalent to saying that every good is beautiful, and that the good is the equivalent of the beautiful, which comes to the same thing. For it is beautiful because it is good; and it is beautiful; therefore it is good.<sup>98</sup> They think that all goods are equal and that every good is desirable in the highest degree and admits of neither slackening nor intensification.

102 They say that some existing things are goods, others bads, and still others neither of these. The virtues, namely wisdom, justice, courage, temperance,

98 A common belief in the ancient world along with its opposite, that ugliness and evil go together.

and the like, are goods, whereas their opposites, namely folly, injustice, and the like, are bads. Neither good nor bad are all things that neither benefit nor harm, such as life, health, pleasure, physical attractiveness, strength, wealth, good reputation, and good birth; their opposites include death, disease, pain, ugliness, weakness, poverty, ignominy, low birth, and the like, as Hecaton says in the seventh book of his work *On the Goal*, as do Apollodorus in his *Ethics* and Chrysippus. For they maintain that these former things are not goods, but are indifferents in the category of preferred things. For just as the property of hot is to warm, not to cool, so benefiting, not harming, is the property of good; but wealth and health do no more harm than good, and thus neither wealth nor health is a good. Furthermore, they say that is not good which can be put to both good use and bad; but wealth and health can be put to both good use and bad; therefore wealth and health are not goods. Posidonius, however, says that these things are also included among goods. But Hecaton in the ninth book of his work *On Goods* and Chrysippus in his work *On Pleasure* deny that pleasure is a good. For there are also shameful pleasures; and nothing shameful is good. To benefit is to set in motion or to maintain in accordance with virtue, whereas to harm is to set in motion or maintain in accordance with vice. 103

“Indifferent” has two meanings. In one sense it signifies the things that contribute neither to happiness nor unhappiness, like wealth, fame, health, strength, and the like; for it is possible to be happy even without these things, though depending on how they are used they contribute to happiness or unhappiness. But in another sense “indifferent” signifies things that excite neither impulse nor aversion, as is the case with having an odd or even number of hairs on one’s head, or with extending or bending one’s finger. But it was not in this sense that the things mentioned above are called indifferent, since they *are* able to excite impulse and aversion. This is why some of the indifferent things are selected and others rejected, whereas indifference in the other sense provides no grounds for choosing or avoiding. 104

Of indifferent things they say that some are preferred, others rejected. The preferred have value, whereas the rejected lack value. Value they define in the first place as anything that contributes to the harmonious life—a property that characterizes every good; but secondly as some intermediate faculty or usefulness that contributes to life according to nature, which is the same as saying “the value brought by wealth or health to the life in accordance with nature”; a third sense of value is the appraiser’s value, which is determined by someone conversant with the facts, as when it is said that wheat is exchanged for barley at the rate of three measures for two. 105

Thus the preferred things are those that have value, for example, among mental qualities, natural ability, skill, moral progress, and the like; among 106

bodily qualities, life, health, strength, good condition, soundness, physical attractiveness, and the like; among external things, wealth, fame, noble birth, and the like. Rejected things include, among mental qualities, lack of ability, lack of skill, and the like; among bodily qualities, death, disease, weakness, poor condition, maiming, ugliness, and the like; among external things, poverty, ignominy, low birth, and the like. Those things that belong to neither class are neither preferred nor rejected.

107 Of the preferred things some are preferred for their own sake, others for the sake of something else, and still others both for their own sake and the sake of something else. Things preferred for their own sake include natural ability, moral progress, and the like. Things preferred for the sake of something else include wealth, noble birth, and the like. Things preferred both for their own sake and for the sake of something else include strength, quick sensibility, and soundness. Things are preferred for their own sake because they accord with nature; things are preferred for the sake of something else because they secure considerable utility. Likewise, conversely, with things that are rejected.

They apply the term “duty” to an action that, when done, can be defended on reasonable grounds, such as its consistency with life; and this extends to plants and animals as well. For “duties” can also be discerned with respect to plants and animals.

108 The term “duty” (*kathēkon*) was used first by Zeno and is derived from *kata tina hēkein*, that is, “incumbent on So-and-so.” It is an activity inherently appropriate to natural arrangements. For of actions prompted by impulse some are appropriate, others the reverse, and still others neither the one nor the other.

109 Actions belonging to duty are those that reason prescribes our doing, as is the case with honoring one’s parents, brothers, country, and spending time with one’s friends. Actions contrary to duty are those that reason forbids, for example, neglecting one’s parents, ignoring one’s brothers, being out of sympathy with one’s friends, disregarding one’s country, and the like. Actions neither belonging to duty, nor contrary to it, are those that reason neither prescribes our doing nor forbids, such as picking up a twig, holding a stylus or a scraper, and the like.

Some actions belong to duty regardless of circumstances, while others are conditioned by circumstances. Actions belonging to duty regardless of circumstances include taking care of one’s health and sense organs, and the like. Actions conditioned by circumstances include maiming oneself and sacrificing one’s property. The same distinctions apply for actions contrary to duty. Some actions always belong to duty and some not always. It always belongs to duty <to live in accordance with virtue, whereas it does not always belong



*The Four Cardinal Virtues: Prudence, Justice, Fortitude, Temperance,*  
by Robinet Testard, c. 1510.

to duty> to ask questions and answer, to walk about, and the like. The same reasoning applies to actions contrary to duty. And there are duties in intermediate matters as well, such as the obligation of boys to obey their attendants. 110

They say that the soul has eight parts: the five senses; the vocal part; the thinking part, which is the mind itself; and the generative part. And distortion, which arises from falsehoods, afflicts the mind. From this distortion arise many passions, which are causes of instability. Passion, according to Zeno, is the irrational and unnatural motion of the soul, or an excessive impulse.

The most dominant passions, as Hecaton says in the second book of his work *On Passions* and Zeno in his work of the same name, consist of four classes: pain, fear, desire, and pleasure. They think that the passions are judgments, as Chrysippus says in his work *On Passions*; for greed is a presumption that money is something beautiful, and the case is similar for drunkenness, licentiousness, and the others. 111

They say that pain is an irrational contraction. Its species are pity, envy, jealousy, rivalry, heavyheartedness, annoyance, chagrin, anguish, and confusion. Pity is a pain felt for someone whose suffering is undeserved, envy a pain felt when others have good things, jealousy a pain felt when others have things one wants oneself, rivalry a pain felt when others have things one has oneself, heavyheartedness a pain that weighs us down, annoyance a pain that cramps and confines us, chagrin a lingering and intensifying pain occasioned by brooding, anguish a pain that saps our energy, and confusion an irrational, gnawing pain that prevents us from comprehending the present situation. 112

Fear is the expectation of something bad. The forms of fear include terror, shrinking, shame, shock, panic, and dread. Terror is a fear that produces fright; shame is fear of a bad reputation; shrinking is a fear of future action;

113 shock is a fear caused by the appearance of something unusual; panic is a fear accompanied by a sudden sound; and dread is a fear of the unknown.

Desire is an irrational yearning; under this heading are included craving, hatred, contentiousness, anger, erotic passion, wrath, and temper. Craving is a desire that is frustrated and, as it were, separated from its object yet vainly attracted to and straining for it; hatred is a growing and persistent desire that things go badly for someone; contentiousness is a desire to get the better of someone; anger is the desire to take revenge on one who is thought to have inflicted an undeserved injury; erotic passion is a desire that does not arise in virtuous men, for it is an impulse to form a relationship on account of physical attractiveness. Wrath is a long-simmering and vengeful anger that is awaiting its opportunity, as is illustrated in these lines:<sup>99</sup>

Even if for the one day he swallows his wrath,  
Yet he nurses resentment until he satisfies it.

Temper is anger at an early stage.

Pleasure is an irrational elation at obtaining what seems to be desirable. Under it are ranged enchantment, spite, delight, and rapture. Enchantment is pleasure that charms the ear; spite is pleasure at another's misfortunes; delight (*terpsis*) is, as it were, a turning (*trep̄sis*), a propensity of the soul to slackness; and rapture is a dissolving of virtue.

115 And just as there are said to be certain infirmities in the body, like gout and arthritis, so too in the soul there are love of fame, love of pleasure, and the like. For an infirmity is a disease accompanied by weakness, and disease is a notion about something that seems very desirable. And just as in the body there are certain predispositions to disease, such as colds and diarrhea, so too in the soul there are bad tendencies, such as resentment, sentimentality, quarrelsomeness, and the like.

116 There are also three good states of feeling, namely joy, caution, and wishing. They say that joy is the opposite of pleasure, being a rational elation; and caution the opposite of fear, being a rational avoidance. For the wise man will never feel fear, though he will be cautious. They say that wishing is the opposite of desire, being a rational yearning. And just as under the primary passions are grouped subordinate ones, so too with the good states of feeling. Under wishing are grouped kindness, goodwill, affection, and warmth; under caution, respect and purity; and under joy, delight, merriment, and cheerfulness.

99 *Iliad*, 1.81–82. The seer Calchas fears that if he identifies the king as responsible for the plague in the Greek camp, Agamemnon will eventually take vengeance upon him.

They say that the wise man is free of passion because he is not disposed to it. But the base man is also “free of passion” in the sense that he is callous and uncompromising. And the wise man is free of vanity, for he is equally indifferent to good and bad reputation. But there is another kind of freedom from vanity, namely heedlessness, which characterizes the base man. And they say that all good men are austere because they neither engage in social relations for the sake of pleasure nor tolerate those who do. The term “austere” is also applied to another type of man, in the same sense that wine is said to be austere when it is used medicinally,<sup>100</sup> and not at all for the pleasure of drinking. 117

The good aim genuinely and vigilantly for their own improvement by making a practice of concealing base things and bringing to light whatever is good. They are unpretentious, for they have stripped pretense from their voice and appearance. They are not overly busy, for they avoid doing anything that is contrary to duty. They will drink in moderation, but will never get drunk. Nor will they go crazy; nevertheless, they will sometimes, because of melancholy or delirium, experience strange impressions, not of things rationally desirable but contrary to nature. The wise man will not be afflicted by grief, since grief is an irrational contraction of the soul, as Apollodorus says in his *Ethics*. 118

The good are also divine, for they have in themselves a kind of divinity. The base man, on the other hand, is godless. Yet “godless” has two senses: in one, it denotes the man who speaks against god, in the other, the man who scorns the divine altogether. In the latter sense the word does not apply to every base man. The good are also god-fearing, for they are conversant with the customs that concern the gods, and piety is knowledge of how to serve the gods. Moreover, they will sacrifice to the gods; and they keep themselves pure by avoiding offenses against the gods. And the gods approve of them, for they are pious and just with regard to the divine. And only the wise are priests, since they have engaged in the study of sacrifices, shrines, purifications, and all the other matters pertaining to the gods. 119

They hold that parents and brothers should be honored in the second place after the gods. They say that affection for one’s children is natural to the good and unnatural to the base. 120

They believe that all mistakes are equal, as Chrysippus says in the fourth book of his *Ethical Researches*, as do Persaeus and Zeno. For if one truth is not more true than another, then neither is one falsehood more false than another. So one deceit is no more deceitful than another, and no mistake more mistaken

100 The Greek term *austēros* could also mean bitter in flavor.

than another. For just as the man who is one hundred stades from Canopus<sup>101</sup> and the man who is one stade away are both not in Canopus, so too one whose mistake is greater and one whose mistake is lesser are both not on the right path. But Heraclides of Tarsus,<sup>102</sup> the follower of Antipater of Tarsus, and Athenodorus hold that mistakes are not equal.

121 They say that the wise man will take part in politics if nothing prevents him, as Chrysippus says in the first book of his work *On Ways of Life*, since he will restrain vice and promote virtue. And he will marry, as Zeno says in the *Republic*, and beget children. Furthermore, the wise man will not hold mere opinions, that is, he will assent to nothing that is false. And he will live like a Cynic, since the Cynic way of life is a shortcut to virtue, as Apollodorus says in his *Ethics*. And he will even taste human flesh under stress of circumstances.

122 He alone is a free man, whereas the base are slaves. For freedom is the power to act independently, and servitude is the deprivation of one's power to do so. There is another form of slavery that consists in subordination, and a third that implies both possession of the slave and his subordination; its correlative is despotism, which is also base. They hold that the wise are not only free, but are also kings, kingship being authority that is not held accountable, which only the wise are qualified to wield, as Chrysippus says in his work *On Zeno's Proper Use of Terms*. For he says that the ruler must be knowledgeable about what is good and bad, and no base man understands these things. Similarly, only the wise are fit to be magistrates, judges, and orators, whereas none of the base are. Furthermore, the wise are infallible, since they are not likely to make mistakes. They cause no harm, for they harm neither others  
123 nor themselves. They are not merciful, nor do they forgive anyone; for they do not mitigate the penalties imposed by the laws, since leniency and pity and even fairness itself are the vapidity of a soul that would substitute kindness for punishment. Nor do they consider punishments too severe.

What is more, the wise man does not marvel at things that seem incredible, like Charon's<sup>103</sup> vapor-filled caverns, ebbs of the tide, hot springs, and eruptions of fire. They hold that the good man will not live in solitude, for he is suited by nature for society and for action. He will also submit to training for the sake of physical endurance.

101 A stade is an ancient measure of distance, equal to about an eighth of a mile; our term "stadium" is derived from the Greek word for the length of the racecourse at Olympia. Canopus was an Egyptian city located on the western side of the Nile Delta.

102 Diogenes discussed the life and views of Heraclides of Tarsus (fl. c. 125 BC) in the last, lost section of Book 7.

103 The mythical ferryman in Hades who conveyed the souls of the dead across the River Styx.



Grotesque heads of a slave, Greek, 323–150 BC.

The wise man, they say, will pray and ask for good things from the gods, as Posidonius says in the first book of his work *On Duties* and Hecaton in the third book of his work *On Paradoxes*. They hold that friendship exists only among the good, by reason of their similarity. They say that friendship is a sharing of all that pertains to life, since we treat our friends as we treat ourselves. They hold that the friend is desirable for his own sake, and that having many friends is a good thing. Among the base, on the other hand, there is no friendship, nor does any base man have a friend. They also hold that all foolish men are insane, given that they are not prudent and do everything under the influence of the madness that is the equivalent of folly. 124

The wise man does everything well, just as we say that Ismenias<sup>104</sup> plays all the flute tunes well. And everything belongs to the wise, since the law has granted them an all-encompassing authority. On the other hand, certain things are said to belong to the base, in the same way that things are said to belong to the unjust man; in one sense we say that things belong to the city, in another sense to those who use them. 125

104 A celebrated flute player.

126 They say that the virtues follow one from another, and that the possessor of one is the possessor of all. For their underlying principles are shared, as Chrysippus says in the first book of his work *On Virtues*, Apollodorus in *Natural Philosophy of the Ancient School*, and Hecaton in the third book of his work *On Virtues*. The virtuous man possesses both the theory and practice of what should be done. There are things that must be done and chosen and endured and abided by and distributed, and consequently if one does some things by choosing, and some by enduring, and some by distributing, and some by standing firm, then he is wise and brave and just and temperate. Each of the virtues has its own particular province, as, for example, courage is concerned with what should be endured, prudence with what should be done or not be done and with what falls under neither category. Similarly, each of the other virtues is concerned with its own proper sphere. Good counsel and understanding follow from prudence; discipline and orderliness from temperance; impartiality and fairness from justice; and constancy and vigor from courage.

127 They hold that there is nothing in between virtue and vice, whereas the Peripatetics say that between virtue and vice there is moral progress. For according to the Stoics, just as a piece of wood must be either straight or crooked, so a man must be either just or unjust (not more just or more unjust), and likewise with the other virtues. And Chrysippus holds that virtue can be lost, whereas Cleanthes says that it cannot be lost, the former maintaining that it can be lost as a result of drunkenness and melancholy, the latter that it cannot, owing to the virtuous person's firm cognitions. And virtue is worth choosing for its own sake. We are ashamed, at any rate, of our bad conduct, as if we knew that only the honorable is good.

128 They hold that virtue is sufficient for happiness, as Zeno says, and Chrysippus in the first book of his work *On Virtues* and Hecaton in the second book of his work *On Goods*. "For if magnanimity by itself," he says, "can make us superior to everything, though it is only one part of virtue, then virtue too is sufficient for happiness, in that it despises all things that seem troublesome." Yet Panaetius and Posidonius say that virtue is not self-sufficient, claiming that strength, health, and material resources are also needed.

129 They maintain that virtue is in use constantly, as Cleanthes says. For virtue cannot be lost, and the good man always makes use of a mind that is in perfect condition. They say that justice is natural and not conventional, as are the law and right reason, as Chrysippus says in his work *On the Honorable*. They think that disagreement is not a reason for abandoning philosophy, since by that argument one would abandon life altogether, as Posidonius



*The Testament of Eudamidas*, by Nicolas Poussin, 1644–1648.

According to Lucian, the story of two citizens of Corinth who assumed responsibility for Eudamidas's mother and daughter after his death (as stipulated in his will) provided an exemplary model of Stoic friendship.

says in his *Exhortations*. Chrysippus even holds that the standard educational curriculum<sup>105</sup> is useful.

What is more, they believe that there is no justice between us and the other animals, because of our dissimilarity, as Chrysippus says in the first book of his work *On Justice*, and Posidonius in the first book of his work *On Duty*.

The wise man will fall in love with the young men who by their appearance reveal their natural aptitude for virtue, as Zeno says in the *Republic*, Chrysippus in the first book of his work *On Ways of Life*, and Apollodorus in his *Ethics*. Love is an impulse to form a relationship on account of physical attractiveness, and it aims not at intercourse but at friendship. They say

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105 This would have included grammar, music, poetry, and rhetoric.

that Thrasonides,<sup>106</sup> at any rate, though he had his mistress in his power, abstained from her because she hated him. Therefore love aims at friendship, as Chrysippus says in his work *On Love*, and is not reprehensible. They say that youthful beauty is the flower of virtue.

Of the three kinds of life—the contemplative, the practical, and the rational—they say that the third is to be chosen; for the rational animal was purposely made by nature for contemplation and action. They say that the wise man will, for a good reason, end his own life, both on behalf of his country and on behalf of his friends, or if he is suffering unbearable pain, mutilation, or incurable disease.

131 They hold that wives should be held in common among the wise, so that anyone might have intercourse with any woman, as Zeno says in the *Republic* and Chrysippus in *On the Republic*, as well as Diogenes the Cynic and Plato. We will show a father's love to all children equally and the jealousy occasioned by adultery will be eliminated. The best form of government is a combination of democracy, monarchy, and aristocracy.

Such are the statements they make in their ethical doctrines, and there are many more, together with their appropriate proofs. Let this suffice as our summary and elementary account.

132 They divide their account of nature into the following topics: bodies, principles, elements, gods, limits, place, and void. This is a division into species. The generic division is into three topics: the universe, the elements, and causation.

133 The topic concerned with the universe they divide into two parts; for in one branch of it the mathematicians also share, when they ask questions about the fixed stars and the planets—for example, whether the sun is as large as it appears, and likewise the moon, and about rotational motion, and similar questions. But there is another branch of the study of the universe that belongs exclusively to the natural philosophers, the one in which they investigate what the substance of the universe is, whether the world was created or is uncreated, whether it is animate or not, whether it is destructible or indestructible, whether it is governed by providence, and so forth. The topic concerned with causation also has two branches. In one of its branches medical inquiries have a share, the one in which they investigate the ruling principle of the soul, psychological processes, seeds, and the like. The second part is also claimed by the scientists, the one in which they

106 A character from the play *The Hated Man*, by Menander, which survives in fragments. Thrasonides, a soldier, loves Cratea, a slave he has taken in war. She believes he has killed her brother and spurns his advances. Rather than force himself on her, he frees her from bondage.



*Stoic*, by Mia Bergeron, 2015. Oil, 30.5 × 30.5 cm.

investigate how we see, what causes the image in the mirror, and the origin of clouds, thunder, rainbows, haloes, comets, and the like.

They hold that there are two principles of the universe: the active and the passive. The passive principle is unqualified substance, namely matter, while the active principle is the reasoning power in it, namely god. For the latter, being eternal, fabricates every single thing throughout the entirety of matter. This doctrine is posited by Zeno of Citium in his work *On Substance*, Cleanthes in his work *On Atoms*, Chrysippus near the end of the first book of his *Natural Philosophy*, Archedemus in his work *On Elements*, and Posidonius in the second book of his *Account of Nature*. They say that there is a difference between principles and elements; for the former are neither generated nor

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destroyed, whereas the elements are destroyed in the conflagration.<sup>107</sup> What is more, the principles are bodies and without form, whereas the elements are endowed with form.

135 Body, says Apollodorus in his *Physics*, is that which extends in three dimensions: length, breadth, and depth. This is also called solid body. A surface is the limit of a body, or that which has only length and breadth, but no depth. This, as Posidonius says in the third book of his work *On Celestial Phenomena*, exists both conceptually and in reality. A line is the limit of a surface, or length without breadth, or that which has only length. A point is the limit of a line and is the smallest mark.

136 God, Intellect, Fate, and Zeus are one thing, though called by many different names. In the beginning, then, being by himself, god turned all of substance through air into water; and just as the sperm is contained in the seminal fluid, so god, being the seminal principle of the universe, remains in the moist substance and adapts matter to himself for the generation of the things that are to come. He then generates the four elements: fire, water, air, and earth. Zeno discusses them in his work *On the Universe*, as do Chrysippus in the first book of his *Physics* and Archedemus in his work *On Elements*.

137 An element is that from which generated things are first generated and into which they are finally resolved. The four elements together constitute unqualified substance, that is, matter. Fire is the hot element, water the moist, air the cold, and earth the dry. Yet that last part is also present in the air. Uppermost is the fire called “aether,” in which is produced first the sphere of the fixed stars and then the sphere of the planets; after this is the air, then the water, and, as the foundation for everything, the earth, which is at the center of all things.

138 They use the term “cosmos” in three senses: of god himself, whose proper quality is derived from the whole of substance; he is indestructible and un-generated, since he is the craftsman of the world’s orderly arrangement, at set periods takes all substance back into himself, and generates it again from himself. They also speak of the world-order itself as a cosmos. And in a third sense, the cosmos is that which is composed of both. In addition the cosmos is the proper quality of the universe’s substance, as Posidonius says in his treatise *Celestial Phenomena*, a system constituted by heaven and earth and the natures in them, or one that is made up of gods, human beings, and the things that come into being for their sake. Heaven is the outermost periphery in which the totality of the divine is located.

<sup>107</sup> The Stoics believed that the universe was generated from fire and was periodically renewed by being consumed in a universal conflagration (see 7.137).



*The Philosophers*, by Wolfgang Lettl, 1987.

The cosmos is governed by mind and providence (as Chrysippus says in the fifth book of his work *On Providence* and Posidonius in the third book of his work *On Gods*), since mind pervades every part of it, just as the soul does in us. But it pervades some parts more than others. For it is present in some parts as a cohesive force, as is the case in our bones and sinews, but in others as intelligence, as in the ruling part. In this way the entire cosmos too, a living being endowed with a soul and reason, has aether as its ruling part, as Antipater of Tyre says in the eighth book of his work *On the Cosmos*. Chrysippus in the first book of his work *On Providence* and Posidonius in his work *On Gods* say that heaven is the ruling part of the cosmos, while Cleanthes says it is the sun. Yet Chrysippus, in the same work, gives a rather different account, saying that it is the purest part of the aether, which they call the primary god that passes as it were perceptibly through the beings in the air and also through all creatures and plants, and through the earth itself as a cohesive principle.

139

The cosmos, they say, is one and limited, with a spherical shape. For such a shape is best suited for motion, as Posidonius says in the fifth book of his *Discourse on Nature* and Antipater in his work *On the Cosmos*. Outside of it is spread the unlimited void, which is incorporeal. By incorporeal they mean that which could be occupied by bodies but is not. The cosmos contains no void, but forms a united whole. For this is necessitated by the cohesive breath and tension that bind together things in heaven and on earth. Chrysippus speaks of the void in his work *On Void* and in the first book of his *Physical Sciences*, as do Apollonphanes in his work *On Natural Philosophy* and Apollodorus and Posidonius in the second book of his *Discourse on Nature*.

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Fragment of the Parian Chronicle, c. 264 BC.

The oldest surviving example of a Greek chronological table, it records the history of Greece from c. 1581 to 264 BC. It was fashioned while the Stoic philosophers were developing their theory of time as incorporeal and completed the year after Zeno died.

141           And these are likewise incorporeal. Time, too, is incorporeal, being a dimension of the world's motion. Past and future time are unlimited, whereas the present is limited.

They hold that the cosmos is perishable, given that it was generated, by analogy with things conceived by the senses. And that of which the parts are perishable, is perishable as a whole. Now the parts of the cosmos are perishable, for they change into one another; therefore, the cosmos itself is perishable. Furthermore, if something is capable of changing for the worse, it is perishable, and that is the case with the cosmos; for it is subject to drought and inundation.

142           They say that the cosmos is created when the substance is transformed from fire through air into moisture, and then the dense part of the moisture congeals and becomes earth, while the fine part becomes air, which, when further rarefied, generates fire. Then, from a mixture of these elements are produced plants and animals and the other natural kinds. The genesis and destruction of the cosmos are discussed by Zeno in his work *On the Cosmos*, Chrysippus in the first book of his *Physics*, Posidonius in the first book of his work *On the Cosmos*, Cleanthes, and Antipater in the tenth book of his work *On the Cosmos*. Panaetius, however, declared that the cosmos is indestructible.

That the cosmos is a living being, rational, endowed with a soul, and intelligent is asserted by Chrysippus in the first book of his work *On Providence*, by Apollodorus in his *Physics*, and by Posidonius. It is a living being in that it is a substance endowed with a soul and sensation. For the living being is better than the nonliving; and there is nothing better than the cosmos; therefore the cosmos is a living being. And it is endowed with a soul, as is clear from the fact that each of our souls is a fragment of it. 143

Boethus, however, says that the cosmos is not a living being. That it is a unity is asserted by Zeno in his work *On the Universe*, Chrysippus, Apollodorus in his *Physics*, and Posidonius in the first book of his *Discourse on Nature*. They mean by “the All” the cosmos, according to Apollodorus, and, in another sense, the system consisting of the cosmos and the void outside it. The cosmos is limited but the void unlimited.

The fixed stars are carried around with the whole heaven, whereas the planets move according to their own particular motions. The sun travels along an elliptical path through the circle of the zodiac; similarly the moon travels along a spiral path. The sun is pure fire, as Posidonius says in the seventh book of his work *On Celestial Phenomena*. And it is larger than the earth, as the same philosopher says in the sixteenth book of his *Discourse on Nature*; it is also spherical, just like the universe, as he maintains. That it is fire is proved by the fact that it does all the things fire does. That it is larger than the earth is proved by the fact that the entire earth is illuminated by it, and so is the heaven. And the fact that the earth casts a conical shadow also indicates that the sun is larger. And because of its great size it is seen from everywhere on earth. 144

The moon is more like the earth in composition because it is closer to the earth. These fiery bodies and the other stars each receive some form of nourishment: the sun, which is an ignited mass endowed with reason, from the great ocean; and the moon from fresh waters, since it is mixed with air and is close to the earth, as Posidonius says in the sixth book of his *Discourse on Nature*. The other celestial bodies get their nutriment from the earth. They hold that the stars and the earth are spherical, and that the earth does not move. The moon does not have its own light, but gets its illumination from the sun. 145

An eclipse of the sun occurs when the moon passes in front of it on the side toward us, as Zeno writes in his work *On the Universe*. For the moon is seen stealing over the sun at their conjunctions, occluding it, and then receding from it. (One can observe this phenomenon by means of a basin containing water.) The moon is eclipsed when it falls into the earth’s shadow; hence it is only during full moons that eclipses occur. Although the moon is diametrically opposite the sun every month, because, in traveling 146

along an oblique path (relative to the sun's), it passes out of the sun's latitude, it goes too far north or too far south for an eclipse to occur every month. But when it is on the sun's latitude and the ecliptic, it is diametrically opposite the sun, and then an eclipse occurs. The moon is on the sun's latitude and the ecliptic in the constellations of Cancer, Scorpio, Aries, and Taurus, according to Posidonius.

147 God is a living being, immortal, rational, perfect in happiness, immune to anything bad, exercising forethought for the cosmos and all it contains. But he is not of human shape. He is the craftsman of the universe and, as it were, the father of all things, both generally and in that particular part of him that pervades everything and which is called by many names in accordance with his various powers. For they call him *Dia*<sup>108</sup> because he is the cause (*di'hon*) of all things; Zeus, insofar as he is the cause of life (*zēn*) or passes through the living; Athena because his ruling part extends into the upper air (*aithēr*); Hera because it extends into the air (*aēr*); Hephaestus because it extends into the designing fire; Poseidon because it extends into the watery domain; and Demeter because it extends into the earth. Likewise, they give him other titles by fastening onto particular aspects of his nature.

148 Zeno says that the whole cosmos and the heaven are the substance of god, as do Chrysippus in the first book of his work *On Gods* and Posidonius in the first book of his work *On Gods*. Antipater, in the seventh book of his work *On the Cosmos*, says that god's substance is aeriform. Boethus, in his work *On Nature*, says that the sphere of the fixed stars is the substance of god.

By the term "nature," they sometimes mean that which sustains the cosmos, sometimes that which makes things on earth grow. Nature is a self-moving force that generates and sustains its products in accordance with generative principles at definite periods, producing beings similar to those from which they sprang. They say that nature aims both at utility and at pleasure, as is evident from human craftsmanship.

149 That all things happen by fate is asserted by Chrysippus in his treatise *On Fate*, by Posidonius in the second book of his work *On Fate*, by Zeno, and by Boethus in the first book of his work *On Fate*. Fate is the causal chain of the universe or a rational principle according to which the cosmos is administered.

They also maintain that divination in all forms is real, if it is true that providence also exists. And they prove it to be a skill on the basis of certain

108 *Dia* in Greek is the accusative case of the name Zeus. This figure, and each of the gods that follow, were, in traditional Greek mythology, separate entities with separate domains. The Stoics, on the other hand, saw them as alternate titles for their single god.

outcomes, as Zeno says, and Chrysippus in the second book of his work *On Divination*, Athenodorus, and Posidonius in the second book of his *Discourse on Nature* and in the fifth book of his work *On Divination*. Panaetius, on the other hand, claims that it does not exist.

They say that the primary matter is the substance of all things that exist; thus Chrysippus in the first book of his *Physics* and Zeno. Matter is that from which anything whatever is produced. The terms “substance” and “matter” are used in two senses, either pertaining to everything or to particular things. The matter of the universe does not increase or diminish, but the matter of particular things both increases and diminishes. Substance, according to them, is body, and it is limited, as Antipater says in the second book of his work *On Substance* and Apollodorus in his work *Physics*. And it is also subject to change, as the same author says; for if it were immutable, then the things generated from it would not have come into being. Hence he also rejects the infinite divisibility that Chrysippus asserts. “For there is nothing infinite into which the division can be made. But the division cannot be brought to an end. Substances can be blended through and through, as Chrysippus says in the third book of his *Physics*, and not merely at their surfaces and by juxtaposition. For a little wine thrown into the sea will co-extend with it for a while, and will then be blended with it.

They say that there are *daimones*<sup>109</sup> who have a rapport with human beings and oversee human affairs, and also heroes,<sup>110</sup> who are the surviving souls of virtuous men.

Of atmospheric phenomena, they call winter the cooling of the air above the earth as a result of the sun’s departure to a distance, and spring the good temperature of the air that results from the sun’s approach to us. Summer is the heating of the air above the earth by the sun’s journey to the north; autumn is caused by the return journey of the sun away from us. <The winds are streams of air, and are differently named> according to the regions from which they blow.<sup>111</sup> They are caused by the sun’s evaporation of the clouds. The rainbow is constituted by rays of light reflected from moist clouds, or, as Posidonius says in his *Meteorology*, a reflection of a section of the sun or moon in a dewy cloud that is hollow and continuous in appearance, the image showing itself, as if in a mirror, in the form of a

109 Beings intermediate between gods and men. The famous *daimōn* of Socrates is mentioned at 2.32.

110 Hero cults, where dead heroes were worshipped, were ubiquitous in ancient Greece.

111 In the Greek world the four principal winds were usually personified as divinities: Boreas (the North Wind), Notus (the South), Eurus (the East), and Zephyros (the West).

circle's circumference. Comets, "bearded" stars,<sup>112</sup> and meteors are fires that  
 153 consist of dense air borne up to the region of aether. A meteor is a kindled  
 mass of fire moving rapidly in the air and looking like a long tail.

Rain is a transformation of cloud into water, when moisture, carried up  
 from the earth or the sea by the sun, has not been entirely evaporated. When  
 it is frozen, it is called hoarfrost. Hail is frozen cloud crumbled by wind. Snow  
 is moisture from a frozen cloud, as Posidonius says in the eighth book of his  
*Discourse on Nature*.

Lightning is a kindling of clouds that have been rubbed together or broken  
 up by wind, as Zeno says in his work *On the Universe*. Thunder is the  
 154 sound produced by the rubbing together or breaking up of these clouds. A  
 thunderbolt is a powerful kindling that falls to the earth with great force  
 when clouds are rubbed together or broken up by the wind. Others say that it  
 is a dense mass of fiery air that descends violently. A typhoon is a great thun-  
 derbolt, violent and windy, or a smoky wind formed when a cloud breaks up.  
 A hurricane is a cloud split by fire and wind.

Earthquakes occur when wind flows into the hollow places of the earth  
 or is trapped there, as Posidonius says in his eighth book. They include jolts,  
 fissures, tilts, and vertical shocks.

They hold that the world's orderly arrangement is as follows. The earth  
 155 lies in the middle, functioning as the center; next comes the watery sphere,  
 concentric with the earth, so that the earth is in water; after the water comes a  
 spherical layer of air. There are five celestial circles: first, the arctic circle, which  
 is always visible; second, the summer tropic; third, the equinoctial circle; fourth,  
 the winter tropic; and fifth, the antarctic, which is invisible. They are called  
 parallel because they do not incline toward one another. Yet they are described  
 around the same center. The zodiac is an oblique circle, since it crosses the par-  
 156 allel circles. The earth has five zones. The first is the northern zone, beyond the  
 arctic circle, uninhabitable because of the cold; the second is the temperate zone;  
 the third is uninhabitable because of the heat and is called the torrid zone; the  
 fourth is the countertemperate zone; and the fifth is the southern zone, which is  
 uninhabitable because of the cold.

They think that nature is a designing fire, proceeding methodically on its  
 course—that is to say breath that is fiery and endowed with designing power.  
 The soul is a nature capable of sense perception. It is our inborn breath. They  
 therefore consider that it is a body and that it survives death. But it is perish-  
 able, though the soul of the universe, of which the souls of living beings are

112 The distinctions between these phenomena are unclear, since in other Greek texts the phrase  
 "bearded star" was a synonym for comet.



Terra-cotta *lekythos* (oil flask), attributed to the Sabouroff Painter, c. 450 BC.  
Hermes beckons a young man, the deceased, toward Charon's boat.

parts, is imperishable. Zeno of Citium and Antipater, in their works *On the Soul*, and Posidonius hold that the soul is a warm breath; through it we live, and by it we move. Cleanthes says that all souls last until the conflagration, but Chrysippus says that only the souls of the wise do. 157

They say that the soul has eight parts: the five senses, the generative principles in us, the power of speech, and the power of reasoning.

They say that we see when the light between our vision and the external object extends in the form of a cone, according to Chrysippus, in the second book of his *Physics*, and Apollodorus. The tip of the cone in the air is at the eye, the base at the object seen. Thus the observed object is communicated to us by the tensed air, as if by a stick.

We hear when the air between the speaker and the hearer is struck in a spherical manner and then rises in waves and strikes the ears, just as the water in a cistern forms circular waves when a stone is thrown into it. 158

Sleep occurs when the sensory tension is relaxed in the ruling part of the soul. They say that the passions are caused by variations of the breath.

Semen, they say, is that which is able to engender beings similar to the beings from which it sprang. Human semen, which the human being emits with a moist envelope, is mingled with the parts of the soul in a mixture identical,

159 proportionally, to that of the parents. Chrysippus, in the second book of his *Physics*, says that in substance it is breath, as is clear from seeds that are sown in the earth, which, when they are old, no longer germinate because their potency has dissipated. Sphaerus<sup>113</sup> says that semen is derived from the entire body; at any rate, it generates all the parts of the body. The seed of the female they declare to be sterile, for it is without tension, scanty, and watery, as Sphaerus says.

The ruling part is the most authoritative part of the soul; in it the impressions and impulses arise, and from it rational speech issues. It resides in the heart.

160 This seems to me an adequate summary of their physical doctrines, my aim being to preserve a due proportion in my work. But the points on which certain Stoics differed from the rest are the following.

## ARISTON

Ariston the Bald, of Chios, who was nicknamed the Siren,<sup>114</sup> said that the goal was to live in a state of indifference to everything that is intermediate between virtue and vice, without making any distinction whatsoever among such things, but treating them all alike. For he likened the wise man to the good actor, who, whether he dons the mask of Thersites or that of Agamemnon,<sup>115</sup> will portray both characters appropriately. He dispensed with the topics of physics and logic, saying that the one is beyond our grasp, that the other does not concern us, and that the only one that does concern us is ethics. He said that dialectical arguments are like spiderwebs: though they seem to display some workmanship, they are utterly useless. He did not accept the idea of numerous virtues, as Zeno did, nor the doctrine of the Megarians, who call a single virtue by many names; instead he regarded virtue as belonging to the category of relative modes.

161

Espousing this sort of philosophy and discoursing in Cynosarges,<sup>116</sup> he became influential enough to be called the founder of a philosophical school. At any rate Miltiades and Diphilus<sup>117</sup> were called Aristonians. He

113 Sphaerus of Borysthenes was a third-century Stoic philosopher taught by Zeno and Cleanthes. According to Cicero, he was particularly admired for his definitions; none of his works have survived. Diogenes briefly discusses his life and views at 7.177–78.

114 Part woman and part bird, the Sirens had the power to enchant listeners with their song. Ariston presumably earned the nickname for his persuasiveness.

115 Thersites and Agamemnon, both portrayed in Book 1 of Homer's *Iliad*, represent two ends of the heroic spectrum, the ugly, hunchbacked private soldier and the highborn king.

116 The name of a gymnasium located outside the walls of Athens, within a sanctuary of Heracles. It was a common gathering place for philosophers, most notably Antisthenes (see 6.13).

117 Neither man is well-known, but Diphilus may be the third-century BC comic playwright of that name.

was a persuasive man and well thought of by the public. Hence Timon alludes to him in this verse:

One who traces his descent from wily Ariston.

After meeting Polemon,<sup>118</sup> says Diocles of Magnesia, Ariston went over to his school; Zeno was at that time afflicted with a lingering ailment. Ariston was especially attached to the Stoic doctrine that the wise man <does not> hold opinions.<sup>119</sup> Persaeus,<sup>120</sup> seeking to oppose this doctrine, had one of a pair of twin brothers deposit a sum with Ariston, and then got the other to reclaim it. Duly perplexed, Ariston was thus refuted. He also inveighed against Arcesilaus.<sup>121</sup> Setting eyes on a monstrous bull that had a uterus, he said, “Alas, Arcesilaus has been given an argument against the evidence of our senses!” To an Academic who claimed that he knew nothing for certain, Ariston said, “Don’t you even see the person sitting next to you?” And when the man said, “No,” Ariston replied,

Who blinded you? Who robbed you of the rays of the lamp?<sup>122</sup>

The books attributed to him include:

*Exhortations*, two books  
*On Zeno’s Doctrines*  
*Dialogues*  
*Lectures*, six books  
*Dissertations on Wisdom*, seven books  
*Dissertations on Love*  
*Notes on Conceit*  
*Notebooks*, twenty-five books  
*Memoirs*, three books  
*Anecdotes*, eleven books  
*Against the Orators*  
*Against the Refutations of Alexinus*  
*Against the Dialecticians*, three books  
*Against Cleanthes*  
*Letters*, four books

118 Head of the Platonic Academy from c. 314 to 270/69 BC. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 4.16–20.

119 Because he has knowledge rather than mere opinion (see 7.121). The point of the ensuing anecdote is that Ariston was uncertain, like one who has an opinion rather than true knowledge.

120 Persaeus of Citium (c. 306–c. 243 BC) became a teacher of Stoic philosophy.

121 Arcesilaus headed the Platonic Academy at the start of its Middle phase. He was generally doubtful about the attainability of knowledge, and in particular cast doubt on the reliability of the senses. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 4.28–45.

122 The quote comes from a lost comedy of Cratinus.

Panaetius and Sosicrates say that only the letters are his; they attribute all the other works to Ariston the Peripatetic.<sup>123</sup>

164 The story goes that, being bald, he suffered a sunstroke and so died. I have made fun of him in choliambic:

Why, Ariston, though old and bald,  
Did you let the sun roast your brow?  
Seeking warmth more than was wise,  
You unwillingly found chill Hades.

There was another Ariston, a Peripatetic from Iulis; a third, a musician of Athens; a fourth, a tragic poet; a fifth, from Halae, an author of handbooks on rhetoric; and a sixth, a Peripatetic from Alexandria.

## HERILLUS

165 Herillus of Chalcedon<sup>124</sup> said that the goal is knowledge, that is, to live always so as to compare everything to a life lived with knowledge and not to be deceived by ignorance. He claimed that knowledge is a habit in the reception of presentations—a habit that cannot be dislodged by argument. Sometimes he would say that there was no single goal, but that goals shifted in light of changing circumstances and objects, just as the same bronze might become a statue either of Alexander or of Socrates. He distinguished between the ultimate goal and the subordinate goal; for even the unwise seek the latter, but only the wise seek the former. Entities that lie between virtue and vice he called the indifferents. His writings, though they consist of only a few lines, are full of vigor, and contain some refutations directed at Zeno.

166 It is said that as a boy Herillus attracted many lovers; and since Zeno wished to drive them away, he forced Herillus to shave his head, whereupon they turned elsewhere.

His books include:

*On Training*  
*On Passions*  
*On Opinion*  
*The Legislator*  
*The Maieutic Argument*

123 Also known as Ariston of Ceos and (as Diogenes terms him just below) Ariston of Iulis.

124 Chalcedon was a Megarian colony on the Asiatic side of the Bosphorus. Some manuscripts have *Karchēdonios* rather than *Chalchēdonios*, which would instead make Herillus a Carthaginian.

*The Adversary*  
*The Teacher*  
*The Reviser*  
*The Correcter*  
*Hermes*  
*Medea*  
*Dialogues*  
*Ethical Theses* < . . . >

## DIONYSIUS

Dionysius the Turncoat declared, as a result of an eye disease, that pleasure was the goal;<sup>125</sup> for his suffering was so severe that he was reluctant to say that pain was an indifferent.

He was the son of Theophantes and a native of Heraclea.<sup>126</sup> He studied first, as Diocles says, with his fellow citizen Heraclides,<sup>127</sup> then with Alexinus and Menedemus,<sup>128</sup> and finally with Zeno.

At the start of his career, being fond of literature, he tried his hand at all sorts of poetry; later he took Aratus<sup>129</sup> as his model and sought to imitate him. After leaving Zeno he went over to the Cyrenaics, took to frequenting brothels, and abandoned himself without disguise to all the other pleasant pursuits. At the age of eighty he ended his life by abstaining from food.

167

The following books are attributed to him:

*On Apathy*, two books  
*On Training*, two books  
*On Pleasure*, four books  
*On Wealth*  
*On Wealth, Gratitude, and Revenge*  
*How to Live among Men*  
*On Prosperity*  
*On Ancient Kings*

125 This abandonment of Stoic teachings in favor of the Cyrenaics, the school that valued pleasure as the highest good, earned Dionysius his nickname (see 7.37).

126 A city on the southern coast of the Black Sea.

127 Heraclides Ponticus, a fourth-century Peripatetic; Diogenes discusses his life and views at 5.86–94.

128 Alexinus was a Megarian. Menedemus of Eretria (c. 339–265 BC) was a founder of the Eretrian school (see 2.125–44).

129 Aratus of Soli (c. 315–240 BC), the author of the extant *Phenomena*, a didactic poem about the constellations.

*On Praiseworthy Deeds*  
*On Barbarian Customs*

These three, then, held divergent views. But Zeno's successor was Cleanthes, of whom we must speak.

## CLEANTHES

168 Cleanthes, son of Phantias, was a native of Assos.<sup>130</sup> At first he was a boxer, as Antisthenes says in his *Successions*. He arrived in Athens with only four drachmas, as some say, and after meeting Zeno he pursued philosophy very creditably and remained faithful to the same doctrines. He was renowned for his diligence, and as he was extremely poor he was forced to work for wages. Thus by night he used to draw water in gardens, and by day he exercised himself in arguments. Hence he was nicknamed Phreantles (“the Water Boy”). They say that he was brought into court to give an account of how, being in such fine condition, he made his living. He was acquitted when he presented as his witnesses the gardener in whose garden he drew water and  
 169 the barley seller for whom he cooked the grain.<sup>131</sup> The Areopagites<sup>132</sup> were satisfied and voted him a donation of ten minas,<sup>133</sup> though Zeno would not let him accept it. We are also told that Antigonus<sup>134</sup> gave him three thousand drachmas.

One day, as he was leading some young men to a festival, a gust of wind exposed his flank and he was seen to be wearing no tunic under his cloak.<sup>135</sup> For this he was applauded by the Athenians, as Demetrius of Magnesia says in his *Men of the Same Name*. He was then admired also for this. They say that Antigonus, while attending one of his lectures, asked why he drew water. To this Cleanthes replied, “Do I *only* draw water? What, do I not dig? What, do I not water the garden and take every sort of job for the sake of philosophy?”

130 A city on the northeast shore of the Aegean Sea, across from the island of Lesbos.

131 The translation of the phrase here rendered as “cooked the grain” is uncertain.

132 A council of political elders who made up the high court of Athens.

133 A mina was worth a hundred drachmas.

134 Antigonus II Gonatas (c. 320–239 BC) was a king of Macedonia; he sought to fill his court at Pella with philosophers, poets, and other intellectuals.

135 The ascetic practice of wearing a rough wool cloak with no soft tunic beneath was usually associated with the Cynics (see 6.13).



Bronze figure of a seated philosopher,  
Roman copy of an early-third-century BC Hellenistic original.

For Zeno trained him in this way and exacted an obol from his wages.<sup>136</sup> One day Zeno brought his followers a handful of coins and said, “Cleanthes could also support a second Cleanthes, if he liked, whereas those who have the means to support themselves look to others for their necessities, even though they have plenty of time for philosophy.” Hence Cleanthes was also called a

170

<sup>136</sup> Under Athenian law, a slave who hired himself out had to give a portion of any money earned to his master. Zeno apparently put himself in the role of master in regard to his student Cleanthes.

second Heracles.<sup>137</sup> He was hardworking, but not naturally gifted and unusually slow, which is why Timon speaks of him as follows:

Who is this, who like a ram ranges over the ranks of warriors?<sup>138</sup>  
A masticator of words, the stone of Assos,<sup>139</sup> a sluggish slab.

171 He bore the jeers of his fellow students and put up with being called an ass, saying that he alone was able to carry Zeno's load. One day, when reproached with timidity, he said, "That is why I seldom make mistakes." Preferring his own life to that of the wealthy, he said that while they were playing ball he was at work digging hard and barren ground. He would often scold himself, and when Ariston<sup>140</sup> heard him doing this and asked, "Who are you scolding?" he laughed and said, "An old man with gray hair, but no wisdom." When someone said that Arcesilaus<sup>141</sup> did not act as he should, Cleanthes said, "Stop! Don't blame him. For if in word he rejects duty, at least he acknowledges it in deed." And when Arcesilaus said, "I don't care for flatterers," Cleanthes replied, "True. I flatter you by saying that you act otherwise than your words would indicate."

172 When someone asked him what advice he should give to his son, he quoted the "watchword of Electra":

Silence, silence, light be your step.<sup>142</sup>

When a Spartan said that labor was a good thing, Cleanthes was delighted and said,

You are of good blood, dear boy.<sup>143</sup>

Hecaton, in his *Anecdotes*, says that when a handsome youth said, "If someone who pokes at one's belly 'bellies' (*gastrizei*), then someone who pokes at one's thigh 'thighs' (*merizei*),"<sup>144</sup> Cleanthes replied, "Do as you like

137 The greatest of Greek heroes, Heracles was much admired by both Stoics and Cynics for his courage, ruggedness, and strength.

138 Timon here puns on a passage of Homer that describes Odysseus (*Iliad* 3.196). In the Homeric passage, the word *stichas* (translated here as "ranks") refers to "lines" of soldiers, but in a different context can also mean "lines" of written text.

139 Cleanthes' native city was famous for a kind of stone used in sarcophagi.

140 Ariston's life is found just above (7.160–64).

141 Diogenes discusses the life and views of Arcesilaus at 4.28–45.

142 A quote from Euripides' *Orestes* (line 140), though the text is slightly different than in our manuscripts of that play. The chorus is speaking to Electra.

143 *Odyssey* 4.611. Menelaus, king of Sparta, praises Odysseus' son Telemachus.

144 The word for belly is *gaster*, and the verb for striking the belly is *gastrizein*. Using that same formula, the boy invents a word for striking the thighs, *merizein*. Given the popularity of



Marble statue of Heracles seated on a rock.  
Imperial Roman adaptation of a Greek statue of the late fourth or early third century BC.

with your thighs, lad, but similar words do not necessarily signify the same things.” Conversing one day with a young man, he asked, “Do you see?” And when the man nodded, Cleanthes said, “Then why don’t I see that you see?”

Present at the theater when the poet Sositheus<sup>145</sup> uttered the line:

173

Like herds of cows, driven by Cleanthes’ folly,

he remained impassive. Marveling at this, the audience applauded him and drove Sositheus from the stage. Afterward, when the poet apologized for the insult, Cleanthes accepted the apology, saying that it would be absurd, considering that Dionysus and Heracles are ridiculed by the poets<sup>146</sup> without getting angry, if he took offense at a casual slur. He used to say that it was the same with the Peripatetics as with lyres: both emit beautiful sounds but never hear themselves.

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intercrural sex in the ancient world, the word would have a decidedly sexual connotation, hence Cleanthes’ warning that analogous words don’t always have analogous meanings.

145 Sositheus is known as a tragic playwright, though in this story he seems to be an actor or declaimer of comic verse.

146 Dionysus and Heracles, as the two gods closest to mortal condition (both being born from mortal mothers), were often portrayed in Greek comedies.

It is said that when he declared it to be Zeno's view that a man's character could be grasped from his looks, certain witty lads brought him a catamite who had been roughened by labor in the country and asked Cleanthes to describe the youth's character. Cleanthes was stumped and told the man to go away. But when, as he was leaving, the man sneezed, Cleanthes said, "I've got it! He's effeminate."<sup>147</sup> To the solitary man who was talking to himself, he said, "You're not talking to a bad man." When someone teased him about his age, he said, "I too would like to be gone; but when I consider that I'm healthy in every respect and can still write and read, I'm prepared to stay where I am." They say that he wrote down Zeno's lectures on shards of pottery and the shoulder blades of bulls,<sup>148</sup> since he had no money to buy papyrus. Such being his character he was able, though Zeno had many other worthy disciples, to succeed him as head of the school.

He left excellent books, which include:

*On Time*  
*On Zeno's Natural Philosophy*, two books  
*Interpretations of Heraclitus*, four books  
*On Sensation*  
*On Art*  
*Against Democritus*  
*Against Aristarchus*  
*Against Herillus*  
*On Impulse*, two books  
175 *Antiquities*  
*On Gods*  
*On Giants*  
*On Marriage*  
*On the Poet*  
*On Duty*, three books  
*On Good Counsel*  
*On Gratitude*  
*Exhortation*  
*On Virtues*  
*On Natural Ability*  
*On Gorgippus*  
*On Jealousy*  
*On Love*  
*On Freedom*  
*The Art of Love*

147 It's unclear why a sneeze would be regarded as a sign of effeminacy.

148 The broad, flat surface of the bovine scapula has served as a writing surface in many cultures.

*On Honor*  
*On Fame*  
*The Statesman*  
*On Deliberation*  
*On Laws*  
*On Passing Judgment*  
*On Education*  
*On Reason*, three books  
*On the End*  
*On Beautiful Things*  
*On Actions*  
*On Knowledge*  
*On Kingship*  
*On Friendship*  
*On the Symposium*  
*On the Idea That Virtue Is the Same in Man and Woman*  
*On the Wise Man Who Practices Sophistry*  
*On Maxims*  
*Talks*, two books  
*On Pleasure*  
*On Personal Traits*  
*On Difficult Problems*  
*On Dialectic*  
*On Modes*  
*On Predicates*

These are his books.

He died under the following circumstances. When his gums became swollen, he followed the advice of his doctors and abstained from food for two days. His condition improved so much that the doctors permitted him to resume his usual diet. But he declined to do so. Declaring that he had already gone too far down the road, he continued to fast for his remaining time and died, according to some, at the same age as Zeno. He had studied with Zeno for nineteen years.

176

I have made fun of him in these verses:

I praise Cleanthes, but praise Hades more,  
 Who could not bear, seeing him grown so old,  
 To deny him peace at last among the dead,  
 He who had bailed his life out for so long a time.<sup>149</sup>

149 The metaphor (and the point of Diogenes' joke) is that Cleanthes had preserved his life like one bailing water from a leaky vessel.

## SPHAERUS

177 As we mentioned earlier,<sup>150</sup> Sphaerus of Bosphorus became Cleanthes' student after Zeno's death. When he had made considerable progress in his studies he went to Alexandria, to the court of Ptolemy Philopator.<sup>151</sup> One day, during a discussion of whether the wise man would hold an opinion, Sphaerus said he would not. The king, who wished to refute him, ordered some waxen pomegranates to be put on the table. Sphaerus was fooled and the king shouted that he had assented to a false impression. To this Sphaerus made a clever reply, saying that what he had assented to was not that they were pomegranates, but that it was reasonable to assume that they were pomegranates, and that there was a difference between the direct apprehension and the probable one. When Mnesistratus<sup>152</sup> accused him of denying that Ptolemy was a king < . . >, he said, "Being such as he is, Ptolemy is indeed a king."<sup>153</sup>

178 He wrote the following books:

*On the Cosmos*, two books  
*On Elements*  
 <*On*> *Seed*  
*On Fortune*  
*On Minima*  
*Against Atoms and Images*  
*On the Sense Organs*  
*On Heraclitus*, five discourses  
*Treatises* < . . >  
*On the Order of Topics in Ethics*  
*On Duty*  
*On Impulse*  
*On the Passions*, two books  
*On Monarchy*  
*On the Spartan Constitution*  
*On Lycurgus and Socrates*, three books  
*On Law*  
*On Divination*

150 See 7.37.

151 Ptolemy IV was ruler of Egypt in the late third century BC, and like most Hellenistic dynasts, collected Greek thinkers and poets at his court. According to 7.185, Sphaerus agreed to join Ptolemy when others refused.

152 Otherwise unknown.

153 The anecdote turns on the difference between inference and true knowledge. Mnesistratus claims that Sphaerus cannot be more certain of Ptolemy's royal status than he was of the authenticity of the pomegranates, but Sphaerus' reply gives Ptolemy an innate quality of kingship that transcends sense impressions.

*Dialogues on Love*  
*On the Eretrian Philosophers*  
*On Similar*  
*On Definitions*  
*On Habit*  
*On Contradictions*, three books  
*On Reason*  
*On Wealth*  
*On Fame*  
*On Death*  
*Handbook of Dialectic*, two books  
*On Predicates*  
*On Ambiguous Terms*  
*Letters*

## CHRYSIPPUS

Chrysippus, son of Apollonius, a native of Soli (or of Tarsus, as Alexander says in his *Successions*), was a student of Cleanthes. Previously he had trained as a long-distance runner, but afterward he attended the lectures of Zeno or Cleanthes, as Diocles and most people say. And then, while Cleanthes was still living, Chrysippus left his school and became an important figure in philosophy. He was a gifted man, and so clever in every branch that he differed on most points from Zeno, and from Cleanthes too, to whom he often said he needed only to know what the man's doctrines were and he would discover the proofs himself. Nevertheless, whenever he contended against Cleanthes he regretted it, so that he frequently quoted the lines:

In all else I am blessed, except when it comes to  
 Cleanthes: there I am unfortunate.<sup>154</sup>

He became so renowned among the dialecticians that most people thought that if the gods had a dialectic, it would be none other than that of Chrysippus. Though he had abundant material for discussion, he did not develop a satisfactory style. His industry was unequalled, as is clear from his writings, which number more than 705. He increased their number by repeatedly treating the same doctrine, setting down everything that came to mind, making many corrections, and citing a great many authorities, with the

<sup>154</sup> The lines are adapted from Euripides' *Orestes* (540–41), where Tyndareus, king of Sparta, says he has been blessed in all things but his daughters, Helen and Clytemnestra. Chrysippus inserted "Cleanthes" in place of "my daughters."

result that in one of his books he copied out nearly the whole of Euripides' *Medea*; and when someone holding the book was asked what he was reading, he replied, "Chrysippus' *Medea*."

181 Apollodorus of Athens, in his *Collection of Doctrines*, wishing to show that the works of Epicurus, who relied on his own resources and had no need to pad his writings with quotations, far exceeded in quantity the books of Chrysippus, says, to quote his exact words, "If one were to remove all extraneous citations from Chrysippus' books, there would be nothing left but blank pages." So says Apollodorus. Chrysippus' old serving woman used to say, according to Diocles, that he wrote five hundred lines a day. Hecaton says that he turned to philosophy when the property he had inherited from his father was confiscated for the royal treasury.

182 His build was slight, as is shown by his statue in the Cerameicus,<sup>155</sup> which is almost overshadowed by the equestrian statue nearby. Hence Carneades<sup>156</sup> used to call him Crypsippus.<sup>157</sup> When reproached by someone for not joining the multitude who attended Ariston's lectures, he said, "If I had cared about the multitude, I would not have studied philosophy." To a dialectician who assailed Cleanthes and presented him with captious arguments, he said, "Stop distracting your elder from more serious subjects, and propound such things to us youngsters." Another time, when somebody who had a question was conversing with him calmly in private, but then, noticing a crowd approaching, began to be argumentative, he said:

Alas, my brother, your eye is growing wild;  
To madness you change apace, though sensible just now.<sup>158</sup>

183 At drinking parties he was quiet, though unsteady on his legs, which prompted the slave woman to remark, "It's only Chrysippus' legs that get tipsy." He was so sure of himself that when someone asked him, "To whom should I entrust my son?" he replied, "To me. For had I supposed there was anyone better than me, I myself would be studying with him." Hence this line is said to have been quoted in reference to him:

He alone has understanding: the rest are flitting shadows;<sup>159</sup>

155 A large neighborhood in Athens, so named because it was the potters' quarter.

156 Carneades of Cyrene (214/13–129/28 BC) served as head of the Academy. His rivalry with Chrysippus was notorious. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 4.62–66.

157 The name could be taken to mean "horse-hidden."

158 Euripides, *Orestes* 253–54. Electra addresses her brother Orestes, who is being driven mad by the vengeful shade of his mother Clytemnestra.

159 *Odyssey* 10.495. The reference is to Tiresias, the great seer of Thebes—the only shade in the underworld to retain full wisdom and consciousness.



Two views of a marble portrait head of the philosopher Chrysippus. Early Imperial Roman copy of a Greek statue of the late third century BC, probably by Euboulides.

and:

Had there been no Chrysippus, there would have been no Stoa.<sup>160</sup>

Finally, however, as Sotion says in his eighth book, he joined Arcesilaus and Lacydes<sup>161</sup> and studied philosophy in the Academy. This explains why he argued both for and against custom and habit, and used the method of the Academy when discussing magnitudes and numbers.

184

One day, as Hermippus says, when he was teaching in the Odeon,<sup>162</sup> he was invited by his students to a sacrificial feast. There, after taking some sweet unmixed wine, he was seized with dizziness and left the world of men five days later at the age of seventy-three, in the 143rd Olympiad,<sup>163</sup> as Apollodorus says in his *Chronology*.

160 Carneades apparently parodied the line, as related in 4.62.

161 Arcesilaus and Lacydes, both of whom headed the Platonic Academy, are discussed at 4.28–45 and 4.59–61, respectively.

162 An odeon was a hall for musical performances or recitations. Here Diogenes refers to the Odeon built at Athens by Pericles in the fifth century BC.

163 This Olympiad began in 208 BC.

My own playful verses about him run as follows:

Chrysippus grew dizzy after greedily  
 Quaffing a cup of Bacchus;<sup>164</sup>  
 He took no thought for the Stoa, nor his country, nor his own soul,  
 But departed for the house of Hades.

185 Some say, however, that he died as the result of a laughing fit. For when an ass had eaten his figs, he said to the old woman, “Now give the ass some unmixed wine to wash down the figs,” at which point he laughed so heartily that he died.

He seems to have been an arrogant man. At all events, though he wrote so much, he dedicated none of his books to any of the kings.<sup>165</sup> He contented himself with one old woman,<sup>166</sup> as Demetrius says in *Men of the Same Name*. When Ptolemy<sup>167</sup> wrote to Cleanthes asking him to come himself or to send someone else, Sphaerus went, but Chrysippus declined the invitation. On the other hand, he sent for his sister’s sons, Aristocreon and Philocrates, and had them educated. As the above-mentioned Demetrius reports, Chrysippus was the first who ventured to deliver his lectures in the open air in the Lyceum.<sup>168</sup>

186 There was another Chrysippus, a doctor from Cnidus, to whom Erasistratus<sup>169</sup> says he is deeply indebted; another, the son of the doctor, was Ptolemy’s doctor, who on a false charge was dragged about and punished with the lash; another was a student of Erasistratus; and another the author of a work *On Agriculture*.

Chrysippus the philosopher used to propound arguments of this kind:<sup>170</sup> “He who divulges the mysteries to the uninitiated is guilty of impiety; but the hierophant reveals the Mysteries to the uninitiated;<sup>171</sup> therefore the hierophant is guilty of impiety.” And another: “That which is not in the city is not in the

164 Bacchus was another name for Dionysus, the god of wine and revelry. “Bacchus” became a synonym for wine.

165 Since the Hellenistic dynasts controlled vast wealth and liked to patronize philosophers, book dedications were common as a way to curry favor and repay benefactions.

166 That is, he had only one servant (see 7.181). In context the point seems to be that he could have afforded a larger staff had he accepted the largesse of wealthy patrons.

167 Ptolemy IV Philopator (c. 244–205 BC), king of Egypt.

168 The Lyceum was a grove outside the walls of Athens where Aristotle’s school had been centered. Aristotle and his followers sometimes taught there while strolling with groups of students, but Chrysippus was evidently the first to deliver formal lectures in the open air.

169 A celebrated physician (c. 315–240 BC) and the author of a number of books on anatomy and practical medicine.

170 What follows is a series of specious arguments—many of them syllogisms that violate the rules of Stoic logic.

171 The Eleusinian Mysteries, rites sacred to the goddesses Demeter and Persephone, took place in secret and were not to be divulged to outsiders. The hierophant was the priest who presided over these rites.

house either; there is no well in the city, therefore there is none in the house either.” And another: “There is a head, but you do not have that particular head; so there is a head you do not have; therefore you do not have a head.” <And another>: “If someone is in Megara, he is not in Athens; but there is a man in Megara; therefore there is not a man in Athens.” And again: “If you say something, it passes through your mouth; but you say wagon; therefore a wagon passes through your mouth.” And: “If you have not lost something, you have it; but you have not lost horns; therefore you have horns.” Others attribute this argument to Eubulides.<sup>172</sup> 187

There are writers who run Chrysippus down on the grounds that he wrote much that is obscene and unspeakable. For in his work *On Ancient Natural Philosophers* he gives an obscene version of the story of Hera and Zeus,<sup>173</sup> with details near line 600 that no one could repeat without soiling his lips. For they say that his interpretation of the story is quite obscene (even if he commends it as a contribution to natural philosophy), its language being more suitable to prostitutes than to gods. Nor is his version even placed on record by historians of painting. For it is found neither in Polemon, nor in Hypsicrates, nor even in Antigonus.<sup>174</sup> It is his own invention. 188

And in his work *On the Republic* he says that one can have intercourse with one’s mother, one’s daughters, and one’s sons.<sup>175</sup> He says the same thing right at the beginning of his work *On Things Not Worth Choosing for Their Own Sake*. And in the third book of his work *On Justice*, near line 1000, he condones the eating of corpses.<sup>176</sup> And in the second book of his work *On the Means of Making a Living*, where he proposes to consider how the wise man should provide for himself, he says: “And yet, why should he provide for himself?<sup>177</sup> If to support life, life is an indifferent; if for pleasure, that too is an indifferent; and if for virtue, virtue itself is sufficient for happiness. The 189

172 Eubulides of Miletus (fl. fourth century BC) was a philosopher of the Megarian school and a pupil of Euclides of Megara. He is best known for his philosophical paradoxes. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 2.108–12.

173 Hera and Zeus were brother and sister as well as husband and wife. Homer, in Book 14 of the *Iliad*, describes an occasion on which Hera seduced Zeus, perhaps the “story” referred to here. The sentence that follows indicates that Chrysippus gave the tale allegorical implications.

174 Antigonus of Carystus is meant, not either of the Macedonian kings of that name.

175 Cynic philosophers before Chrysippus had argued that incest taboos were purely artificial. Plato, in the *Republic*, takes steps to ensure that incest will not occur by accident in his ideal state, even though parents and children will not recognize their familial bonds.

176 Necrophagy, like incest, might be regarded, by those questioning the validity of social convention, as morally neutral; Herodotus, in the fifth century BC, discussed the necrophagy of the Callatian Indians in just these terms (*Histories* 3.38). The taboo against cannibalism was also challenged by the Cynics (see 6.73).

177 In other words, why should one not live by begging from others, as the Cynics often did.



Marble fragment of the Great Eleusinian Relief.

Early Imperial Roman copy of a Greek marble relief of c. 450–425 BC found at the sanctuary of Demeter at Eleusis. Demeter, the goddess of agricultural abundance, stands at the left, holding a scepter. At the right is Persephone, her daughter. Each goddess extends her right hand toward a nude youth, but it is no longer possible to determine what the hands held. The boy is thought to be Triptolemus, who was sent by Demeter to teach men how to cultivate grain.

ways of making a living are also ridiculous: maintenance by a king—you would have to humor him; or by friends—then friendship will have a price; or living by one’s wisdom—then wisdom will become mercenary.” These are the objections leveled at him.

Since his books are highly regarded, I have decided to include a catalogue of them, grouping the works according to subject matter. They are as follows:

#### LOGIC

*On Logic* < . . . >

*Logical Theses* < . . . >

*The Philosopher’s Inquiries*

*Dialectical Definitions, Addressed to Metrodorus*, six books

*On the Terms Employed in Dialectic, Addressed to Zeno*, one book

*Art of Dialectic, Addressed to Aristagoras*, one book

190

*Persuasive Conditional Arguments, Addressed to Dioscurides*, four books

#### LOGIC AS CONCERNED WITH THE SUBJECT MATTER

First series:

*On Propositions*, one book

*On Nonsimple Propositions*, one book

*On the Complex Proposition, Addressed to Athenades*, two books

*On Negative Propositions, Addressed to Aristagoras*, three books

*On Definite Propositions, Addressed to Athenodorus*, one book

*On Propositions Expressed by Means of Privation, Addressed to Thearus*, one book

*On Indefinite Propositions, Addressed to Dion*, three books

*On the Variety of Indefinite Propositions*, four books

*On Temporal Propositions*, two books

*On Propositions in the Aorist Tense*, two books

Second series:

*On the True Disjunctive Proposition, Addressed to Gorgippides*, one book

*On the True Hypothetical Proposition, Addressed to Gorgippides*, four books

*Choice, Addressed to Gorgippides*, one book

191

*Remarks on the Subject of Consequents*, one book

*On the Argument That Employs Three Propositions, Addressed to Gorgippides*,  
one book

*On Propositions of Possibility, Addressed to Clitus*, four books

*A Reply to Philo’s Work on Meanings*, one book

*On the Question What Are False Propositions*, one book

Third series:

*On Imperatives*, two books

*On Interrogations*, two books

*On Inquiry*, four books  
*Epitome Concerning Interrogation and Inquiry*, one book  
*Epitome Concerning Replies*, one book  
 <On> *Investigation*, two books  
*On Replies*, four books

Fourth series:

*On Predicates, Addressed to Metrodorus*, ten books  
*On Nominatives and Oblique Cases, Addressed to Phylarchus*, one book  
*On Predicates That Have a Subject in the Nominative, Addressed to Apollonides*,  
 one book  
*To Pasyllus, on Predicates*, four books

Fifth series:

192 *On the Five Cases*, one book  
*On Modes of Expression Grouped According to Subject Matter*, one book  
*On Incidental Signification, Addressed to Stesagoras*, two books  
*On Common Nouns*, two books

#### LOGIC AS CONCERNED WITH WORDS OR PHRASES AND THE SENTENCE

First series:

*On Singular and Plural Enunciations*, six books  
*On Expressions, Addressed to Sosigenes and Alexander*, five books  
*On Linguistic Anomaly, Addressed to Dion*, four books  
*On Sorites Arguments Relating to Utterances*, three books  
*On Solecisms*, one book  
*On Solecistic Arguments, Addressed to Dionysius*, one book  
*Arguments That Depend on Customary Usage*, one book  
*Expression, Addressed to Dionysius*, one book

Second series:

193 *On the Elements of Speech and on Things Said*, five books  
*On the Syntax of Things Said*, four books  
*On the Syntax and Elements of Things Said, Addressed to Philip*, three books  
*On the Elements of Speech, Addressed to Nicias*, one book  
*On Things Said Relatively*, one book

Third series:

*Against Those Who Reject Division*, two books  
*On Ambiguities, Addressed to Apollas*, four books  
*On Mode Ambiguities*, one book  
*On Conditional Mode Ambiguity*, two books

*A Reply to the Work of Panthoides on Ambiguities*, two books  
*On the Introductory Course on Ambiguities*, five books  
*Epitome of the Work on Ambiguities, Addressed to Epicrates*, one book  
*Conditionals for the Introductory Course on Ambiguities*, two books

## LOGIC AS CONCERNED WITH ARGUMENTS AND MODES

First series:

*Handbook of Arguments and Modes, Addressed to Dioscurides*, five books  
*On Arguments*, three books  
*On the Construction of Modes, Addressed to Stesagoras*, two books 194  
*Comparison of the Propositions Expressed in the Modes*, one book  
*On Reciprocal and Hypothetical Syllogisms*, one book  
*To Agathon or On the Problems of What Follows*, one book  
*On the Question What Premises Could Demonstrate a Given Conclusion with the  
 Aid of One or More Other Premises*, one book  
*On Conclusions, Addressed to Aristagoras*, one book  
*On How the Same Syllogism May Be Arranged in Several Modes*, one book  
*A Reply to the Objection to Arranging the Same Argument Both in a Syllogistic  
 and in a Nonsyllogistic Mode*, two books  
*A Reply to the Objections to the Analyses of Syllogisms*, three books  
*A Reply to Philo's Work on Modes, Addressed to Timostratus*, one book  
*An Anthology of Material on Logic, Addressed to Timocrates and Philomachus:  
 An Introduction to the Topic of Arguments and Modes*, one book

Second series:

195

*On Conclusive Arguments, Addressed to Zeno*, one book  
*On the Primary Indemonstrable Syllogisms, Addressed to Zeno*, one book  
*On the Analysis of Syllogisms*, one book  
*On Redundant Arguments, Addressed to Pasyllus*, two books  
*On the Theorems Pertaining to Syllogisms*, one book  
*On the Introductory Syllogisms, Addressed to Zeno*, one book  
*On the Introductory Modes, Addressed to Zeno*, three books  
*On Syllogisms in False Figures*, five books  
*Syllogistic Arguments by Analysis in Indemonstrable Arguments*, one book  
*Inquiries into the Modes, Addressed to Zeno and Philomathes,*  
 one book (This appears to be spurious.)

Third series:

*On Changing Arguments, Addressed to Athenades*, one book (spurious)  
*Changing Arguments Concerned with the Adverb*, three books (spurious) 196  
*Reply to Ameinias' "Disjunctive Syllogisms,"* one book

## Fourth series:

*On Hypotheses, Addressed to Meleager*, three books  
*Hypothetical Syllogisms Based on the Laws, Addressed to Meleager*, one book  
*Hypothetical Syllogisms to Serve as an Introduction*, two books  
*Hypothetical Syllogisms Consisting of Theorems*, two books  
*Solutions of Hedylus' Hypothetical Syllogisms*, two books  
*Solution of Alexander's Hypothetical Syllogisms*, three books (spurious)  
*On Explanations, Addressed to Leodamas*, one book

## Fifth series:

*On the Introductory Course to the "Lying" Argument, Addressed to Aristocreon*,  
 one book  
*"Lying"-Type Arguments: An Introduction*, one book  
*On the "Lying" Argument, Addressed to Aristocreon*, six books

## Sixth series:

*A Reply to Those Who Hold That Propositions May Be Simultaneously False and  
 True*, one book  
 197 *Reply to Those Who Solve the "Liar" Argument by Dissecting It, Addressed to  
 Aristocreon*, two books  
*Proofs Showing That Indefinite Propositions Should Not Be Dissected*, one book  
*A Reply to Objections to What Is Said Against the Dissection of Indefinite  
 Propositions, Addressed to Pasylus*, three books  
*Solution According to the Ancients, Addressed to Dioscurides*, one book  
*On the Solution of the "Liar" Argument, Addressed to Aristocreon*, three books  
*Solution of Hedylus' Hypothetical Arguments, Addressed to Aristocreon  
 and Apollas*, one book

## Seventh series:

*Reply to Those Who Hold That the Premises of the "Liar" Argument Are False*,  
 one book  
*On the "Denying" Argument, Addressed to Aristocreon*, two books  
*"Denying" Arguments for Training*, one book  
*On the "Little-by-Little" Argument, Addressed to Stesagoras*, two books  
*On the Arguments Relating to Assumptions, and on Quiescent Arguments,  
 Addressed to Onetor*, two books  
 198 *On the "Veiled Man" Argument, Addressed to Aristobulus*, two books  
*On the "Man Who Escapes Detection" Argument, Addressed to Athenades*,  
 one book

## Eighth series:

*On the "Nobody" Argument, Addressed to Menecrates*, eight books  
*On the Arguments Formed with an Indefinite and a Definite Proposition,  
 Addressed to Pasylus*, two books  
*On the "Nobody" Argument, Addressed to Epicrates*, one book



*Philosophy Presenting the Seven Liberal Arts to Boethius,*  
by the Coëtivy Master, c. 1460–1470.

On the far left, Boethius speaks to Philosophy, who presents him with personifications of the seven liberal arts, identified from left to right as Grammar, Rhetoric, Logic, Music, Geometry, Arithmetic, and Astronomy.

Ninth series:

*On Sophisms, Addressed to Heraclides and Pollis*, two books

*On Dialectical Puzzles, Addressed to Dioscurides*, five books

*Remarks on the Method of Arcesilaus, Addressed to Sphaerus*, one book

Tenth series:

*Attack on Customary Usage, Addressed to Metrodorus*, six books

*Defense of Customary Usage, Addressed to Gorgippides*, seven books

The topic of logic includes thirty-nine investigations that are outside the range of the four above-mentioned divisions; they address themes already enumerated, but are isolated logical investigations and are not included in the didactic corpus. All together the logical writings number 311.

199 ETHICAL THEORY AS CONCERNED WITH THE ARTICULATION OF  
ETHICAL CONCEPTIONS

First series:

*Outline of Ethical Theory, Addressed to Theoporus*, one book

*Ethical Theses*, one book

*Convincing Premises for Ethical Doctrines, Addressed to Philomathes*, three books

*Definitions of the Virtuous, Addressed to Metrodorus*, two books

*Definitions of the Base, Addressed to Metrodorus*, two books

*Definitions of the Ethically Intermediate, Addressed to Metrodorus*, two books

*Definitions of the Generic Notions, Addressed to Metrodorus*, seven books

*Definitions Concerned with the Other Branches of Expertise, Addressed  
to Metrodorus*, two books

Second series:

*On Similar, Addressed to Aristocles*, three books

*On Definitions, Addressed to Metrodorus*, seven books

Third series:

*On the Faulty Objections to the Definitions, Addressed to Laodamas*, seven books

200 *Persuasive Arguments in Support of the Definitions, Addressed to Dioscurides*, two  
books

*On Species and Genera, Addressed to Gorgippides*, two books

*On Divisions*, one book

*On Opposites, Addressed to Dionysius*, two books

*Convincing Arguments Against the Divisions and Genera and Species,  
and That Which Concerns the Contraries*, one book

Fourth series:

*On Etymologies, Addressed to Diocles*, seven books

*Etymological Matters, Addressed to Diocles*, four books

Fifth series:

*On Proverbs, Addressed to Zenodotus*, two books

*On Poems, Addressed to Philomathes*, one book

*On the Right Way to Listen to Poems Read Aloud*, two books

*A Reply to the Critics, Addressed to Diodorus*, one book

201 ETHICS AS CONCERNED WITH REASON IN COMMUNITY LIFE AND  
THE SKILLS AND VIRTUES THAT ARISE FROM IT

First series:

*Against Pictorial Representations, Addressed to Timonax*, one book

*On How We Name Each Thing and Conceive of It*, one book

*On Conceptions, Addressed to Laodamas*, two books

*On Assumption, Addressed to Pythonax*, three books

*Proofs That the Wise Man Will Not Hold Opinions*, one book

*On Apprehension, Knowledge, and Ignorance*, four books

*On Reason*, two books

*On the Use of Reason, Addressed to Leptines*

Second series:

*On the Fact That the Ancients Accepted Dialectic along with Proofs,*

*Addressed to Zeno*, two books

*On Dialectic, Addressed to Aristocreon*, four books

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*On Objections Made Against the Dialecticians*, three books

*On Rhetoric, Addressed to Dioscurides*, four books

Third series:

*On Habit, Addressed to Cleon*, three books

*On Skill and Lack of Skill, Addressed to Aristocreon*, four books

*On the Difference Between the Virtues, Addressed to Diodorus*, four books

*On the Fact That the Virtues Are Qualities*, one book

*On Virtues, addressed to Pollis*, two books

#### ETHICS AS CONCERNED WITH THINGS GOOD AND BAD

First series:

*On the Morally Beautiful and Pleasure, Addressed to Aristocreon*, ten books

*Proofs That Pleasure Is Not the Goal*, four books

*Proofs That Pleasure Is Not a Good*, four books

*On What Is Said about <. . .>*<sup>178</sup>

178 Book 7 breaks off at this point, with the list of Chrysippus' works incomplete; the remainder of the text has not survived. According to several ancient sources, Diogenes, in the remainder of Book 7, went on to recount the lives and views of the following Stoic philosophers: Zeno of Tarsus, Diogenes of Babylon, Apollodorus of Seleucia, Boethus of Sidon, Mnesarchus, Mnasagoras, Nestor, Basilides, Dardanus, Antipater of Tarsus, Heraclides of Tarsus, Sosigenes, Panaetius of Rhodes, Hecaton of Rhodes, Posidonius of Apamea, Athenodorus Cordylian, Athenodorus Cananites, Antipater of Tyre, Arius Didymus of Alexandria, and Lucius Annaeus Cornutus, who (uniquely among Diogenes' subjects) wrote in Latin as well as Greek.



# BOOK 8

PYTHAGORAS

FL. C. 530 BC

EMPEDOCLES

C. 492–C. 432 BC

EPICHARMUS

FL. EARLY 5TH CENT. BC

ARCHYTAS

FL. C. 400–350 BC

ALCMEON

5TH CENT. BC

HIPPASUS

6TH CENT. BC

PHILOLAUS

C. 470–390 BC

EUDOXUS

C. 390–C. 340 BC

## PYTHAGORAS

1 Now that we have reviewed Ionian philosophy starting with Thales,<sup>1</sup> and presented its noteworthy representatives, let us take up the philosophy of Italy, which began with Pythagoras, the son of the gem engraver Mnesarchus, a Samian, according to Hermippus, though Aristoxenus says he was a Tyrrhenian from one of the islands the Athenians occupied after they expelled the Tyrrhenians.<sup>2</sup> Some say that he was the son of Marmacus, himself the son of Hippasus, son of Euthyphro, son of Cleonymus, an exile from Phlius,<sup>3</sup> and that because Marmacus lived in Samos, Pythagoras was called a Samian. On reaching Lesbos

2 he was recommended to Pherecydes<sup>4</sup> by his uncle Zoilus. He had three silver drinking-cups made and took them as gifts to each of the priests of Egypt. He had older brothers, of whom Eunomus was the elder and Tyrrhenus the second; he also had a slave, Zamolxis,<sup>5</sup> whom the Getae worship as Cronus, according to Herodotus.

He was a student, as was mentioned earlier, of Pherecydes of Syros, after whose death he went to Samos and studied with Hermodamas<sup>6</sup> (the descendant of Creophylus), by then an elderly man. Being young and fond of learning, he went abroad and had himself initiated in all the Greek and barbarian

3 mysteries. He went to Egypt, and it was then that Polycrates introduced him

1 Thales of Miletus (c. 624–c. 546 BC) was one of the Seven Sages; Diogenes discusses his life and views at 1.22–44. He is mentioned later as the founder of philosophy in Ionia (1.122).

2 The term “Tyrrhenians” was generally used by the Greeks to refer to the people known to us as Etruscans, occupants of the region now called Tuscany. These Tyrrhenians were thought to have migrated to Italy from points farther east, and so the Greeks often associated them with the Pelasgians, a catch-all name for various pre-Greek peoples of the Aegean basin. Here, Diogenes seems to refer to Pelasgians when he speaks of an Athenian expulsion—Athens did in fact drive a non-Greek population out of Lemnos—but calls them Tyrrhenians. Linguistic evidence suggests there may in fact be close links between the Tyrrhenians (Etruscans) and the indigenous population of Lemnos.

3 A city in the northeast Peloponnese.

4 Pherecydes of Syros (fl. c. 550 BC) was the author of *Heptamychos*, which described the creation of the world. Diogenes discusses his life and work at 1.116–22.

5 Zamolxis, better known as Zalmoxis or Salmoxis, was mentioned by Diogenes as a Thracian philosopher at 1.1. The legend that he was a slave to Pythagoras is recounted by Herodotus (*Histories* 4.95–96), though Herodotus himself doubts its veracity.

6 Otherwise unknown.



*Three Philosophers*, by Giorgione, 1508–1509.

Interpretations of the figures portrayed have included the Three Kings, three astronomers, representatives of three religions, and the rival exponents of painting, philosophy, and astrology.

Recently, Pythagoras and his two teachers, Thales and Pherecydes, have also been mentioned. It has been suggested that the figure of the young man can be inscribed neatly in a right-angled triangle to which the Pythagorean theorem applies.

by letter to Amasis.<sup>7</sup> He even learned the Egyptian language, as Antiphon<sup>8</sup> says in his work *On Men of Exceptional Virtue*, and visited the Chaldaeans and the Magi.<sup>9</sup> Then, in Crete, he descended with Epimenides into the cave of Ida.<sup>10</sup> (He had also visited the Egyptian sanctuaries, where he was taught

7 Polycrates was tyrant of Samos from about 535 to 522 BC; Amasis II was a pharaoh of Egypt during the same period. According to Herodotus, the two rulers forged a warm alliance and corresponded with each other.

8 Either Antiphon of Athens (fifth century BC), a sophist and dream interpreter, or his namesake, an Attic orator (c. 480–411 BC).

9 Diogenes uses “Chaldaeans” here to mean Eastern mystics associated with magic and numerology (the name can also refer to a Mesopotamian nation). The Magi were Persian priests skilled in astronomy, astrology, and other mystic wisdom.

10 Epimenides of Crete (late seventh century BC), a semimythical sage and poet, is discussed by Diogenes at 1.109–15. In mythology, the cave of Mt. Ida was the birthplace of Zeus.

their secret lore about the gods.) He then returned to Samos, and finding his country under the rule of Polycrates, he sailed away to Croton<sup>11</sup> in Italy. And there, establishing laws for the Italians, he and his students were held in high esteem. Numbering three hundred, they administered the state so well that its government was virtually a government by the best.

4       Heraclides Ponticus says that Pythagoras gave the following account of himself: he had formerly been Aethalides and was thought to be the son of Hermes;<sup>12</sup> Hermes told him to choose any gift he wanted except immortality. He therefore asked to retain, both living and dead, the memory of what he had experienced. Hence in life he could recall everything; and when he died he kept his memories intact. Later on, he entered the body of Euphorbus and was wounded by Menelaus.<sup>13</sup> And Euphorbus used to say that he had once been Aethalides and had received the gift from Hermes and the power of his soul to pass from one place to another, and he recounted how it migrated, and in which plants and animals it had been present, and everything that it underwent in Hades, and everything the other souls there endure.

5       When Euphorbus died, his soul entered the body of Hermotimus,<sup>14</sup> who, wishing to corroborate the story, traveled to the Branchidae;<sup>15</sup> upon entering the temple of Apollo, he identified the shield that Menelaus had dedicated there (for he said that Menelaus, when he sailed home from Troy, had dedicated the shield to Apollo), a shield that by then had rotted; only its ivory facing remained. When Hermotimus died, he became Pyrrhus, the fisherman of Delos, and he again remembered everything: how he had previously been Aethalides, then Euphorbus, then Hermotimus, and then Pyrrhus. When Pyrrhus died, he became Pythagoras and remembered everything that has been mentioned.

6       There are some who say, mistakenly, that Pythagoras left no written work. Heraclitus<sup>16</sup> the natural philosopher, at any rate, declares, almost at the top of his voice, “Pythagoras, son of Mnesarchus, pursued inquiry beyond all other

11 A Greek colony on the southernmost coast of Italy and the site of Pythagoras’s first school of philosophy.

12 Aethalides, son of Hermes, was a mythic hero associated with the expedition of the Argonauts. Pythagoras believed in transmigration of souls and traced his own previous incarnations back to Aethalides.

13 Euphorbus was a mythic Trojan who fought in the Trojan War. According to the *Iliad*, he fatally wounded Patroclus, Achilles’ closest companion, and then was himself killed by Menelaus in the fight over Patroclus’ body.

14 A mysterious and possibly legendary philosopher whom Aristotle credits with having developed some of the same ideas as Anaxagoras.

15 The family name of the priests of the temple and oracle at Didyma, near Miletus.

16 Heraclitus of Ephesus (fl. c. 500 BC) was a Pre-Socratic philosopher. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 9.1–17.



*Numa Follows the Lessons of Pythagoras*, by Pablo Picasso, 1930.  
Etching from an illustrated version of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, published in 1931.

men, and having made his selection of these writings, created a wisdom of his own, showing great learning but faulty workmanship.” He expressed himself thus in response to the opening of Pythagoras’s work *On Nature*, which reads: “I swear by the air I breathe, I swear by the water I drink, that I shall never be censured on account of this work.” Pythagoras wrote three books: *On Education*, *On Statesmanship*, and *On Nature*.

But the book that passes as the work of Pythagoras is by Lysis of Tarentum,<sup>17</sup> a Pythagorean who fled to Thebes and taught Epaminondas.<sup>18</sup> Heraclides, son

7

<sup>17</sup> Lysis had apparently “escaped” a massacre of Pythagoreans at Croton (see 8.39), in which Pythagoras himself was killed.

<sup>18</sup> A Theban general and statesman (d. 362 BC). He was instrumental in freeing Thebes from Spartan subjugation and made his city the most powerful in Greece.

of Serapion, in his *Epitome of Sotion*, says that Pythagoras also wrote a poem in epic verse, *On the Universe*, and secondly *The Sacred Poem*, which begins,

Young men, hold all these my words in quiet reverence;

thirdly *On the Soul*, fourthly *On Piety*, fifthly *Helothales* (the father of Epicharmus of Cos<sup>19</sup>), sixthly *Croton*, and other works. Heraclides says that the poem *On the Mysteries* was written by Hippasus<sup>20</sup> to slander Pythagoras, and that many works written by Aston of Croton have been attributed to Pythagoras. Aristoxenus says that Pythagoras got most of his ethical doctrines from Themistoclea,<sup>21</sup> the priestess of Delphi. Ion of Chios, in his *Triads*, says that Pythagoras ascribed some of his own poems to Orpheus.<sup>22</sup> They also attribute to him the <*Kopidas*><sup>23</sup> which begins, “Be <shameless> to no man.”

Sosicrates, in his *Successions*, says that when Leon the tyrant of Phlius asked Pythagoras what he was, he replied, “A philosopher.”<sup>24</sup> He said that life resembles a festival, where some go to compete for a prize, others to buy or sell, but the best men as spectators; for likewise in life, some men are servile by nature, hunters of fame and profit, while the philosopher hunts for the truth. So much for this topic.

The three treatises cited above contain the following general principles of Pythagoras. He forbids us to pray for ourselves, since we do not know what is good for us. He substitutes for the word “drunkenness” the word “damage,” and rejects every type of satiety, saying that one should not exceed what is moderate when drinking or eating. About sexual pleasure he speaks as follows: “Have sexual relations in winter, not in summer; though less harmful in autumn and spring, they are harmful in every season and not good for one’s health.” When someone once asked him when one should have sexual relations, he replied, “Whenever you want to become weaker than yourself.”

He divides man’s life in this way: “Twenty years a boy, twenty a youth, twenty a young man, and twenty an old man. And the stages of life correspond to the seasons: the boy to spring, the youth to summer, the young man to autumn, and the old man to winter.” (For him the youth is an adolescent, and the young man an adult.)

19 Epicharmus of Cos (fl. early fifth century BC) was one of the earliest comic poets; Diogenes later (at 8.78) claims he was a student of Pythagoras, though in fact he lived much later.

20 Hippasus of Metapontum is discussed by Diogenes at 8.84.

21 Otherwise unknown.

22 Orpheus, the semidivine musician of myth, was also considered a mystic philosopher, and a mystery cult known today as Orphism sprang up around his legend and the theological writings attributed to him (the so-called Orphic hymns).

23 The translation would be something like *Liars*.

24 See 1.12, where Pythagoras is also said to have coined the noun “philosophy.”



*Pythagoras: Nocturnes in Cosine*, by Michael Schultheis, 2014.

From the series *Dreams of Pythagoras*, in which the artist imagines Pythagoras falling into a deep sleep and dreaming of the progeny of his original ideas.

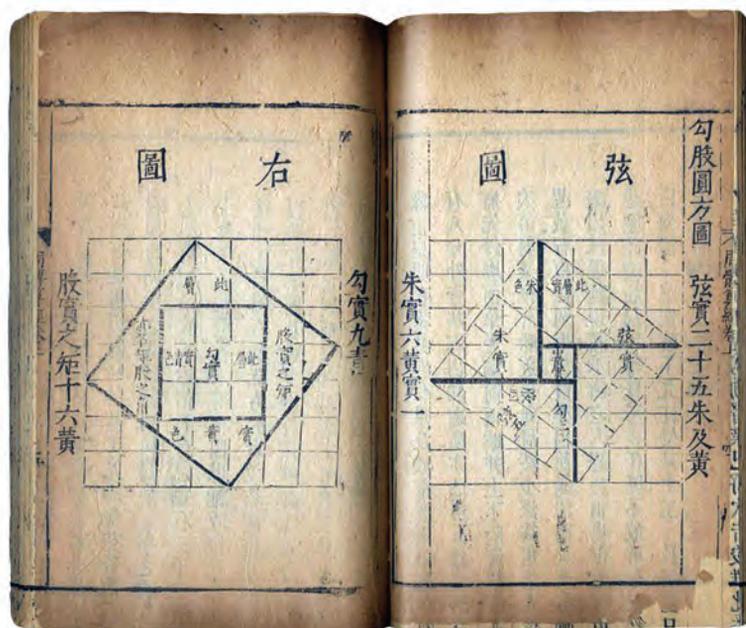
He was the first, according to Timaeus, to say that “the possessions of friends are common property” and that “friendship is equality.” And his disciples did put their possessions into a common stock. They kept silent for a period of five years, merely listening to his discourses, but not yet seeing him, until they were judged worthy; from then on his house was open to them and they were admitted to his presence. They refrained from using coffins of cypress, since Zeus’ scepter was made from that material, as Hermippus says in the second book of his work *On Pythagoras*.

Indeed, he is said to have been highly dignified, and his students held the opinion about him that he was Apollo come from the Hyperboreans.<sup>25</sup> There is a story that once, when his flank was exposed, his thigh was seen to be made of gold. And there were many who reported that the river Nessus,<sup>26</sup> when he crossed it, addressed him by name. And according to Timaeus, in the tenth book of his *Histories*, Pythagoras remarked that the women who live with men

11

<sup>25</sup> The Hyperboreans (“Those beyond the North Wind”) were thought to reside in a paradisaical land at the northern edge of the world; Apollo supposedly spent part of each year among them.

<sup>26</sup> Also called the Nestos, a river in Thrace that flows into the Aegean near the island of Thasos.



Two pages from the *Zhou Dynasty Sundial of Astronomy and Calculation*, illustrating the “Gougu” (Pythagorean) theorem. Dating from the Zhou dynasty (c. 1046–256 BC), this version is from a Ming dynasty edition, 1603. This text contains one of the first recorded proofs of the Pythagorean theorem.

12 have divine names, being called Maidens, Brides, and then Mothers.<sup>27</sup> It was he who brought geometry to perfection, while Moeris<sup>28</sup> was the first to discover the beginnings of its elements, as Anticlides says in the second book of his work *On Alexander*. He says that Pythagoras spent most of his time on the arithmetical aspects of geometry, and that he invented the canon monochord.<sup>29</sup> Nor did he even neglect medicine. Apollodorus the Arithmetician says that Pythagoras sacrificed a hecatomb<sup>30</sup> when he discovered that in a right-angled triangle the

27 The word used in the original here for maiden is *korē*, also a cult name for the goddess Persephone; the word for bride is *nymphē*, or nymph; and *mētēr* (mother) was a name for Demeter, the goddess of grain and fertility.

28 Diogenes is probably referring to the Moeris who reigned as pharaoh of Egypt in the second millennium BC and who, according to Herodotus, invented geometry (2.101 and 2.148).

29 An acoustical instrument consisting of an oblong box, usually with a single string, used for the mathematical determination of musical intervals.

30 A hecatomb consists of a hundred head of cattle, a prestigious offering.

square of the hypotenuse equals the sum of the squares on the sides that formed the right angle.<sup>31</sup> And the following epigram bears on this discovery:

Pythagoras attained his celebrated result: he discovered  
The figure in honor of which he offered a famous sacrifice of oxen.

He is also said to have been the first to put athletes on a meat diet, starting with Eurymenes<sup>32</sup> (as Favorinus says in the third book of his *Reminiscences*), whereas formerly they had trained on dried figs, soft cheese, and even wheat meal, as the same Favorinus says in the eighth book of his *Miscellaneous History*. But others say it was a gymnastics trainer named Pythagoras who instituted this diet and not our Pythagoras, who forbade the slaughter, not to mention the eating, of animals—since their souls, in common with ours, possess justice. But this was only a pretext. His real reason for forbidding the consumption of sentient animals was to train and accustom men to be content with their diet, so they could live on the most easily procurable food-stuffs, spreading their tables with uncooked food and drinking only water. For this diet would result in a healthy body and a keen mind. And of course he worshipped only at the altar of Apollo the Begetter in Delos (which is behind the altar of Horns), since upon it were placed flour and meal and round cakes, untouched by fire; nor was there any sacrificial victim, as Aristotle says in his *Constitution of the Delians*.

13

He was the first, they say, to declare that the soul, traveling the circle of necessity, is bound now in one creature, now in another. He was also the first to introduce weights and measures into Greece, according to Aristoxenus the musician; and the first to say that the Evening and Morning Stars are the same,<sup>33</sup> according to Parmenides.

14

He was so admired that people used to call <his> disciples “<manifold> voices of god,” and even he himself, in one of his writings, says “after 207 years I have returned from Hades to the world of men.”<sup>34</sup> This is why even the Leucanians, Peucetians, Messapians, and Romans<sup>35</sup> adhered to him faithfully and came to hear his words.

31 The Pythagorean theorem, which can be expressed as  $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$ .

32 Eurymenes of Samos was apparently unusually small but nevertheless triumphed over even the largest man thanks to Pythagoras’s dietary regimen.

33 The Evening Star (Hesperus) and the Morning Star (Phosphorus) both refer to the planet Venus.

34 Presumably this refers to the doctrine of transmigration of souls, though the significance of the number is obscure.

35 Four non-Greek peoples of Italy. The Romans, in Pythagoras’s time, were only a small, provincial people, not an expansive imperial power.

15           Until the time of Philolaus<sup>36</sup> it was not possible to acquire knowledge of Pythagorean doctrine; it was he alone who published Pythagoras's three famous books, which Plato ordered him by letter to purchase for one hundred minas.<sup>37</sup> No fewer than six hundred people attended Pythagoras's evening audience; and persons who were thought worthy to see him would write to their friends to report that they had met with so singular an honor. The Metapontines<sup>38</sup> called his house "the temple of Demeter," and his lane "the Museum,"<sup>39</sup> as Favorinus says in his *Miscellaneous History*. The other Pythagoreans also used to say that not all of his doctrines were for everyone to hear, as Aristoxenus says in the tenth

16           book of his *Rules of Pedagogy*. In that work, Xenophilus the Pythagorean, when asked by someone how he could best educate his son, replied, "Let him live in a well-governed city." And throughout Italy Pythagoras made many into good and honorable men, among them the legislators Zaleucus and Charandas.<sup>40</sup> For he had a gift for friendship; in particular, if he learned that someone had adopted his watchwords, he would immediately attach himself to that man and make him his friend.

17           The following were his watchwords: "don't stir fire with a knife," "don't step over the bar of a scale," "don't sit down on your bushel," "don't eat your heart," "don't help a man load; help him unload," "always fold up your quilts," "don't wear a signet ring engraved with the image of a god," "wipe away the imprint of a cooking pot in the ashes," "don't wipe yourself in a privy under the light of a torch," "don't urinate facing the sun," "don't walk the highways," "don't shake hands too readily," "don't keep swallows under your own roof," "don't raise birds with crooked talons," "don't urinate on or stand upon your nail and hair trimmings," "turn the sharp edge of a knife away," "when leaving on a journey, don't turn back at the border."

18           By "don't stir fire with a knife" he meant, don't provoke the anger and swelled heads of the mighty; "don't step over the bar of a scale" means, don't transgress the bounds of what is fair and just; "don't sit down on your bushel" means, take equal thought for today and the future, since a bushel is a day's rations; by "don't eat your heart" he meant, don't waste your life on sorrows and pains; by "when leaving on a journey, don't turn back at the border" he

36 Philolaus of Croton, also known as Philolaus of Tarentum (c. 470–390 BC), was a Pythagorean and a contemporary of Socrates. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 8.84–85.

37 A significant sum, as one mina was equal to one hundred drachmas. Diogenes also recounts this story at 3.9 when discussing the life of Plato.

38 Dwellers on the eastern coast of the Gulf of Tarentum, in Italy.

39 The word is used here in its original sense, meaning "shrine of the muses."

40 Two semilegendary Greek lawgivers, associated with the Italian cities of Locri and Catana, respectively.



*Pythagoras Advocating Vegetarianism*, by Peter Paul Rubens and Frans Snyders, c. 1618–1630.

was advising those who are departing life not to set their hearts on living, or be attracted by its pleasures. I refrain from interpreting the others, so as not to prolong the discussion.

Above all, he forbade the consumption of red mullet and blacktail,<sup>41</sup> and he prescribed abstention from animal hearts and from beans, and, at certain times, according to Aristotle, swine-womb and gurnard.<sup>42</sup> Some say he contented himself with honey only, or with honeycomb, or with bread, and took no wine in the daytime; for a delicacy, he limited himself to vegetables, both boiled and raw, and took seafood very rarely. His robe was white and spotless, and his quilts were of white wool. For linen had not yet reached those parts. He was never known to be afflicted with diarrhea, to have sexual relations, or to be drunk. He refrained from laughter and all pandering to a taste for coarse jokes and vulgar tales. He would punish no man, whether slave or freeborn, in anger. Admonition he used to call “modulation.” He practiced divination both by omens drawn from chance utterances and the flight of birds, never by burnt offerings, except frankincense. His sacrificial offerings were inanimate,

19

20

<sup>41</sup> Two species of Mediterranean fish.

<sup>42</sup> A mullet.

though some say that he offered only cocks, suckling goats, and the suckling pigs they call porkers, but never lambs. Yet Aristoxenus maintains that he permitted the eating of all other animals, and abstained only from plowing oxen and rams. The same author declares, as was mentioned earlier,<sup>43</sup> that  
 21 Pythagoras acquired his doctrines from Themistoclea, the priestess of Delphi.

Hieronymus says that when Pythagoras descended to Hades he saw the soul of Hesiod bound to a bronze pillar and uttering inarticulate cries, and that of Homer hanging from a tree and surrounded by serpents, these being their punishments for what they had said about the gods;<sup>44</sup> he also saw men undergoing punishment for having refused to have intercourse with their wives. This, according to Aristoxenus, is why Pythagoras was honored by the people of Croton. Aristippus of Cyrene, in his work *On the Natural Philosophers*, says that the man was named Pythagoras because he spoke the truth no less reliably than the Pythian oracle.<sup>45</sup>

22 He is said to have advised his disciples always to say, upon entering their homes,

Where did I trespass? What did I accomplish? What did I not  
 [do that I should have done?<sup>46</sup>

He forbade them to bring sacrificial victims to the gods, and permitted them to worship only at an altar unstained by blood. He told them not to swear by the gods, since a man should rather strive to make *himself* worthy of trust. He enjoined them to honor their elders, on the principle that precedence in time gives a greater title to respect; for just as, in the world, sunrise precedes sunset, so in our existence the beginning precedes the end,  
 23 and in life, birth precedes death. He said that one should honor gods before demigods;<sup>47</sup> heroes before men; and first among men their parents; and they should associate with one another not so as to make enemies of their friends but to make friends of their enemies. He taught them to regard nothing as their own; to safeguard the law and to make war on lawlessness; and not to destroy or injure plant life or any animal that does men no harm. He held that shame and discretion forbid indulgence in laughter or scowling. He said that one ought to avoid excessive meat eating; on a journey, to alternate be-

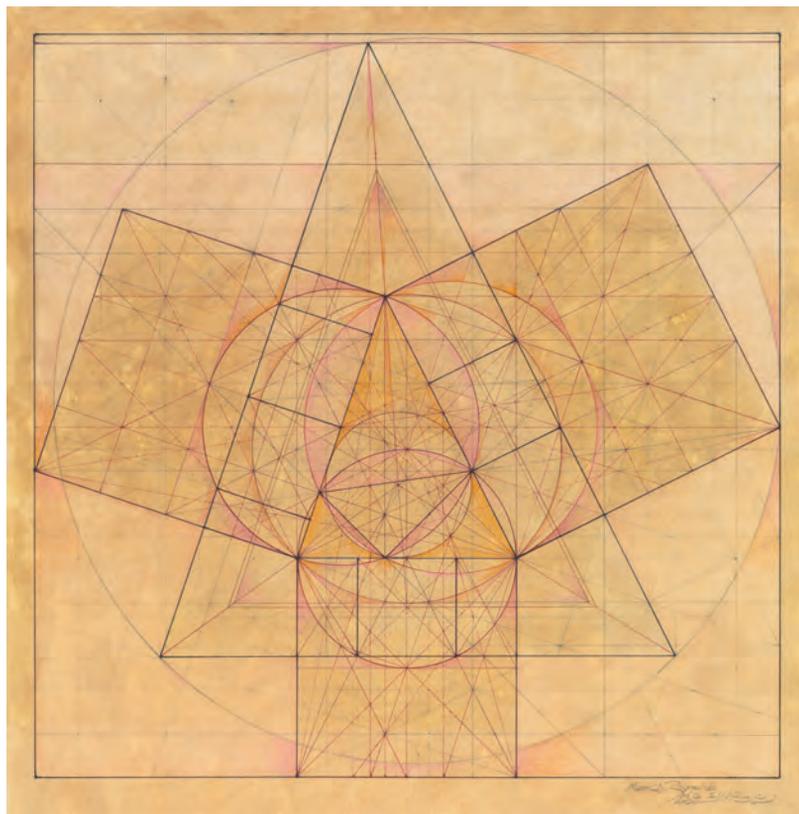
43 See 8.8.

44 Both poets, in their epic and didactic works, portrayed the gods as powerful but also vengeful, scheming, and occasionally buffoonish.

45 Aristippus derives the philosopher's name from *Pythia*, a name for the priestess of the oracle at Delphi, and *agoreuō*, a verb meaning "to speak aloud."

46 The line is composed in dactylic hexameter, the meter of epic poetry.

47 The Greek word *daimones* can refer to various kinds of semidivine or divine beings.



*Minor Third Series: Nods to Pythagoras, 2.1.12*, by Mark A. Reynolds, 2012.  
Graphite, ink, and pastels on mustard-stained paper, 56.5 × 55.2 cm.

tween exertion and relaxation; to train the memory; to say or do nothing in  
 anger; to respect all divination; to sing to the lyre; and by hymns to show  
 proper gratitude to gods and to good men. He prescribed abstention from  
 beans, since by reason of their windy nature<sup>48</sup> they partake most of the breath  
 of life; and besides, by abstaining from them we leave our stomach in better  
 order, and this will also make our dreams sweeter and less troubled. 24

Alexander, in his *Successions of Philosophers*, says that he found the follow-  
 ing precepts in a *Pythagorean Memoir*.<sup>49</sup> The first principle of all things is the 25

48 That is, their tendency to cause flatulence. Diogenes gives other reasons for this mysterious prohibition at 8.34.

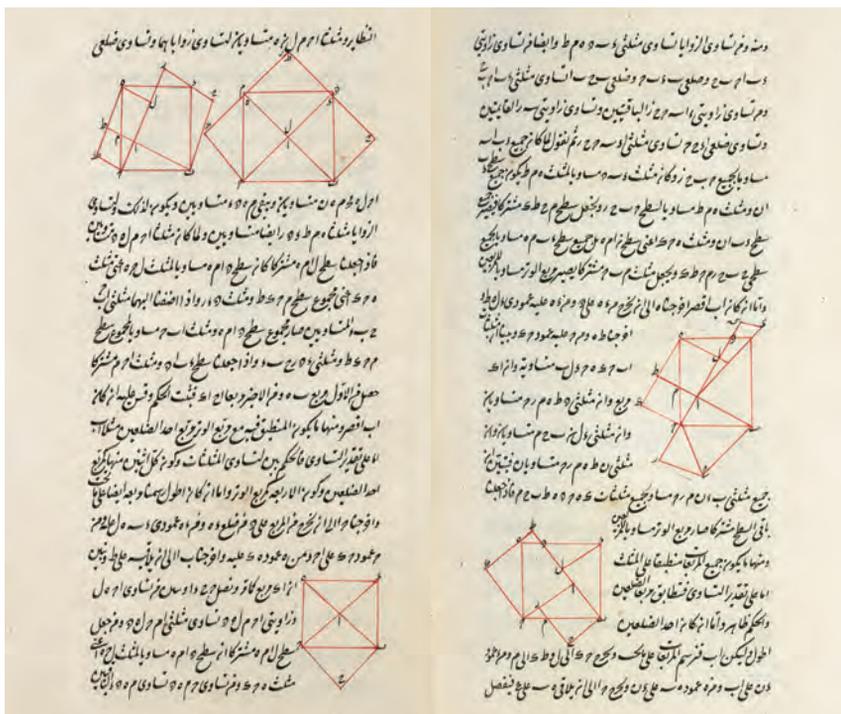
49 In fact, most of the doctrines that follow seem to derive from a variety of later sources, notably Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and Plato's *Timaeus*.

monad;<sup>50</sup> arising from the monad, the indeterminate dyad serves as the substrate of the monad, which is cause. From the monad and the indeterminate dyad arise numbers; from numbers, points; from points, lines; from lines, plane figures; from plane figures, solid figures; from solid figures, perceptible bodies, of which there are four elements: fire, water, earth, and air. These elements interact and change completely into one another, and from them arises a universe animate, intelligent, and spherical, with the earth (which is also spherical and widely inhabited) at its center. There are also people at the antipodes, and our “down” is their “up.”

26 Light and dark are equally apportioned in the universe, as are hot and cold, dry and moist; and of these, when hot predominates, it is summer; when cold, winter; when dry, spring; and when wet, autumn. If all are in equilibrium, we enjoy the finest periods of the year. The flourishing spring is the healthy season, the decaying autumn the unhealthy. This holds true also for the day; its flourishing belongs to the morning, its decay to the evening, which is therefore more unhealthy. The air that surrounds the earth is stagnant and unhealthy, and everything in it is mortal; but the uppermost air is in perpetual motion and pure and healthy, and everything in it is immortal and therefore divine. The sun, the moon, and the other stars are gods; for heat predominates in them, and heat is the cause of life. The moon is illuminated by the sun. There is a kinship between gods and men because man partakes of heat. Hence god takes thought for us. Fate is the cause of the order of the universe, of its totality and of its parts.

27 A ray of the sun penetrates through the aether, whether the cold or the dense. (The air they call “cold aether,” the sea and moisture “dense aether.”) This ray plunges even to the depths and thereby engenders all living creatures. Everything that partakes of heat is alive, which is why plants are living things. But all living things do not have soul. The soul is a detached portion of the aether, partly the hot and partly the cold; and because it participates also in the cold aether the soul is distinct from life. It is immortal, since that from which it has been detached is immortal. Living creatures are begotten from one another through seeds; spontaneous generation from earth, however, is impossible. The seed is a droplet of brain that contains a hot vapor. When this droplet is brought to the womb, it emits, from the brain, serum, fluid, and blood, from which flesh, sinews, bones, hair, and the entire body are constituted, whereas it is from the vapor that soul and sense perception are constituted. First, solidifying in forty days, it takes shape; then, in seven or

50 “Monad” is derived from *monos*, meaning “one” or “alone,” while “dyad,” which is based on *duo*, means “a group of two” or “a couple.”



Variations of the Pythagorean theorem, recto and verso, folio 25 from a manuscript of Tahrir Uqlidis by Nasir al-Din Tusi, Ottoman period, 1710.

nine or at most ten months (in accordance with the ratios of harmony), the fully developed baby is brought forth. It has in it all the faculties of life, and these, which are interconnected, hold it together according to the ratios of harmony, each emerging at the prescribed stage.

Sense perception in general (and sight, in particular) is an extremely hot vapor. And that is why it is said to be possible to see through air and through water. For the hot is strongly resisted by the cold; so if the vapor in the eyes had been cold, it would have been dissipated on meeting the air, which resembles it. As it is, there are maxims in which he calls the eyes “the portals of the sun.” He concludes the same about hearing and the other senses.

The soul of man, he says, is divided into three parts: mind, reason, and passion. Now mind and passion are present in the other animals as well, but man alone possesses reason. The soul’s headquarters extends from the heart to the brain; the part of it that resides in the heart is passion, while reason and mind are located in the brain. Sensations are distillations from these. The reasoning part is immortal, the others are mortal. The soul draws its nourish-

ment from the blood, and the ratios of the soul are breaths. The soul and its faculties are invisible, just as the aether is invisible.

31 The veins and arteries and sinews are the bonds of the soul. But when the soul gains strength and settles down into itself, its ratios and deeds become its bonds. When cast out upon the earth, it wanders in the air like the body. Hermes is the steward of souls, and that is why he is called Hermes the Escorter, Hermes of the Gate, and Hermes of the Netherworld, since he leads the souls from their bodies both by land and by sea; the pure souls are led to the loftiest region, while the impure are not allowed to approach the pure or  
32 one another, but are bound by the Furies<sup>51</sup> in unbreakable bonds. The air in its entirety is full of souls, and these are called demigods and heroes. It is they who send men dreams and omens of disease and health; and not only to men, but also to cattle and other domestic animals. And it is to them that purifications, expiations, all divination, omens, and the like are referred.

The most significant thing in human life, he says, is the power to persuade the soul toward good or toward evil. Men who acquire a good soul are blessed;  
33 otherwise they are never at rest, nor can they keep to the same course. Justice has the force of an oath, and that is why Zeus is called the God of Oaths. Virtue is harmony and health and goodness in its entirety and god itself. Hence the universe is said to be constituted in accordance with the laws of harmony. Friendship is a harmonious equality. We should not pay equal honor to gods and heroes, but to the gods always, observing due reverence, wearing white robes, and after purification; to the heroes only after midday. Purity is attained by cleansing, ablution, and sprinkling with lustral water, and by avoiding all contact with cadavers, women in childbirth, and all that defiles, and by abstaining from the meat and flesh of animals that have died of disease, and from gurnards, blacktail, eggs and animals hatched from eggs, beans, and all the other items proscribed by those who perform mystic rites in the temples.

34 Aristotle, in his work *On the Pythagoreans*, says that Pythagoras prescribed abstention from beans either because they resemble testicles, or because they resemble the gates of Hades, since it is the only plant that lacks joints;<sup>52</sup> or because they harm one's health, or because they resemble the shape of the world, or because they are associated with oligarchy, since beans are used in elections by lot. He forbade his disciples to pick up fallen crumbs, either in order to accustom them not to eat immoderately or because crumbs are associated

51 The Furies, or Erinyes, were snaky-haired underworld deities of retribution.

52 This refers specifically to the stem of the plant, which is straight and without joints. How this corresponds with the gates of Hades is a little unclear, and some editors have marked a lacuna between the two thoughts.



*Pythagoras*, by Günter Haese, 1997. Phosphorbronze, 16 × 22 cm.

with a person's death. Moreover, Aristophanes declares that crumbs belong to the heroes; for in *Heroes* he says,

Eat not what falls from the table!

He forbade them to eat a white cock, because the bird is sacred to the Month<sup>53</sup> and is a suppliant, supplication being a good thing; and it is sacred to the Month because it announces the time of day. Furthermore, white has the nature of good, black that of evil. He forbade them to touch any species of fish that is sacred, since it is not right for gods and men to be allotted the same things, any more than free men and slaves. He forbade them to break their bread into pieces, since in times past friends met over a single loaf, as the barbarians do to this day; and we should not divide what brings them together. Some, however, connect this prohibition to the judgment of the dead in Hades, others to the idea that the practice makes one cowardly in war, and still others to the idea that it is from this that the world begins.<sup>54</sup>

35

<sup>53</sup> Here the Greek word *mēn* (month) is treated as the name of a divinity.

<sup>54</sup> Perhaps a reference to the division of the monad into a dyad mentioned at 8.25.

He held that the most beautiful of the solids is the sphere, the most beautiful of the plane figures the circle. Old age and everything that is decreasing are similar, while youth and increase are one and the same. Health is the conservation of the form, disease its destruction. He said of salt that it should be brought to the table as a reminder of what is right; for salt preserves everything it finds, and it has arisen from the purest sources, the sun and sea.

36 Alexander says he found these precepts in a *Pythagorean Memoir*. What followed it was found in Aristotle.

But Pythagoras's dignified air is not overlooked even by Timon, though the satirist jabs at him in his *Lampoons* when he says,

Pythagoras, inclined to wonder-working doctrines,  
A snarer of men, a familiar friend of Bombast.

Xenophanes bears witness to Pythagoras's having been different persons at different times in the elegy that begins,

Now, in turn, I'll take up another view and show you the way.

And he speaks of him as follows:

One day, passing a puppy being thrashed,  
They say he pitied the whelp and cried out,  
“Stop, don't strike! For it's the soul of a dear man—  
I recognized him by his yelp.”

37 Thus Xenophanes. Cratinus also lampooned him in *The Woman Who Followed Pythagoras*; and in *The Tarantines* he says,

It is their custom, when any outsider approaches them,  
To test the strength of their doctrines,  
To upset and confound him with antitheses, limits,  
Neatly balanced clauses, fallacies, and magnitudes.

And Mnesimachus in the *Alcmeon*:

In the manner of Pythagoras we sacrifice to Loxias,<sup>55</sup>  
Eating nothing whatsoever that lives and breathes.

38 Aristophon in *Pythagoras's Disciple*:

A: He said that he descended to Hades and observed its inhabitants,  
How each of them lived, and how different from the lives of the dead  
Were the lives of the Pythagoreans; for they alone,  
On account of their piety, were permitted to dine

<sup>55</sup> Another name for Apollo.

With Pluto.<sup>56</sup> B: You speak of a heedless god,  
If he enjoys consorting with such trash.

And later on, in the same work:

They eat  
Vegetables, and with these they drink water.  
Unwashed, lice-ridden, clothed in tattered cloaks—  
No one nowadays could stand them.

This is how Pythagoras died. Sitting among his acquaintances at the house of Milo,<sup>57</sup> it happened that the house was set on fire, out of envy, by one of the people who had not been judged worthy of being admitted to his presence. Some, however, say that it was the work of the people of Croton, who were taking precautions against the imposition of a tyranny. Pythagoras was caught attempting to flee; and when he reached a certain beanfield, he stopped and said he would rather be captured than cross it, and would rather be killed than converse; and so his pursuers cut his throat. The majority of his companions, around forty, were also slaughtered. Only a few escaped, including Archippus of Tarentum<sup>58</sup> and Lysis, who was mentioned earlier.<sup>59</sup> 39

Dicaearchus says that Pythagoras died a fugitive in the temple of the Muses at Metapontum after fasting for forty days. Heraclides, in his *Epitome of the Lives of Satyrus*, says that after burying Pherecydes in Delos Pythagoras returned to Italy,<sup>60</sup> and when he found Cylon of Croton<sup>61</sup> giving a lavish banquet he withdrew to Metapontum and there ended his life by abstaining from food, as he had no wish to live longer. But Hermippus says that when the citizens of Agrigentum and Syracuse<sup>62</sup> were at war, Pythagoras went out with his friends and fought in the front ranks for the Agrigentines. When they were put to flight, he was killed by the Syracusans as he was trying to avoid the beanfield. The rest, around thirty-five men, were burned alive in Tarentum<sup>63</sup> for seeking to oppose those in power. 40

56 Another name for Hades.

57 Milo of Croton was one of the most famous athletes of the ancient world. He was awarded the wrestling prize at the Olympic games six times.

58 Otherwise unknown.

59 At 8.7.

60 Diogenes Laertius also mentions this anecdote at 1.118.

61 An aristocrat who seems to have opposed Pythagoras. Various stories are told about their rivalry, including one recounted by Porphyry in which Cylon sought to study with Pythagoras but was refused because of his tyrannical nature.

62 Two Greek cities in Sicily. Agrigentum was on the south coast of the island, Syracuse on the east coast.

63 A colony in southern Italy founded by Sparta.



*Pythagoras Emerging from the Underworld*, by Salvator Rosa, 1662.

- 41 Hermippus recounts another tale about Pythagoras. When he arrived in Italy, he built an underground chamber and instructed his mother to commit to writing everything that occurred, and at what time, and then to send her notes down to him until he came back up. This his mother did. And after a time Pythagoras emerged, withered and skeletal; entering the assembly, he said that he had come from Hades; he even read aloud what he had experienced there. Shaken by what he said, the people wept and wailed and were so convinced Pythagoras was a god that they sent their wives to him in the hope they might learn some of his doctrines. These were called the Pythagorizusae (Women Who Followed Pythagoras). So says Hermippus.
- 42 Pythagoras had a wife, Theano by name, the daughter of Brontinus of Croton,<sup>64</sup> though some say that Theano was Brontinus' wife and Pythagoras's student. He also had a daughter, Damo, as Lysis says in a letter to Hippasus, where he writes about Pythagoras as follows: "I am told by many that you discourse on philosophy in public, a thing that Pythagoras regarded as unworthy. At any rate, he entrusted his memoirs to his daughter, Damo, and commanded her never to give them to anyone outside their house. And though she could have

<sup>64</sup> Otherwise unknown, except as one of three dedicatees of a treatise by Alcmeon (see 8.83).

sold them for a large sum she would not do so, since she considered poverty and her father's commandments more valuable than gold. This from a woman!"

Pythagoras and Theano also had a son, Telauges, who succeeded his father and was Empedocles<sup>65</sup> instructor, according to some. Hippobotus, at any rate, says that Empedocles mentions

Telauges, renowned son of Theano and Pythagoras.

No written work of Telauges is known, though there are a number of works by his mother, Theano. There is even a story that when asked on which day a woman is pure after intercourse, she replied, "With her husband immediately, with anyone else never." And she advised a woman who was going in to her husband to put aside her modesty at the same time as her clothes, and when rising, to don them both again. When asked, "What clothes?" she replied, "Those that cause me to be called a woman."

According to Heraclides, son of Serapion, Pythagoras died at the age of eighty, which accords with Pythagoras's own outline of the ages of men.<sup>66</sup> But most authorities say he was ninety. And my own playful verses about him run as follows:

You were not the only one to abstain from animate things, but so did we.  
For who has partaken of animate things, Pythagoras?  
Once a dish is boiled, roasted, and salted,  
What we eat is no longer animate.

Another:

So wise was Pythagoras that he would not touch meat,  
And declared it wrong to do so,  
Though he let others partake. A marvel of wisdom:  
One should not transgress, said he; though he let others do so.

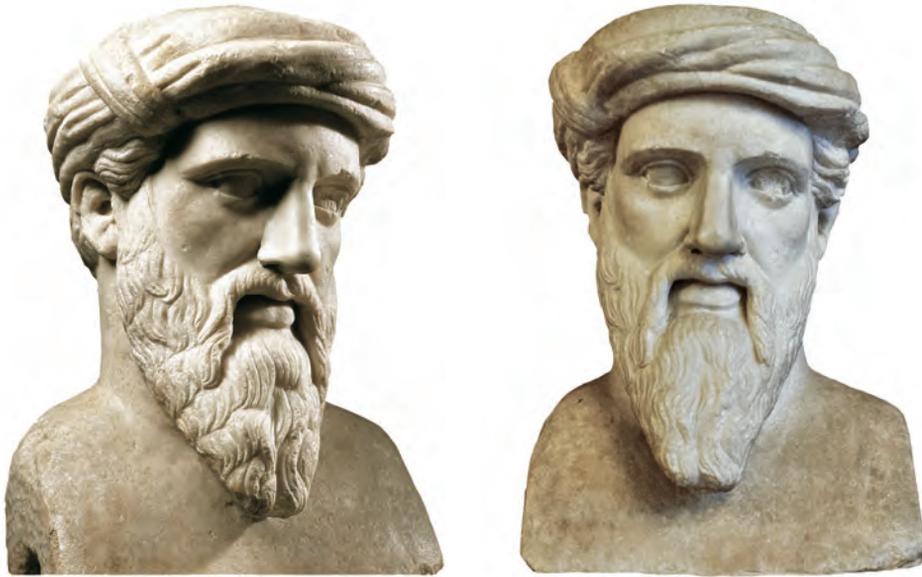
And another:

If you wish to know the mind of Pythagoras,  
Observe the boss of Euphorbus' shield.<sup>67</sup>  
For it says, "I was a mortal once." If, when he says  
He was, he was not, then he was no one when he was.

<sup>65</sup> Empedocles of Agrigentum (c. 492–c. 432 BC), a philosopher influenced by Pythagoreanism, is discussed at 8.51–77.

<sup>66</sup> Pythagoras divided the ages of man into four twenty-year segments (see 8.10).

<sup>67</sup> Euphorbus, the Trojan warrior, was one of the men whose past lives Pythagoras claimed to have lived (see 8.5).



Two views of a herm supposedly depicting Pythagoras. Roman copy of a Greek original from the fifth century BC.

And another, on how he died:

Alas, alas, why did Pythagoras have such a reverence for beans?  
 He died amid his disciples.  
 There lay a beanfield; to avoid trampling the beans  
 He was slain at a crossroads by the Agrigentines.

46 He flourished in the sixtieth Olympiad,<sup>68</sup> and his community endured for nine or ten generations. For the last of the Pythagoreans, whom Aristoxenus knew, were Xenophilus of the Thracian Chalcidice, Phanton of Phlius, Echebrates, Diocles, and Polymnestus, also of Phlius, who were students of Philolaus and Eurytus, both of Tarentum.<sup>69</sup>

There were four men named Pythagoras who lived at about the same time and at no great distance from one another. One was from Croton, a

<sup>68</sup> This Olympiad began in 540 BC.

<sup>69</sup> According to 3.6, Plato encountered Philolaus and Eurytus, whom Diogenes there terms the last Pythagoreans, in his late twenties, probably around 400 BC.

man who aspired to a tyranny; another from Phlius, an athlete, and some say a gymnastics trainer; a third from Zacynthus;<sup>70</sup> <the fourth, our present subject>, whom they say discovered the secrets of philosophy and taught them, and in reference to whom the phrase, “He himself said . . .” became proverbial in ordinary life. Some say there was also another Pythagoras, a sculptor from Rhegium, who was thought to be the first to aim at rhythm and symmetry; another a sculptor from Samos; another a bad orator; another a doctor who wrote about hernia and also compiled some treatises on Homer; and another who wrote a treatise on the Dorians, as Dionysius reports. And Eratosthenes says (as Favorinus mentions in the eighth book of his *Miscellaneous History*) that the last named was the first to box in a technical manner, at the forty-eighth Olympic games,<sup>71</sup> wearing his hair long and sporting a purple robe; and that when he was excluded from the boys’ contest and ridiculed, he immediately entered the men’s and won the prize. This is brought to light in the epigram of Theaetetus:<sup>72</sup>

Do you recall a Pythagoras, friend, long-haired Pythagoras,  
A famous boxer from Samos?  
I am that Pythagoras. And if you ask an Elian to recount  
My exploits, you’ll find his tale incredible.

Favorinus says that Pythagoras<sup>73</sup> was the first to use definitions throughout the subject of mathematics, and that these were applied even more extensively by Socrates and his disciples, and later by Aristotle and the Stoics.

Moreover, he is said to have been the first to call the heavens “the cosmos” and to have said that the earth is spherical, though Theophrastus claims it was Parmenides who did so, and Zeno<sup>74</sup> that it was Hesiod. They say that Cylon was a rival of Pythagoras, as Antilochus was of Socrates.<sup>75</sup>

Pythagoras the athlete was also the subject of this epigram:

He went, still a lad, to box with the lads at Olympia  
Pythagoras of Samos, <the son of Crates>.

70 An island in the Ionian Sea off the west coast of the Peloponnese.

71 This Olympiad began in 588 BC.

72 An obscure poet, not the same person as the interlocutor of Socrates in Plato’s dialogue *Theaetetus*. The poem that follows is framed as an epitaph on the tomb of the boxer Pythagoras.

73 The philosopher is meant, not the boxer discussed just before. Diogenes returns to the boxer briefly at 8.49, then resumes speaking of the philosopher.

74 Diogenes discusses the life and views of Zeno of Citium at 7.1–160.

75 The same comparison of rivalries is made at 2.46, where Antilochus is identified as a Lemnian, but nothing else is known about him. On Cylon of Croton, see 8.40 and corresponding note.

The philosopher Pythagoras also wrote the following letter:

Pythagoras to Anaximenes<sup>76</sup>

50 Even you, O best of men, had you not surpassed Pythagoras in birth and fame, would have left Miletus and migrated. But as it is, your ancestral glory detains you, as it would have detained me had I resembled Anaximenes. But if you, the most useful men, abandon your cities, their good order will be destroyed, and they will be in greater danger from the Medes. For it is not right to be always meditating on the aether; finer it is to safeguard one's country. For I too am not wholly occupied with my discourses, but take part in the wars the Italians wage with one another.

Since we have completed our account of Pythagoras, we must speak of the noteworthy Pythagoreans; after them we will discuss those philosophers referred to by some as “scattered”;<sup>77</sup> and then we will tackle the succession of all who were worthy of mention as far as Epicurus, as we promised earlier. We have already dealt with Theano and Telauges. We must now speak first about Empedocles, since some maintain that he was a student of Pythagoras.

## EMPEDOCLES

51 Empedocles, according to Hippobotus, was the son of Meton, son of Empedocles, and was a native of Agrigentum.<sup>78</sup> Timaeus says the same in the fifteenth book of his *Histories* and adds that Empedocles, the poet's grandfather, had been a distinguished man. Hermippus also agrees with Timaeus. Likewise Heraclides, in his work *On Diseases*, says that Empedocles belonged to an illustrious family, his grandfather having bred horses. And Eratosthenes, in his *Victors at the Olympic Games*, reports (on Aristotle's authority) that  
52 Meton's father won a victory in the seventy-first Olympiad.<sup>79</sup> In his *Chronology* the grammarian Apollodorus says, “Empedocles was the son of Meton.

76 Diogenes discusses the Pre-Socratic philosopher Anaximenes at 2.3–5 and quotes two of his (spurious) letters to Pythagoras. The spurious letter of Pythagoras quoted here addresses the same theme as the letter attributed to Anaximenes at 2.5: the danger posed to the Ionian Greeks by their growing conflict with the Persian empire (referred to here as the Medes), as well as the question of emigration.

77 The term “scattered” (*sporadēn*) is introduced here to designate those thinkers whom Diogenes cannot place within the lines of philosophic transmission laid down at 1.13–15. It applies principally to Heraclitus and Xenophanes, the first two figures discussed in Book 9.

78 One of the most powerful and prosperous Greek cities in Sicily.

79 This Olympiad began in 496 BC.



Marble votive relief, Greek, c. 500 BC. Found in Attica, this relief was probably set up in a sanctuary of the gods to honor the victor of a horse race.

And Glaucus says that Empedocles went to Thurii,<sup>80</sup> which had just been founded." Farther on he adds, "Those who report that, being exiled from his home to Syracuse, he went to Syracuse and fought in their war against the Athenians, seem to me to be utterly ignorant. For by then he was no longer living, or was a very old man, which belies the story." For Aristotle, like Heracitus, says he died at the age of sixty. And the man who, in the seventy-first Olympiad, won the horse race, was this man's grandfather and namesake, so that at the same time Apollodorus gives us an indication of the date.

Satyrus, however, in his *Lives*, says that Empedocles was the son of Exaenetus, and that Empedocles left a son named Exaenetus; and that in the same Olympiad, Empedocles himself was victorious in the horse race, and his son in

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<sup>80</sup> A panhellenic colony in southern Italy founded in 443 BC on the site of the destroyed city of Sybaris.

wrestling, or, as Heraclides reports in his *Epitome*, in the footrace. I found in the *Reminiscences* of Favorinus that Empedocles presented the festival envoys with a sacrificial ox made of honey and barley meal, and that he had a brother named Callicratides. Telauges, son of Pythagoras, says in his letter<sup>81</sup> to Philolaus that  
 54 Empedocles was the son of Archinomus. It is because he was from Agrigentum in Sicily that he himself says at the beginning of his *Purifications*:

My friends, who inhabit the great city that slopes to  
 Yellow Acragas,<sup>82</sup> close by the citadel.

So much for his family.

Timaeus, in the ninth book of his *Histories*, says that Empedocles was a student of Pythagoras, adding that after being convicted of plagiarizing the man's discourses he was excluded, like Plato, from taking part in the school's discussions. He adds that Empedocles himself mentions Pythagoras when he says,

Among them was a man of rare knowledge,  
 Who possessed an immense wealth of wisdom.

Others, however, maintain that here he is referring to Parmenides.<sup>83</sup>

55 Neanthes says that down to the time of Philolaus<sup>84</sup> and Empedocles the Pythagoreans admitted one and all to their discussions. But when Empedocles made them common property by his poem, they established a rule that they should not be shared with any epic poet. He says that the same thing happened to Plato, for he too was excluded. But of which Pythagorean Empedocles was a student Neanthes did not say. For he held that the letter attributed to Telauges, and according to which Empedocles was linked with both Hippasus and Brotinus, is not trustworthy.<sup>85</sup>

56 Theophrastus says that Empedocles was an admirer of Parmenides and that he imitated him in his poems. For Parmenides too composed his discourse *On Nature* in verse. Hermippus, on the other hand, maintains that

81 Telauges was supposedly the teacher of Empedocles (see 8.43). Diogenes refers again to a letter attributed to Telauges just below (8.55), but also indicates doubts about its authenticity.

82 Another name for Agrigentum.

83 A fifth-century BC philosopher who founded the Eleatic school and wrote a philosophical poem that examined the nature of reality. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 9.21–23.

84 Philolaus of Croton or Tarentum (c. 470–390 BC), a Pythagorean and a contemporary of Socrates. His work *On Nature* was likely the first book written by a Pythagorean. See 8.84–85.

85 Hippasus of Metapontum is discussed briefly by Diogenes at 8.84. A Brotinus is mentioned at 8.83, perhaps the same man as the one found here, but probably distinct from Brontinus, Pythagoras' father-in-law, mentioned at 8.42 (the similarity of the names has produced confused spellings in the manuscripts).

it was not Parmenides he emulated but Xenophanes,<sup>86</sup> with whom he lived and whose poetry he imitated; and that it was only later that he encountered the Pythagoreans. Alcidas, in his work *On Nature*, says that Zeno<sup>87</sup> and Empedocles studied with Parmenides at the same time, that subsequently they left him, and that Zeno developed his own philosophical system, while Empedocles became a student of Anaxagoras<sup>88</sup> and Pythagoras; and that he emulated the latter in the dignity of his life and demeanor, and the former in his study of nature.

Aristotle, in the *Sophist*, states that Empedocles was the inventor of rhetoric, Zeno of dialectic. In his work *On Poets* he says that Empedocles wrote in the Homeric manner and proved adept in phraseology, since he had a gift for metaphors and all the other poetic devices. He also says that he wrote other poems, in particular the *Crossing of Xerxes*<sup>89</sup> and the *Hymn to Apollo*. These his sister later burned (or his daughter, as Hieronymus says)—the hymn inadvertently, the Persian poem intentionally, because it was unfinished. He says that Empedocles generally wrote tragedies and political discourses. But Heraclides, son of Serapion, says the tragedies were the work of a different author. Hieronymus says he himself has read forty-three of them, while Neanthes says that the tragedies were written in Empedocles' youth and that he himself has read seven of them. 57 58

Satyrus, in his *Lives*, says that Empedocles was also a doctor and an excellent orator. Gorgias of Leontini,<sup>90</sup> at any rate, who excelled in rhetoric and has left a treatise on the art, had been his student. Apollodorus, in his *Chronology*, says that Gorgias lived to the age of 109. Satyrus quotes Gorgias as saying that he was present when Empedocles performed magic tricks. He also says that Empedocles, in his poems, claims to have this power and many others when he says: 59

All the drugs that are a defense against ailments and old age  
 You will learn, since for you alone I shall accomplish all this.  
 You will halt the force of tireless winds that sweep over the earth,  
 Devastating the cornfields with their gusts;  
 And in turn, if you wish, you will bring on requiting winds.

86 Xenophanes of Colophon (c. 570–c. 475 BC) was a Pre-Socratic philosopher and poet. At 8.36, Diogenes quotes some verses of his that satirized Pythagoras, and discusses his life and views at 9.18–20.

87 Zeno of Elea (fl. early fifth century BC), a member of the Eleatic School founded by Parmenides. This Zeno is distinct from Zeno of Citium, the founder of Stoicism. Diogenes discusses Zeno of Elea's life and views at 9.25–29.

88 Anaxagoras (c. 500–428 BC) is discussed at 2.6–15.

89 The title no doubt refers to the crossing of the Hellespont by the Persian army invading Greece, led by Xerxes, in 480 BC, when Empedocles was an adolescent.

90 An influential sophist (c. 485–380 BC) and teacher of rhetoric.

The dark rain you will transform into a drought favorable to men;  
 And the dry heat of summer you will transform  
 Into precipitations that nourish the trees, and they will abide in the sky.  
 And you will bring back from Hades a dead man's strength.

60 Timaeus too, in his eighteenth book, says that the man was admired on many grounds. For example, when the Etesian winds<sup>91</sup> once blew with such violence that they were damaging the crops, Empedocles gave orders for asses to be flayed and their skins used to make bags; stretching these near crests and mountain ridges, he captured the wind; and for making it cease he was called the “Wind-Checker.” And Heraclides, in his work *On Diseases*, says that Empedocles informed Pausanias<sup>92</sup> about the woman who had ceased to breathe. For Pausanias, according to Aristippus<sup>93</sup> and Satyrus, was Empedocles' beloved, and it was to him that the philosopher dedicated *On Nature* as follows:

61 Hearken, Pausanias, son of Architus the wise!

He even composed an epigram about him:

The doctor Pausanias, son of Architus, the aptly named  
 Descendant of Asclepius, his country, Gela, nourished.  
 Many a man wasting away from grievous ills  
 Did he bring back from Persephone's<sup>94</sup> innermost sanctuary.

As for the woman who had ceased to breathe, Heraclides says her state was such that Empedocles kept her body for thirty days, though she never breathed and had no pulse;<sup>95</sup> hence Heraclides called him both a doctor and a prophet, deriving both titles from these lines:

62 My friends, who inhabit the great city that slopes to yellow Acragas,  
 Close to the citadel, careful tenders of your fertile lands,  
 Greetings! For you I am a deathless god, no longer mortal,  
 I go among you honored by all, as is right,  
 Crowned with ribbons and blooming garlands.

91 The strong summer northerlies known in Greece today as *meltemi*.

92 An eminent physician of Agrigentum.

93 This detail may come from *On the Luxuriousness of the Ancients*, which was written not by the philosopher whose life is discussed in 2.65–104 but by a later author who assumed that name (a man sometimes referred to as Pseudo-Aristippus), presumably to give his work greater credibility. As the title suggests, the book purveyed erotic gossip about various philosophers.

94 Persephone was the daughter of the goddess Demeter and the wife of the god Hades; here she stands for the underworld generally.

95 Not until 8.67 does Diogenes supply the resolution of the tale, namely that the woman made a full recovery.



Votive relief fragment of goddesses, mother, nurse, and infant, late fifth century BC, Greek. Both mother and infant often died during childbirth in antiquity. Showing the mother and child alive postpartum, this small relief was likely a thanks offering to a healing deity such as Asclepius or Hygieia.

As soon as I enter with these into flourishing towns  
 I am worshipped by men and women; tens of thousands  
 Follow me to learn where lies the path to well-being,  
 Some eager for oracles, others afflicted with manifold diseases,  
 Hoping to hear a healing word.

He explains that Empedocles called Agrigentum great because it had 800,000 inhabitants. Hence Empedocles, speaking of their luxury, said, “The Agrigentines live luxuriously as if they would die tomorrow, but build their houses as if they would live forever.”

63

64 It is said that Cleomenes the rhapsode recited this very poem, the *Purifications*, at Olympia, as Favorinus says in his *Reminiscences*. Aristotle too declares that Empedocles was freedom-loving, and averse to all authority, seeing that, as Xanthus relates in his account of him, he declined the kingship when it was offered to him, since he clearly preferred the simple life. Timaeus agrees with him and describes the occasion that revealed Empedocles' democratic spirit. For he says that Empedocles was invited to dinner by one of the magistrates, and the meal proceeded, but no wine was served. Though the others kept quiet, Empedocles grew indignant and demanded that wine be served. But their host said he was waiting for the officer of the Assembly. When the latter arrived he was made toastmaster,<sup>96</sup> an obvious arrangement on the part of the host, who was hinting at his design to make himself tyrant; for he ordered his guests to either drink or have the wine poured on their heads. At the time, Empedocles kept quiet; but the next day, hauling both host and toastmaster into court, he had them convicted and condemned to death. This, then, was the beginning of his political career.

65 Another time, when Acron the doctor asked the Assembly for a site on which to build a monument to his father, who had been an eminent doctor, Empedocles came forward and prevented it in a speech in which he addressed the subject of equality and in particular posed this question: "What inscription shall we put on it? Should it be this?"

Acron, the eminent doctor of Agrigentum, son of Acros,  
Lies beneath the eminent crag of his most eminent native city."

Others say the second line was:

Lies in an eminent tomb on a most eminent peak.<sup>97</sup>

Some attribute the verses to Simonides.<sup>98</sup>

66 At a later time Empedocles dissolved the assembly of the Thousand three years after it had been established, which suggests not only that he was wealthy but that he had embraced the cause of democracy.<sup>99</sup> Timaeus, at any

96 The toastmaster (*symposiarchos* in Greek, literally "leader of the symposium") decided how the rounds of drinking should proceed, including how liberally the wine should be mixed with water.

97 These verses repeatedly pun on Acron's name, which derives from the same root as the words *akros*, meaning "high" or "eminent," and *akron*, a "mountain peak" or "summit." The point of the proposed inscription was to highlight the arrogance of building such a monument, by overemphasizing the idea of elevation.

98 Simonides of Ceos (c. 556–468 BC), a Greek lyric poet, often composed epigrams for the tombs of eminent men.

99 The Thousand were evidently an oligarchic regime, made up of the wealthiest citizens. By disbanding them, Empedocles restored power to a broader spectrum of the population.

rate, in his first and second books (for he mentions Empedocles frequently), says he seems to have held opposite views <when he appeared in public> and when writing poetry; and in some passages he is boastful and selfish. At any rate, he says,

Greetings! To you I am a deathless god, no longer mortal,

and so on. When he traveled to Olympia he was deemed worthy of extravagant regard, to the point where, in conversations, no one was mentioned more than Empedocles.

Later, however, when he sought to settle in Agrigentum,<sup>100</sup> the descendants of his enemies opposed his return home; and this is why he retired to the Peloponnese, where he died. Nor did he escape Timon, who attacks him in these words:

and Empedocles, a bawler of vulgar verse;  
He drew distinctions as subtly as he could;  
The principles he set forth require other principles to explain them.

Of his death, different accounts are given. Heraclides, after relating the story of the woman who had stopped breathing, and saying that Empedocles won renown because he had sent off the dead woman alive, reports that he was offering a sacrifice near the field of Peisianax. Some of his friends had been invited, including Pausanias. After the feast, the others dispersed to rest, some under the trees in the next field, others wherever they liked, while Empedocles himself remained where he had reclined for the feast. At daybreak they got up, and he alone was missing. A search was made, and his servants, when questioned, said they did not know where he was. At that point someone said that during the night he had heard a booming voice calling Empedocles. Getting up, he had seen a heavenly light and a gleam of torches, but nothing else. The company was astounded by what had happened, and Pausanias went down and sent people to search for him. But later he hindered them from taking further trouble, saying that what had happened was worthy of a prayer, and that they should sacrifice to Empedocles as if he had become a god.

Hermippus, on the other hand, says that Empedocles had cured Panthea, an Agrigentine woman whom the doctors had despaired of saving, and that this was why he was conducting the sacrifice, to which nearly eighty persons had been invited. Hippobotus says that when Empedocles got up he made his way to Etna,<sup>101</sup> and when he got there he leaped into the fiery craters and

100 The phrase translated as “when he sought to settle in Agrigentum” is deemed corrupt by some editors.

101 Located in eastern Sicily, the tallest active volcano in Europe. In mythology Etna was the

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68

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*Empedocles Burning in the Crater of Etna*, French manuscript, c. 1405.

disappeared; for he wished to strengthen the rumor that he had become a god. But later the truth came out when one of his boots was disorged by the volcano. For it was his habit to wear boots made of bronze. Pausanias, however, disputes this account.

70 Diodorus of Ephesus, writing about Anaximander,<sup>102</sup> declares that Empedocles emulated him, affecting theatrical pomp and sporting stately attire. When a pestilence attacked the people of Selinus<sup>103</sup> because of the foul smell of the river nearby, so that the inhabitants were dying and their women suffering miscarriages, Empedocles conceived the plan of diverting the course of two nearby rivers, bringing their water to the place at his own expense; and by combining the streams he sweetened the water. When the pestilence had thus been brought to an end and the people of Selinus were feasting on the riverbank, Empedocles appeared, whereupon the citizens rose up, made obeisance, and prayed to him as to a god. It was therefore to confirm their belief that he leaped into the fire.

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prison of the giant Typhos, whose wrathful attempts to escape caused it to belch fire.

102 Anaximander, the Pre-Socratic philosopher (c. 610–540 BC), is discussed at 2.1–2.

103 The southwesternmost Greek city of Sicily.

These authors are contradicted by Timaeus, who expressly declares that Empedocles withdrew to the Peloponnese and never returned at all; hence nothing is known about his death. He replies to Heraclides, whom he mentions by name in his fourth book. There he says that Peisianax was a citizen of Syracuse and had no land in Agrigentum. Furthermore, Pausanias <would have> erected a monument to his friend, had such a story been current—either a statue or a sepulcher, as to a god; for he was a wealthy man. “And how,” asks Timaeus, “did he come to leap into the craters, which he had never mentioned, though they were nearby? So he died in the Peloponnese. And it is not strange that his tomb has not come to light; for the same is true of many other men.” So saying, Timaeus adds, “But Heraclides is invariably just such a fabulist, even going so far as to say that a man fell to earth from the moon.”

Hippobotus says that in Agrigentum there used to be a statue of Empedocles with his head covered, and that it was later found in front of the Roman Senate with the head uncovered; the Romans had evidently transported it there. For painted images with inscriptions are carried about even now. Neanthes of Cyzicus, who has also spoken of the Pythagoreans, says that after the death of Meton<sup>104</sup> the beginnings of a tyranny began to show themselves, and it was then that Empedocles persuaded the Agrigentines to put an end to their quarrels and practice political equality.

Moreover, from his large fortune he gave dowries to the young women in the city who had not been provided for. It was this fortune that enabled him to don a purple robe and a golden sash, as Favorinus says in his *Reminiscences*. He also wore bronze slippers and a Delphic wreath. He had thick hair and a retinue of slaves. Gloomy of countenance, his demeanor never varied. Such was his appearance in public; and the citizens who encountered him found in his demeanor the sign of a kind of royalty. Later, when traveling by carriage to attend a festival in Messene, he fell and broke his thigh. Falling ill after this injury, he died at the age of seventy-seven. His tomb is in Megara.

As to his age, Aristotle is of a different opinion. He says that Empedocles was sixty when he died; others say he was one hundred and nine. He flourished in the eighty-fourth Olympiad.<sup>105</sup> Demetrius of Troezen, in his book *Against the Sophists*, says of him, adapting the Homeric verses:

He fastened a noose from a tall cornel tree,  
Thrusting it round his neck, and his soul went down to Hades.<sup>106</sup>

104 Empedocles' father, mentioned at 8.51.

105 This Olympiad began in 444 BC.

106 Adapted from *Odyssey* 11.278. Odysseus describes the death of Epicaste (more commonly known

And in the letter of Telauges I mentioned earlier it says that owing to his advanced years he slipped into the sea and died. Let these accounts of his death suffice.

My own satirical epigram about him in *Pammetros*<sup>107</sup> runs as follows:

- 75           And you, Empedocles, on cleansing your body with nimble flame,  
               Drank fire from everlasting craters;  
               I shall not say that you threw yourself willingly into Etna's stream,  
               But fell in unwillingly, hoping not to be found out.

and another:

              Yes, there is a tale about Empedocles' death,  
               That he once fell from a carriage and broke his right thigh;  
               But if he leaped into craters of fire and drained the cup of life,  
               How could one still see his tomb in Megara?

- 76           His doctrines were as follows. There are four elements: fire, water, earth, and air; and there is Love, by which they are combined, and Strife, by which they are separated. He says,

              Shining Zeus and life-bearing Hera, Aidoneus<sup>108</sup> and Nestis,<sup>109</sup> who with her tears swells the mortal stream.

By Zeus he means fire, by Hera earth, by Aidoneus air, and by Nestis water.

“And their continual change,” he says, “never ceases,” as if such an arrangement were eternal; at any rate, he adds:

              At one time by Love all things uniting in one,  
               At another each borne apart by the hatred of Strife.

- 77           He says that the sun is an immense aggregation of fire, and that it is larger than the moon; the moon, he says, has the shape of a discus, and the heaven itself is crystalline. And the soul assumes the manifold forms of animals and plants. At any rate he says,

              By now I have been born a boy and a girl,  
               A bush and a bird, and a sunlit fish leaping from the sea.

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as Jocasta), the mother of Oedipus, who killed herself when she discovered she had married her son.

107 A collection of Diogenes' verse, now lost; it translates roughly to “[Poems of] All Meters,” referring to the wide variety of metrical forms it employed.

108 Another name for the god Hades.

109 A cult title for Persephone, Hades' queen.

His poems *On Nature* and *Purifications* run to five thousand lines, his *Discourse on Medicine* to six hundred. We have already spoken of his tragedies.

## EPICHARMUS

Epicharmus,<sup>110</sup> son of Helothales, was from Cos. He too studied with Pythagoras. At the age of three months he was brought from Sicily to Megara, and from there to Syracuse,<sup>111</sup> as he says himself in his writings. His statue bears this inscription:

If the great sun outshines the other stars,  
And the sea is mightier than the rivers,  
So Epicharmus' wisdom surpassed all the rest,  
He whom Syracuse, his fatherland, has crowned.

He has left some memoirs in which he discourses on nature, ethics, and medicine. In most of these memoirs he made marginal notes, which plainly show they were written by him. He died at the age of ninety.

## ARCHYTAS

Archytas of Tarentum,<sup>112</sup> son of Mnesagoras (or of Histiaeus, according to Aristoxenus), was also a Pythagorean. It was his letter that saved Plato when he was about to be put to death by Dionysius.<sup>113</sup> He was widely admired for his all-around excellence. And thus he served seven times as his city's general, though all others were excluded by law from serving for more than one year. There are two letters written to him by Plato, since Archytas had written to him first as follows.

Archytas to Plato, good health.  
You have done well to get rid of your ailment, of which we got word from your own message and Lamiscus' report. As for the memoirs, we attended to

110 Epicharmus (fl. early fifth century BC) was a Sicilian comic playwright as well as a sage, whose plays are quoted extensively by Diogenes as a possible source for some of Plato's ideas (see 3.9–17).

111 A large, prosperous city on the eastern coast of Sicily, originally a Corinthian colony.

112 Tarentum was a colony in southern Italy founded by Sparta.

113 Diogenes refers to Dionysius II (b. c. 397 BC), ruler of Syracuse, whose court Plato visited twice in the 360s BC; on the second of these visits, Dionysius had him imprisoned. Diogenes quotes the letter referred to here at 3.21.

the matter and went up to Lucania, where we found Ocellus' offspring.<sup>114</sup> We obtained the works *On Law*, *On Kingship*, *On Piety*, and *On the Creation of the Universe*, and have sent them off to you. The rest, at present, cannot be found; if they turn up, you will have them.

So wrote Archytas, and Plato wrote back as follows:

Plato to Archytas, greetings.

- 81 I was overjoyed to receive the memoirs you sent and am greatly pleased with their author; he seems to me a man worthy of his ancestors. For they are said to have been from Myra<sup>115</sup> and were among those who emigrated from Troy in Laomedon's<sup>116</sup> day—brave men, as the traditional story makes clear. My own memoirs, which you alluded to in your letter, are not yet satisfactory; but such as they are I have sent them off to you. About their custody we both agree, so I need not advise you further. Farewell.

These then are the letters they exchanged.

- 82 There have been four men named Archytas: the first is our present subject; the second was a musician from Mytilene; the third, the author of *On Agriculture*; and the fourth, a writer of epigrams. Some say there was a fifth, an architect, whose book *On Mechanism* begins “These things I learned from Teucer of Carthage.”<sup>117</sup> It is reported of the musician that when reproached because he could not be heard, he replied, “Well, my instrument competes and speaks for me.”

Aristoxenus says our Pythagorean was never defeated when serving as general; but on one occasion, owing to a grudge against him, he resigned his command, whereupon his men were immediately taken captive.

- 83 He was the first to make mechanics methodical by applying mathematical principles; he was also the first to employ mechanical motion in a geometrical figure, when he tried, by means of a section of a half-cylinder, to find two mean proportionals in order to double the cube.<sup>118</sup> And in geometry he was the first to discover the cube, as Plato says in the *Republic*.<sup>119</sup>

114 Luciana was an ancient district of southern Italy. Ocellus (or Ocelus) was a Pythagorean.

115 A town in Lycia, a district in southwestern Asia Minor.

116 Laomedon was a mythical king of Troy and the father of Priam.

117 Otherwise unknown.

118 The problem known as “doubling the cube”—constructing a cube such that its volume would be exactly twice that of a given cube, using only a compass and straightedge—gave much vexation to ancient mathematicians; it is now known to be insoluble. According to Plutarch (*Moralia* 718e–f), Plato himself assigned the problem to Archytas and two other philosophers and was disappointed that they approached it through means other than geometric reasoning.

119 Plato has Glaucon say in the *Republic* (528b–c) that the subject of cubes and other solids “has not been investigated yet.” The meaning of that statement is opaque, but it certainly cannot

## ALCMEON

Alcmeon was from Croton. He too was a student of Pythagoras. He writes chiefly about medicine, though he sometimes discourses on natural phenomena, as when he says, “Most human things come in pairs.” He is thought to have been the first to write a treatise on nature, as Favorinus says in his *Miscellaneous History*, and he held that the moon, in general < . . . ><sup>120</sup> possesses an eternal nature.

He was the son of Pirithus, as he says himself at the beginning of his treatise: “These are the words of Alcmeon of Croton, son of Pirithus, which he addressed to Brotinus, Leon, and Bathyllus:<sup>121</sup> ‘Of things invisible, as of mortal things, it is for the gods to have clear knowledge, for men to conjecture from evidence,’” and so forth. He also declared that the soul is immortal and that it is in constant motion, like the sun.

## HIPPASUS

Hippasus of Metapontum<sup>122</sup> was another Pythagorean. He claimed that changes in the universe require definite intervals of time and that the all is limited and endowed with perpetual motion.

84

Demetrius, in his *Men of the Same Name*, says that Hippasus left no written work. There were two men named Hippasus, one being our present subject, the other a man who wrote a *Constitution of the Lacedemonians* in five books; he himself was a Lacedemonian.<sup>123</sup>

## PHILOLAUS

Philolaus of Croton<sup>124</sup> was a Pythagorean. It was from him that Plato

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mean that the cube had not yet been “discovered” in the late fifth century, and it says nothing about Archytas.

120 Some words have dropped out of the manuscript.

121 A Brotinus is mentioned at 8.55, perhaps the same man as the one addressed by Alcmeon here, but probably distinct from Brontinus, Pythagoras’ father-in-law, mentioned at 8.42 (the similarity of the names has produced confused spellings in the manuscripts). The other two addressees are little known.

122 Mentioned at 8.55 as a possible teacher of Empedocles.

123 The term “Lacedemonian” encompassed both citizens of Sparta and other Greeks who dwelled close to the city.

124 Philolaus, elsewhere in Diogenes’ work, is often said to be from Tarentum (see, e.g., 8.46).



Bronze hydria (water jar), mid-fifth century BC, Greek.

asked Dion to buy the Pythagorean treatises.<sup>125</sup> He died because he was suspected of aiming at a tyranny.<sup>126</sup> I have written about him as follows:

Suspicion, I say, counts most of all;  
 For even if you do nothing, but are suspected, you are lost.  
 Thus Croton, his fatherland, did away with Philolaus,  
 Who thought he'd like to be their tyrant.

85 He thought that all things come into being by necessity and harmony. He was the first to say that the earth moves in a circle,<sup>127</sup> though some say that it was Hicetas of Syracuse<sup>128</sup> who did so.

125 Diogenes also recounts this anecdote at 3.9 and 8.15. Plato as a young man may have encountered Philolaus in Italy (see 3.6).

126 No other evidence suggests that Philolaus had political ambitions, though many Pythagoreans were suspected of sedition (including one of Philolaus' students, as the text describes below).

127 This point is confirmed by other sources. Philolaus apparently believed that all celestial objects, including the sun, revolved around an unseen "central fire."

128 A fifth-century Pythagorean, little known.

He wrote one book; and it was this book, according to Hermippus, that some writer said that Plato the philosopher, when he came to Sicily to the court of Dionysius,<sup>129</sup> bought from the relatives of Philolaus for forty Alexandrine minas of silver, and that from it he transcribed the *Timaetus*.<sup>130</sup> Others say Plato received it for having interceded with Dionysius for the release from custody of a young man, a student of Philolaus.

Demetrius, in his *Men of the Same Name*, says Philolaus was the first of the Pythagoreans to publish a work titled *On Nature*, which begins as follows: “Nature in the universe was composed of unlimited and limiting elements, as was the entire universe and all it contains.”

## EUDOXUS

Eudoxus of Cnidus, the son of Aeschines, was an astronomer, a geometer, a doctor, and a legislator.<sup>131</sup> He studied geometry with Archytas and medicine with Philistion of Sicily,<sup>132</sup> as Callimachus says in his *Tablets*. Sotion, in his *Successions*, says he was also a student of Plato. When he was about twenty-three and in straitened circumstances, the fame of the Socratics attracted him, and he set sail for Athens with Theomedon the doctor, who supported him; some say he was Theomedon’s beloved. Disembarking at the Piraeus, Eudoxus went up to Athens every day, attended the sophists’ lectures, and returned to the port. 86

After two months he returned home and, assisted by contributions from his friends, sailed to Egypt with Chrysippus the doctor, with a letter of introduction from Agesilaus to Nectanabis,<sup>133</sup> who recommended him to the priests. He spent sixteen months there, having shaved his beard and eyebrows,<sup>134</sup> and it was there, some say, that he wrote his *Octaeteris*.<sup>135</sup> From there 87

129 Diogenes could mean either Dionysius I (c. 430–367 BC), or his son, Dionysius II (c. 396–c. 343 BC), tyrants of Syracuse; Plato spent time at both their courts (see 3.18–23).

130 Plato was often accused of plagiarism by ancient critics (see, e.g., 3.9–17).

131 Cnidus was a Greek city on the southwestern coast of Asia Minor. Eudoxus’ father is a different person than either the famous fourth-century orator or Aeschines of Sphettus, whom Diogenes discusses at 2.60–64.

132 For Archytas, see 8.79–83. Philistion of Locri (c. 427–347 BC) espoused Empedocles’ idea that the world is composed of water, earth, fire, and air.

133 Agesilaus II was a king of Sparta during the first four decades of the fourth century BC; he went to Egypt at the end of his life and served as a mercenary general under the pharaoh Nectanebo II (here called Nectanabis), who was then revolting from Persian rule.

134 Depilation was a sacred duty among Egyptian priests.

135 The title means “eight-year period,” indicating a work of calendrical astronomy. Lunar and solar calendars come into alignment in a repeating eight-year cycle.

he went to Cyzicus and the Propontis<sup>136</sup> to give lectures; later he went to the court of Mausolus.<sup>137</sup>

88 He then returned to Athens with a great many disciples; some say he did this to annoy Plato, who had originally snubbed him. Some report that at a drinking party given by Plato, Eudoxus, owing to the number of guests, introduced the practice of arranging couches in a semicircle. Nicomachus, son of Aristotle, says he declared pleasure to be the good.<sup>138</sup> Eudoxus was welcomed in his native city with great honor, as the decree concerning him makes clear.<sup>139</sup> But he also became highly renowned throughout Greece, having written laws for his fellow citizens, as Hermippus says in the fourth book of his work *On the Seven Sages*, as well as astronomical, geometrical, and other noteworthy works.

89 He had three daughters—Actis, Philtis, and Delphis. Eratosthenes, in his work *Against Baton*, says that Eudoxus also composed *Dialogues of the Dogs*,<sup>140</sup> but others say that the Egyptians wrote these in their own language, and that Eudoxus translated and published them for the Greeks. Chrysippus of Cnidus, <the son of Erineus>, attended his lectures about the gods, the cosmos, and the celestial phenomena, while in medicine he studied with Philistion of Sicily. Eudoxus left some excellent memoirs. He had a son, Aristagoras; and Aristagoras's son Chrysippus was a student of Aethlius. To this Chrysippus<sup>141</sup> is attributed a work on the treatment of the eye, since he devoted himself to speculations about nature.

90 There have been three men named Eudoxus; the first is our present subject; the second was a historian from Rhodes; and the third a Sicilian Greek, Agathocles' son, a comic poet who won three victories at the Dionysia and five at the Lenaea,<sup>142</sup> as Apollodorus says in his *Chronology*. We also find another doctor from Cnidus;<sup>143</sup> Eudoxus, in his *Map of the Earth*, says that this man was always advising people to move their limbs, using every form of exercise, and to keep their organs of sense active in the same way.

136 Now known as the Sea of Marmara, which lies between the Aegean and Black Seas.

137 The king of Caria from 377 to 353 BC. After his death his sister-wife Artemisia built him a magnificent tomb at Halicarnassus, which was called the Mausoleum—the origin of the English word.

138 This doctrinal point intrudes abruptly into an account of Eudoxus' life. The source of this information is not in fact Nicomachus, but his father, Aristotle, who describes the views of Eudoxus in two passages of the *Nicomachean Ethics* (1101b and 1172b).

139 This decree has not survived.

140 If the title given here is correct, “dogs” may have referred to Cynic philosophers (see 6.13).

141 That is, the grandson of the Chrysippus who studied with Eudoxus.

142 Both were important annual panhellenic festivals that included competitions in music and poetry.

143 Since Diogenes has already listed the three men he knew of named Eudoxus, this “other doctor from Cnidus” may be yet another Chrysippus, a third Cnidian doctor to add to the two discussed just above.



Astronomical papyrus of Eudoxus of Cnidus (detail III). Egyptian (Greek period), second century BC.

The same author<sup>144</sup> says that Eudoxus of Cnidus flourished in the 103rd Olympiad<sup>145</sup> and that he discovered the properties of curves. He died at the age of fifty-three. When he was in Egypt with Chonuphis of Heliopolis,<sup>146</sup> the bull, Apis,<sup>147</sup> licked his cloak. The priests therefore declared that Eudoxus would be renowned but short-lived, as Favorinus says in his *Reminiscences*.

Our own verses about him run as follows:

91

At Memphis, they say, Eudoxus learned his fate  
 From the bull with beautiful horns.  
 The beast said naught; for whence comes speech to a bull?  
 Nature gave no wagging tongue to the young bull Apis.  
 But standing beside Eudoxus, it licked his robe,  
 Imparting the prophecy “you are not long for the world.”  
 Hence his fate soon overtook him  
 When he had seen fifty-three risings of the Pleiades.

Eudoxus used to be called Endoxus (“renowned”) because of his brilliant reputation.

Now that we have dealt with the eminent Pythagoreans, let us take up the so-called scattered<sup>148</sup> philosophers. We should speak first of Heraclitus.

144 Presumably meaning Apollodorus.

145 This Olympiad began in 368 BC.

146 One of the Egyptian “wise men” who shared their insights with Greeks.

147 Apis was a sacred bull worshipped at Memphis.

148 The term here rendered “scattered,” *sporadēn*, refers to those thinkers whom Diogenes cannot place within the lines of philosophic transmission laid down at 1.13–15.



# BOOK 9

HERACLITUS

FL. C. 500 BC

XENOPHANES

C. 570–C. 475 BC

PARMENIDES

FL. EARLY 5TH CENT. BC

MELISSUS

FL. 441 BC

ZENO

FL. EARLY 5TH CENT. BC

LEUCIPPUS

LATE 5TH CENT. BC

DEMOCRITUS

B. 460/57 BC

PROTAGORAS

C. 490–420 BC

DIOGENES

FL. 425 BC

ANAXARCHUS

MID TO LATE 4TH CENT. BC

PYRRHO

C. 365–275 BC

TIMON

C. 320–230 BC

## HERACLITUS

1 Heraclitus, son of Bloson or, according to some, of Heracon, was a native of Ephesus; he flourished in the sixty-ninth Olympiad.<sup>1</sup> He was exceptionally haughty and disdainful, as is clear from his book, in which he says, “Much learning does not teach understanding; otherwise it would have taught Hesiod and Pythagoras, or, in turn, Xenophanes and Hecataeus.”<sup>2</sup> For “what is wise is one thing: to understand thought, which steers<sup>3</sup> all things through all.” He used to say that Homer should be thrown out of the public contests and beaten with a stick, and Archilochus likewise.<sup>4</sup>

2 He also used to say, “One should extinguish pride more quickly than a fire,” and “The people should defend the law as they would their city wall.” And he attacked the Ephesians for banishing his friend Hermodorus, in the passage where he says, “All the adults of Ephesus would do better to end their lives and leave the city to the children; for they have banished Hermodorus, the most useful man among them, saying, ‘Let there be no “most useful” among us; if anyone be such, let him go elsewhere and live with others.’” When asked by them to establish laws, he would not deign to do so, since by  
3 then the city was in the grip of a bad constitution. Withdrawing to the temple of Artemis,<sup>5</sup> he would play at knucklebones<sup>6</sup> with the children, and when the Ephesians stood around him, he said, “Why are you surprised, you rascals? Isn’t it better to do this than take part in your civic life?”

At last, having become a misanthrope, he departed for the mountains, where he lived on grass and herbs. But when this diet gave him dropsy, he returned to town and asked the doctors, enigmatically, if they could produce a

1 Ephesus was an important Greek city on the coast of Asia Minor. The sixty-ninth Olympiad began in 504 BC.

2 The four names given here represent leading figures in different wisdom traditions. Hesiod (eighth or early seventh century BC) wrote didactic and cosmogonic poems; Pythagoras was a mystic and religious leader (see 8.1–50); Xenophanes, discussed next in this book (9.18–20), wrote verses skeptical about traditional mythology and religion; Hecataeus of Miletus was an early Greek prose writer (sixth to fifth century BC) who dealt with geography and mythical genealogy.

3 The text is uncertain here and has been variously restored.

4 Homer and Archilochus represent the earliest Greek epic and lyric poets, respectively; Heraclitus, who wrote in prose, presumably used their names to represent poetry generally.

5 The enormous temple of Artemis at Ephesus was renowned throughout the Greek world.

6 *Astragaloi* (“knucklebones”) denotes several different kinds of games, played either with actual sheep knucklebones or with clay pieces made to resemble them.



“Knucklebones” (*astragaloi*) of the Greco-Roman world, third to second century BC.  
The one on the left is made of bronze; on the right of translucent cobalt blue glass.

drought after heavy rain.<sup>7</sup> When they failed to understand him, he buried himself in a cowshed, hoping that the heat of the cow dung would draw the fluid out of him. But as even this had no effect, he died at the age of sixty.

My own verses about him run as follows:

I have often wondered how Heraclitus lived  
Such a troubled and ill-fated life and then died.  
An awful disease, flooding his body,  
Extinguished the light in his eyes and brought on darkness.

4

Hermippus says that Heraclitus asked the doctors whether anyone could draw off the fluid by emptying his intestines; and when they said it was impossible, he lay in the sun and told his servants to plaster him with cow dung. Thus laid out, he died the next day and was buried in the marketplace. But Neanthes of Cyzicus says that when Heraclitus was unable to push off the cow dung he stayed where he was, and that he became unrecognizable by this transformation and was devoured by dogs.

He was extraordinary from boyhood. When young, he used to say that he knew nothing; as an adult, that he knew everything. He became no one’s student, and said that he had searched himself, and from himself had learned everything. Some say that he attended the lectures of Xenophanes, according to Sotion, who reports that Ariston, in his book *On Heraclitus*, says that he was cured of the dropsy, but died of another disease. Hippobotus says the same.

5

The book attributed to him, in light of its chief subject, is a treatise on nature, but it is divided into three discourses: one on the universe, another on politics, and a third on theology. He deposited it in the temple of Artemis, as

6

<sup>7</sup> Dropsy or edema results in a swelling of the limbs due to accumulation of water under the skin.

some say, having purposely written it in a rather obscure style so that <only> the competent might approach it, and lest a common style should make it easy to despise. Timon offers this sketch of him:

Among them arose a crower, a riddler,  
Mob-reviling Heraclitus.

Theophrastus says that owing to his melancholy he left some parts of his work half-finished; other parts survive in a number of different versions. As proof of his magnanimity Antisthenes<sup>8</sup> cites, in his *Successions*, his having renounced the kingship in favor of his brother. His book won such renown that from it arose disciples, those called the Heracliteans.

7 Heraclitus' doctrines, in general terms, are as follows. All things are made of fire, and into fire they are dissolved; all things come about by fate, and it is by the convergence of opposites that beings are brought into harmony; and all things are full of souls and of deities. He has also given an account of all the changes that are effected in the universe, and declares that the sun is as large as it appears. He is also reported to have said, "You could not find the boundaries of the soul, even by treading every path; so deep is its reckoning." He used to call conceit a sacred disease, and sight a deceptive sense. Sometimes, in his book, his phrases are so brilliant and clear that even the slowest mind could easily understand and derive from them elevation of soul. For the brevity and depth of his exposition are incomparable.

8 His particular doctrines are as follows. Fire is the element; all things are an exchange of fire and come into being by rarefaction and condensation; but of this he offers no clear explanation. All things come into being from a conflict of opposites, and the universe in its entirety flows like a river. The whole is limited and forms one world. It is alternately born from fire and again resolved into fire at fixed periods through all eternity; and this comes about in accordance with destiny. Of the opposites, that which leads to creation is called war and strife, and that which leads to the conflagration is called concord and peace. Change is called a path up and down, and the world comes into being in conformity with it.

9 For when fire contracts it turns into moisture; and when this condenses, it turns into water; as for water, when it solidifies it turns into earth. This he calls the downward path. In turn the earth is liquefied, and thus gives rise to water, from which everything else is derived. For he reduces almost everything to exhalation from the sea. This is the upward path. Exhalations arise from the earth as

<sup>8</sup> Probably Antisthenes of Rhodes (fl. 200 BC), but in any case not the Cynic philosopher discussed in Book 6.



*Air Dies Giving Birth to Fire*, by Eric Martin, 2016.

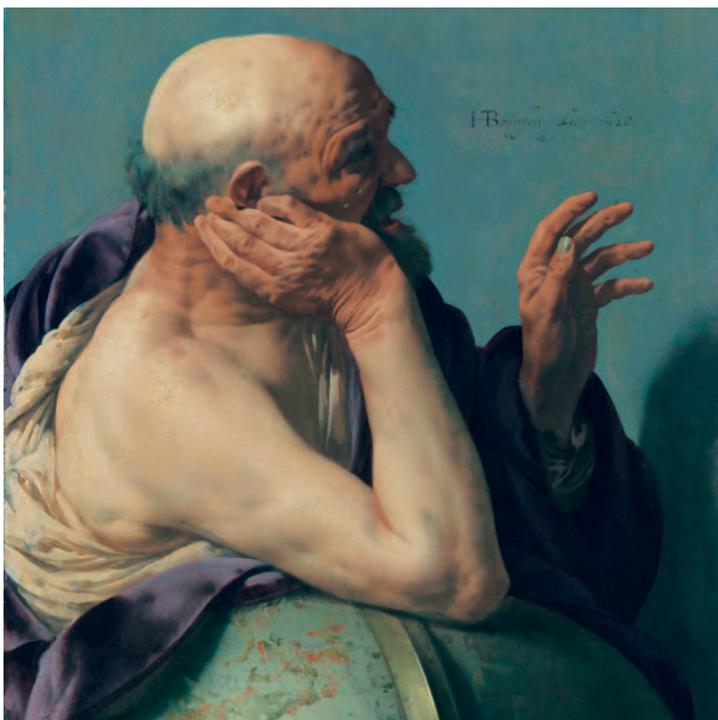
Charcoal and gap fire ash on paper, 56 x 76 cm.

From a series of drawings inspired by Heraclitus' aphorisms on fire.

well as from the sea; those from the sea are bright and pure, those from the earth are dark. Fire is fed by the bright exhalations, the moist element by the others.

As for the nature of the element that surrounds the world, he does not make clear what it is. But he says that in it there are bowls whose concavities are turned toward us, in which the bright exhalations collect and produce flames. These are the stars. The flame of the sun is the brightest and the hottest. The other stars are farther from the earth, which is why they shine less and give off less heat. As for the moon, it is closer to the earth but does not travel through the pure region. The sun, on the other hand, travels in a translucent and pure region and remains at a uniform distance from us, which is why it gives us more heat and light. The

10



*Heraclitus*, by Hendrick ter Brugghen, 1628.

sun and the moon are eclipsed when the bowls are turned upward; the monthly phases of the moon occur as the bowl itself gradually revolves in place.

11 Day and night, months, seasons, years, rains, winds, and similar phenomena result from the various exhalations. The bright exhalation, set on fire in the hollow of the sun, makes day, while the opposite exhalation, when it gets the upper hand, causes night. The heat, nourished by the bright exhalation, produces summer; and the moist element, augmented by the dark exhalation, produces winter. It is in conformity with these theories that he indicates the causes of the other phenomena. As for the earth, he gives no account of its nature nor that of the bowls. These, then, were his views.

12 The story Ariston tells about Socrates and what the philosopher said when he read Heraclitus' book, which had been brought to him by Euripides, has been related in the chapter on Socrates.<sup>9</sup> But Seleucus the grammarian says that a certain Croton reports in his work *The Diver* that a certain Crates<sup>10</sup> first

<sup>9</sup> See 2.22.

<sup>10</sup> An obscure person, not the Cynic philosopher discussed at 6.85–93.

brought Heraclitus' book to Greece, and that it was he who said it required a Delian diver not to be drowned in it. Some give it the title *The Muses*, others *On Nature*. Diodotus calls it

An infallible helm for the rule of life

and others “a code of conduct for one and all.”<sup>11</sup> They say that, when asked why he remained silent, he replied, “So that you can chatter.” Darius<sup>12</sup> too was eager to make his acquaintance, and wrote to him as follows:

King Darius, son of Hystaspes, to Heraclitus, the wise man of Ephesus, greetings. 13

You have written a discourse, *On Nature*, which is hard to understand and to interpret. In some parts, if one takes you at your word, it seems to have the force of a theory of the entire universe and the things it contains, which depend on motion most divine. But for the most part one is called upon to suspend judgment, so that even those who are most well versed in literature are at a loss to know how to interpret your work correctly. Therefore King Darius, son of Hystaspes, wishes to receive your teaching and Greek culture. Come quickly into my sight at the palace. For the Greeks in general do not know how to distinguish their wise men, and neglect their excellent precepts, which are well worth hearing and learning. At my court you will enjoy every privilege, daily conversation of the noble and worthy kind, and a life that does honor to your counsels. 14

Heraclitus of Ephesus to King Darius, son of Hystaspes, greetings.

All men on earth hold aloof from truth and justice, and in their wretched folly devote themselves to avarice and the thirst for fame. But I, keeping myself oblivious of all wickedness, and avoiding the satiety of everything, which is usually accompanied by envy, would not come to Persia, as I am content with little, in conformity with my judgment.

Such was our philosopher, even toward a king. Demetrius, in his *Men of the Same Name*, says that Heraclitus despised even the Athenians, though they held him in the highest esteem, and that though he himself was despised by the Ephesians, he nevertheless preferred his own country. Demetrius of Phalerum mentions him in his *Apology of Socrates*. And there have been a great many interpreters of his work, including Antisthenes, Heraclides of Pontus, Cleanthes, 15

11 The text of this quote is corrupt in the Greek and restoration is very uncertain.

12 Darius I (c. 550–486 BC) was ruler of the Persian Empire during a portion of the Greco-Persian Wars. After suppressing a revolt by the Greeks of western Asia (499–494 BC), Darius sent an expedition to punish Athens and Eretria for their part in the revolt. His forces were defeated at the Battle of Marathon (490 BC).



And another runs as follows:

Be in no hurry to unroll to its end the book of Heraclitus  
 The Ephesian; for the path is hard to travel,  
 Gloom prevails, and a darkness devoid of light; but if an initiate leads you,  
 The paths are brighter than sunlight.

There have been five men named Heraclitus: the first was our present subject; the second a lyric poet who wrote an *Encomium of the Twelve Gods*; the third an elegiac poet from Halicarnassus, for whom Callimachus<sup>16</sup> wrote this epitaph: 17

They told me, Heraclitus, of your death, and to my eyes  
 Brought tears. I recalled how often you and I  
 Let the sun go down in talk. But you,  
 My Halicarnassian host, have long been a heap of ashes; Yet  
 your nightingale songs live on;  
 Hades, the robber, cannot touch them.

The fourth was a native of Lesbos, who wrote a history of Macedonia; and the fifth, a seriocomic author, who had been a musician before he adopted that profession.

## XENOPHANES

Xenophanes of Colophon,<sup>17</sup> son of Dexius, or, according to Apollodorus, of Orthomenes, is praised by Timon, who speaks, at any rate, of 18

Xenophanes, nearly free of vanity, denouncer of Homer's deceptions.

Banished from his native land, he lived in Zancle<sup>18</sup> in Sicily < . . >. He also spent time in Catana.<sup>19</sup> Some say he was no man's student, though others maintain he was a student of Boton of Athens,<sup>20</sup> or, as others say, of Archelaus.<sup>21</sup> Sotion makes him a contemporary of Anaximander.<sup>22</sup> He wrote in epic meter,

16 Callimachus of Cyrene (fl. 279–245 BC), a Greek poet connected to the famous Library at Alexandria.

17 Colophon was a Greek city on the coast of Asia Minor, northwest of Ephesus.

18 A Greek seaport in northeast Sicily; Messina is built on its ruins.

19 A city on the eastern coast of Sicily.

20 Otherwise unknown.

21 The best-known thinker by this name, the teacher of Socrates discussed at 2.16–17, lived later than Xenophanes; this passage may refer to some other Archelaus, not otherwise known, or may be in error.

22 Anaximander, a thinker of the first half of the sixth century BC, is discussed at 2.1–2.

and also composed elegies and iambics condemning Homer and Hesiod and disparaging what they say about the gods. He also recited his own works. He is said to have opposed the views of Thales and Pythagoras,<sup>23</sup> and attacked those of Epimenides.<sup>24</sup> He lived to a great age, as he himself somewhere says:

- 19                   Seven and sixty years have by now been  
                       Buffeting my thought up and down the land of Greece;  
                       And since my birth there have been twenty-five more,  
                       If I may speak truly about these matters.<sup>25</sup>

He maintains that there are four elements of existing things, and worlds that are unlimited in number but not apt to change. He says that clouds are formed when vapor from the sun ascends and lifts them into the atmosphere. The substance of god is spherical and bears no resemblance to man; he is all-seeing and all-hearing, but does not breathe; he is the totality of mind and intelligence and is immortal. Xenophanes was the first to declare that everything that comes into being is perishable and that the soul is breath.

- 20                   He maintained that most things are inferior to thought. He also held that one's encounters with tyrants <should be> as infrequent or as pleasant as possible.<sup>26</sup> When Empedocles said to him that the wise man remained undiscovered, he replied, "As one might expect, since it takes one to find one." Sotion says that Xenophanes was the first to say that all things defy comprehension (though Sotion was mistaken).

He also wrote *The Founding of Colophon* and *The Establishment of the Colony at Elea in Italy*, two thousand verses.<sup>27</sup> He flourished in the sixtieth Olympiad.<sup>28</sup> Demetrius of Phalerum, in his work *On Old Age*, and Panaetius the Stoic, in his work *On Contentment*, say that Xenophanes buried his sons with his own hands, like Anaxagoras.<sup>29</sup> He is thought to have been sold into slavery by < . . . > <and was ransomed by> the Pythagoreans Parmeniscus and

23 Diogenes discusses the life and views of these two thinkers at 1.22–44 and 8.1–50, respectively. At 1.23 he claims that Xenophanes admired Thales, in contradiction to what he says here.

24 Epimenides of Crete (late seventh century BC) is discussed at 1.109–15.

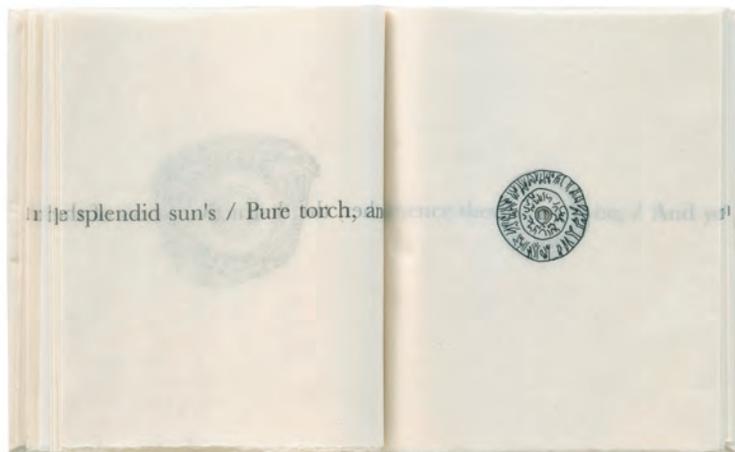
25 In these verses Xenophanes claims a life span of ninety-two years, and he may have lived a while longer after composing them. Modern historians, relying on this fragment, have assigned his birth roughly to 570 BC and his death to the mid-470s.

26 The word translated "should be" has been inserted by editors. "Tyrants" translates the Greek *tyrannoi*, a word that does not imply harsh or despotic behavior but simply one-man rule (often, but not always, achieved with the support of armed force).

27 Nothing remains of either poem, though some verses do survive from other works by Xenophanes.

28 This Olympiad began in 540 BC.

29 See 2.13.



*The Vitreous Body*, by Kiki Smith, 2001. Book of eighteen woodblock prints with text by Parmenides of Elea. Published by Graphicstudio/USF.

Orestades,<sup>30</sup> as Favorinus says in the first book of his *Reminiscences*. There was another Xenophanes, of Lesbos, an iambic poet.

These, then, are the “scattered” philosophers.<sup>31</sup>

## PARMENIDES

Parmenides, son of Pyres, a native of Elea,<sup>32</sup> was a student of Xenophanes (though Theophrastus, in his *Epitome*, says he studied with Anaximander).<sup>33</sup> But though he was a pupil of Xenophanes, he did not become his follower.

21

30 Nothing else is known of these men. The two bracketed insertions, one of which indicates the missing name(s) of Xenophanes' captor(s), were suggested by Hermann Diels to avoid the reading of the manuscripts according to which Xenophanes was sold into slavery by two Pythagoreans. But since Xenophanes had shown antipathy to Pythagorean views (see 9.18), the received text may be correct.

31 The term “scattered” (*sporadēn*) was introduced at 8.50 to designate those thinkers whom Diogenes cannot place within the lines of philosophic transmission laid down at 1.13–15. Here, he applies the term to Heraclitus and Xenophanes, to indicate that they do not belong to the line of transmission begun by Pythagoras. However, at 1.15 he considered Xenophanes a part of the Pythagorean line, so it is unclear why he now classes him as “scattered” (the term applies more closely to Heraclitus, who went unmentioned at 1.13–15). With Parmenides below—a student of Xenophanes, but more deeply influenced by the Pythagorean Ameinias—Diogenes returns to the Pythagorean line he laid out at 1.15, and follows this throughout the rest of his work.

32 A Phocaeen colony founded in the sixth century on the Tyrrhenian coast of southern Italy, famous chiefly for the Eleatic school of philosophy.

33 Xenophanes is discussed just above, Anaximander at 2.1–2.

According to Sotion he associated with Ameinias,<sup>34</sup> son of Diochaetas, a Pythagorean who was poor but respectable. Parmenides was more inclined to adopt Ameinias's ideas, and after the man's death built him a hero's shrine, since he himself belonged to a distinguished and wealthy family; and it was under the influence of Ameinias, rather than that of Xenophanes, that he was persuaded to adopt a contemplative life.

22 He was the first to declare that the earth is spherical and is situated at the center.<sup>35</sup> He held that there are two elements, fire and earth, and that the former has the role of craftsman, the latter of his material. The generation of human beings proceeded initially from the sun. And <from these elements> arise heat and cold, from which all things are formed. He held that soul and mind are the same thing, as Theophrastus mentions in his *Physics*, where he presents almost all of the philosophers' doctrines. He said that philosophy was a twofold thing, one part dealing with truth, the other with opinion. Hence he somewhere says:

You must learn all things:

Both the precise heart of persuasive Truth,  
And the opinions of mortals, in which there is no true conviction.

Parmenides also commits his doctrines to verse, as did Hesiod, Xenophanes, and Empedocles.<sup>36</sup> He made reason the criterion, and declared that the sensations are inexact. At any rate, he says,

May long-standing habit not force you along this path,  
To be guided by a heedless eye and an echoing ear and tongue;  
But discern by reason the much contested proof.

23 Hence Timon says of him:

And the strength of high-minded Parmenides, a man of no varied opinions,  
Who separated thought from the deception of appearance.

It was about him that Plato wrote the dialogue entitled *Parmenides* or *On the Forms*.<sup>37</sup>

He flourished in the sixty-ninth Olympiad.<sup>38</sup> He is thought to have been

<sup>34</sup> Otherwise unknown.

<sup>35</sup> Pythagoreans had formerly believed that the earth orbited around a "central fire" (see 8.85 and corresponding note).

<sup>36</sup> The poet Hesiod is grouped here with two Pre-Socratic philosophers, perhaps on the basis of his *Theogony*. Diogenes discusses the life and views of Empedocles at 8.51–77.

<sup>37</sup> The dialogue, a conversation among Parmenides, Zeno of Elea (see 9.25–29), and Socrates (see 2.18–47), survives intact. Parmenides was some forty years' Socrates' senior.

<sup>38</sup> This Olympiad began in 504 BC.

the first to discover that Hesperus and Phosphorus are the same,<sup>39</sup> as Favorinus says in the fifth book of his *Reminiscences*. Others say that Pythagoras was the first to do so.<sup>40</sup> Callimachus says that the poem was not the work of Parmenides. The philosopher is said to have given laws to his fellow citizens, as Speusippus says in his work *On Philosophers*. And he was the first to use the Achilles argument,<sup>41</sup> as Favorinus says in his *Miscellaneous History*.

There was another Parmenides, an orator who wrote a handbook on rhetoric.

## MELISSUS

Melissus, son of Ithaegenes, was a native of Samos. He was a student of Parmenides but he also conversed with Heraclitus,<sup>42</sup> on which occasion he introduced the philosopher to the Ephesians, who were unacquainted with him, just as Hippocrates introduced Democritus to the people of Abdera.<sup>43</sup> He also took part in politics and was thought worthy of his fellow citizens' favor; hence when appointed admiral he won even more admiration for his personal courage. 24

He believed the universe is unlimited, unchangeable, immovable, and one, homogeneous and complete; and that motion is not real but merely apparent. He also said we should not offer opinions about the gods since it is not possible to have knowledge of them.

Apollodorus says he flourished in the eighty-fourth Olympiad.<sup>44</sup>

## ZENO

Zeno was a native of Elea.<sup>45</sup> Apollodorus, in his *Chronology*, says that by birth he was the son of Teleutagoras, but by adoption of Parmenides (Parmenides being the son of Pyres).<sup>46</sup> 25

39 Phosphorus (the Morning Star) and Hesperus (the Evening Star) both refer to the planet Venus.

40 Diogenes himself makes this claim for Pythagoras at 8.14.

41 The famous paradox of Achilles and the tortoise stated that if a tortoise was given a head start it could outrun even Achilles, the fleetest of Greek heroes. In order to catch up, Achilles would first have to reach where the tortoise had previously been, and in the time it took to do that, the tortoise would have moved ahead—and so on *ad infinitum*.

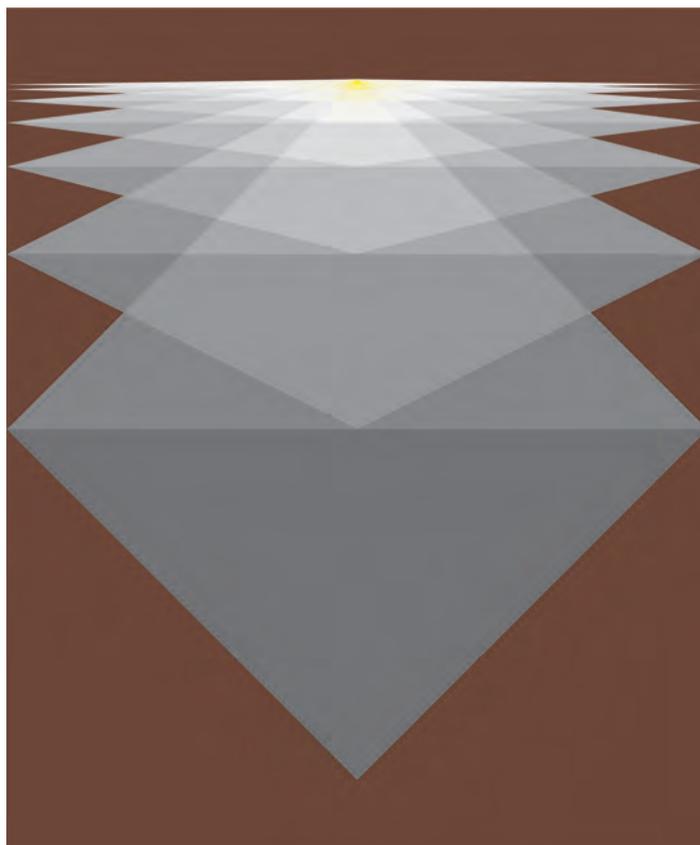
42 Heraclitus of Ephesus is discussed at 9.1–17.

43 Legendary encounters between the physician Hippocrates of Cos and the philosopher Democritus were the source of many Greek and Roman anecdotes, some of which are retold by Diogenes at 9.42 below.

44 This Olympiad began in 444 BC.

45 This Zeno should be distinguished from Zeno of Citium, the founder of Stoicism (see 7.1–160).

46 The material in parentheses is deleted by some editors.



*Zeno's Square*, by Piero Passacantando, 2010.

Timon speaks as follows about Zeno and Melissus:

I praise the great strength, which never failed,  
 Of double-tongued Zeno, the censurer of everyone,  
 And Melissus, who dispelled many vain imaginings,  
 And was himself deluded by few.

Zeno was the student of Parmenides, and became his beloved. He was tall, as Plato says in the *Parmenides*; Plato also mentions him in the *Sophist* and calls him the Palamedes of Elea.<sup>47</sup> Aristotle says that Zeno was the inventor of dialectic, as Empedocles<sup>48</sup> was of rhetoric.

<sup>47</sup> Palamedes was a mythic hero of the Trojan War, known for his great size.

<sup>48</sup> Empedocles of Agrigentum is discussed at 8.51–77.

Zeno was a man of great nobility, both in philosophy and in politics; his extant books, at any rate, are full of intelligence. Hoping to overpower the tyrant Nearchus (though some say it was Diomedon),<sup>49</sup> he was arrested, as Heraclides says in his *Epitome of Satyrus*. And when interrogated about his confederates and about the weapons he was transporting to Lipara,<sup>50</sup> he informed against all of the tyrant's friends, hoping to leave him bereft of supporters. Then, saying that he had to whisper something about certain persons, he sank his teeth into the tyrant's ear and did not let go until he had been run through, meeting the same fate as Aristogeiton the tyrannicide.<sup>51</sup> 26

Demetrius, in his *Men of the Same Name*, says that Zeno bit the tyrant's nostril. Antisthenes,<sup>52</sup> in his *Successions*, says that after Zeno had informed on the tyrant's friends he was asked whether there was any other conspirator; to this Zeno replied, "Yes, you, the scourge of the city!" And to those standing nearby he said, "I am surprised at your cowardice, if in fear of what I am now enduring you could be the tyrant's slaves." And finally, biting off his own tongue, he spat it at him. And his fellow citizens were so provoked that they stoned the tyrant to death. Most writers give almost the same account of Zeno's end. Hermippus, however, says that Zeno was cast into a mortar<sup>53</sup> and beaten to death. 27

My own verses about him run as follows: 28

You desired, Zeno, and your desire was noble,  
 To slay the tyrant and deliver Elea from slavery.  
 But you were defeated; for the tyrant caught you and beat you in a mortar.  
 But what am I saying? It was your body that he beat, and not you.

Zeno proved noble in all other respects, particularly in his contempt for the powerful, which equaled that of Heraclitus. In fact, that colony of the Phocaeans (originally called Hyele, later Elea), which was his native place—a modest city, good only for rearing brave men—he preferred to the arrogance of Athens, hardly ever visiting that city and spending his whole life at home.

He was also the first to use the Achilles argument<sup>54</sup> (though Favorinus says that Parmenides used it first) and a number of others. He favored the following views. There is a world, but there is no void. The nature of all things 29

49 Both names are unknown outside this passage.

50 An island off the northern coast of Sicily.

51 Aristogeiton and his lover Harmodius conspired to assassinate the Athenian tyrant Hippias and his brother Hipparchus in 514 BC. The attack on Hipparchus succeeded, but Hippias survived and had his one surviving assailant tortured and killed.

52 Antisthenes of Rhodes (fl. 200 BC), not the Socratic philosopher discussed in Book 6.

53 In this case, a large stone trough used for kneading or grinding.

54 See 9.23 and corresponding note.

arose from hot and cold and dry and moist, which change into one another. Human beings are generated from earth, and the soul is a mixture of the above-mentioned elements, no one of them predominating.

They say that once, when rebuked, he lost his temper; and when blamed for this he said, “If when reproached I pretend that I have not been, then I’ll be unaware of it when I’m praised.”

That there have been eight men named Zeno we have mentioned in our account of Zeno of Citium. Our present subject flourished in the seventy-ninth Olympiad.<sup>55</sup>

## LEUCIPPUS

30 Leucippus was a native of Elea, though some say he was born in Abdera,<sup>56</sup> others in Melos. He was a student of Zeno.

He held that the totality of things is infinite and that they all change into one another. The whole is at the same time empty and full of bodies. The worlds come into being when bodies fall into the void and are intertwined with one another; and it is their motion as their bulk increases that gives rise to the substance of the stars. The sun revolves in an orbit larger than that of the moon. The earth stays in place, revolving around the center; its shape is that of a drum. Leucippus was the first to posit atoms as first principles. Such are his views in general; in detail, his account is as follows.

31 He says that the whole is infinite, as has been mentioned; but that part of it is full and part empty, and it is these parts that he calls elements. From these elements arise an unlimited number of worlds, and into them they are dissolved. The worlds are formed in the following way. Detaching themselves from the unlimited, a large number of bodies of various shapes flow into a great void. As they collect they form a single vortex in which they collide with one another and, circling in all sorts of ways, are separated off, those of a given kind joining others of the same kind. And when, by reason of their numbers, they can no longer revolve in equilibrium, the light bodies pass into the outer void, as if through a sieve, while the rest keep together; and because they are intertwined, they remain in motion together and form a primary spherical system.

32 This stretches out like a membrane and encloses many sorts of bodies. And as the vortex containing these bodies spins around a tightening cen-

<sup>55</sup> This Olympiad began in 464 BC.

<sup>56</sup> A Greek city on the coast of Thrace.

ter, the surrounding membrane thins out, while the adjacent bodies inside it constantly flow together as they graze the vortex. And thus the earth is formed, as the bodies carried to the center remain together. Meanwhile, the enveloping membrane grows larger with the influx of bodies from outside; and as it is carried around in the vortex it adds to itself whatever bodies it touches. Some of these are intertwined and form a mass, at first moist and muddy; but when they have dried and are revolving with the entire vortex, they eventually catch fire and produce the substance of the stars.

The orbit of the sun is the outermost, that of the moon the nearest to the earth; those of all the other celestial bodies lie between the two. All the stars catch fire by the speed of their motion; the sun is also kindled by the stars, whereas the moon is kindled only slightly. The sun and the moon are eclipsed <. . .> the tilting of the earth to the south. The regions of the north are always blanketed with snow and are extremely cold and frozen. Eclipses of the sun are rare, those of the moon very frequent by reason of the inequality of their orbits. And just as the world is born, so it grows and decays and perishes in accordance with some necessity, the nature of which he does <not> make clear.

33

## DEMOCRITUS

Democritus was the son of Hegesistratus, though some say his father was Athenocritus, others Danasippus. He was a native of Abdera, or, as some say, of Miletus.<sup>57</sup> He studied with certain Magi and Chaldaeans.<sup>58</sup> For when King Xerxes was entertained by Democritus' father, he left instructors behind, as Herodotus recounts.<sup>59</sup> From these men Democritus learned about theology and astronomy when still a boy. Later he met Leucippus and, according to some, Anaxagoras,<sup>60</sup> though he was forty years younger than the latter. Favorinus, in his *Miscellaneous History*, reports that Democritus declared that Anaxagoras's views about the sun and moon<sup>61</sup> were not his own, but were ancient, and that Anaxagoras had appropriated them. And he pulled to pieces Anaxagoras's views about the world's orderly

34

35

57 Abdera was on the coast of Thrace, while Miletus was on the coast of Asia Minor.

58 The Magi were Persian priests skilled in astronomy, astrology, and other arts; the term "Chaldaeans" refers here to a sect of Mesopotamian mystics.

59 Xerxes I (c. 519–465 BC), king of Persia, led a massive invasion of Greece in 480 BC, passing through Abdera on his way west. Herodotus records in his *Histories* (7.109) that Xerxes stopped in Abdera but says nothing of a visit to Democritus' father or of Persian sages left there.

60 Leucippus is discussed just above, Anaxagoras at 2.6–15.

61 See 2.8, where Anaxagoras is credited with the view that the sun was made of hot iron and that the moon had crests and ravines.

arrangement and about Mind, his hostility toward him stemming from the fact that Anaxagoras had rebuffed him.<sup>62</sup> But then how could he have been his student, as some maintain?

36 Demetrius in his *Men of the Same Name* and Antisthenes<sup>63</sup> in his *Successions* say that Democritus went abroad to Egypt to study geometry with the priests, and to Persia and to the Red Sea. And some say he associated with the Naked Sages<sup>64</sup> in India and went to Ethiopia. Being the third brother, he divided the family property. And most say that he chose the smaller portion, which was in money, because he needed it for his travels, a choice his brothers had shrewdly anticipated. Demetrius says Democritus' portion amounted to more than one hundred talents,<sup>65</sup> all of which he spent. He says Democritus was so industrious that he took over a little house in a part of his garden and shut himself in. And once, when his father was leading an ox to sacrifice and tied it there, Democritus was unaware of it for a considerable time, until his father roused him for the sacrifice and told him about the ox. "It seems that he also went to Athens," says Demetrius, "and was not eager to be recognized, since he despised fame, and that though he knew of Socrates, he was not known to him; for he says, 'I came to Athens and nobody knew me.'"

37 "If the *Rivals in Love* is the work of Plato," says Thrasylus, "then Democritus would be the unnamed character, different from Oenopides and from Anaxagoras, who takes part in the discussion with Socrates about philosophy, and to whom Socrates says that the philosopher is like the pentathlete.<sup>66</sup> For Democritus was truly a pentathlete in philosophy, since <he trained himself> not only in natural science and ethics but also in mathematics and the ordinary branches of education,<sup>67</sup> and was fully conversant with the arts." From him came the saying "Speech is the shadow of action." Demetrius of Phalerum, in his *Apology of Socrates*, says that Democritus did not even visit Athens.<sup>68</sup> And this is even more impressive, if Democritus actually looked

62 An antipathy between Anaxagoras and Democritus was mentioned at 2.14.

63 Antisthenes of Rhodes (fl. 200 BC) is meant, not the Socratic philosopher discussed in Book 6.

64 Indian religious ascetics, dubbed "Gymnosophists" by Greeks who observed them exposing themselves to the elements.

65 A considerable fortune for the time.

66 The sentence here quoted from Claudius Thrasylus—a Greek scholar of the first century AD who catalogued and arranged the works of Plato—concerns the dialogue known today as *Erastai* (*Lovers*), but in antiquity more often known as *Anterastai* (*Rivals in Love*). The dialogue survives intact but its Platonic authorship is now widely disputed. At the opening of the work, Socrates encounters two youths in a grammar school engaged in a debate about astronomical theories, which he supposes to be those of Anaxagoras or of Oenopides (a thinker from Chios). He engages the wiser of the two youths—whom Thrasylus supposed was Democritus in disguise—in a dialogue that ends up comparing philosophers with pentathletes in terms of their breadth of skills.

67 These included grammar, music, poetry, and rhetoric.

68 This directly contradicts the claim made by Demetrius at 9.36.



*Democritus among the Abderitans*, by François-André Vincent, c. 1790

down on so great a city and wanted not to win glory from a place, but rather to confer on a place his own glory.

It is also clear from his writings what sort of man he was. “He is thought,” says Thrasyllus, “to have been an admirer of the Pythagoreans. And he himself mentions Pythagoras, expressing his admiration in his work entitled *Pythagoras*. He seemed to have taken all his ideas from him, and might even, if chronology did not stand in the way, be thought to have been his student.” According to Glaucus of Rhegium, his contemporary, Democritus certainly studied with one of the Pythagoreans. And Apollodorus of Cyzicus says that Democritus studied with Philolaus.<sup>69</sup> 38

According to Antisthenes he used to train himself in a great variety of ways to test his sense impressions, sometimes living in solitude and spending time in tombs. Antisthenes says that when Democritus returned from his travels he lived very humbly, since he had spent his entire fortune, and was supported in his poverty by his brother Damasus. But after he had foretold various future events he won renown, and ended by acquiring among most men the reputation of a god-inspired man. There was a law, says Antisthenes, that prevented anyone who had squandered his patrimony from being buried in his native city. Aware of this, Democritus, who feared that he might be liable in the eyes of certain envious men or public informers, gave a public reading of his *Great Cosmology*, the finest of his works, and was rewarded with five hundred talents; and not only 39

<sup>69</sup> On the Pythagorean Philolaus, variously said to be from Croton or Tarentum, see 8.84–85.

40 with this sum, but with bronze statues as well. And when he died he was given a public funeral, having lived for more than a hundred years. Demetrius, however, says that it was Democritus' relatives who read the *Great Cosmology*, and that the reward was only one hundred talents. Hippobotus says the same.

Aristoxenus, in his *Historical Commentaries*, says that Plato wanted to burn all the copies he could collect of Democritus' works, and that the Pythagoreans Amyclas and Clinias<sup>70</sup> prevented him, arguing that it would do no good, since by then his books had been widely circulated. And Plato's attitude is obvious: for whereas he mentions almost all the ancient authors, he never once alludes to Democritus,<sup>71</sup> not even where it would be necessary to refute him, since he clearly realized that the contest would be between him and the best of the philosophers, whom even Timon praises in the following terms:

Such is the wise Democritus, shepherd of myths,  
Versatile debater, among the best I ever read.

41 As regards chronology, he was, as he himself says in the *Lesser Cosmology*, a young man when Anaxagoras was elderly, Democritus being forty years his junior. He says the *Lesser Cosmology* was compiled 730 years after the capture of Troy.<sup>72</sup> As Apollodorus says in his *Chronology*, Democritus would have been born in the eightieth Olympiad.<sup>73</sup> But according to Thrasyllus, in his work entitled *Introduction to the Reading of the Books of Democritus*, he was born in the third year of the seventy-seventh Olympiad,<sup>74</sup> which makes him, says Thrasyllus, a year older than Socrates. In that case he would have been a contemporary of Archelaus, the student of Anaxagoras, and of Oenopides and his circle.<sup>75</sup> And in  
42 fact he mentions Oenopides. He also mentions the doctrine of the One held by Parmenides and Zeno,<sup>76</sup> since these two were his most renowned contemporaries; he also cites Protagoras of Abdera,<sup>77</sup> who, it is agreed, was a contemporary of Socrates.

70 Amyclas is otherwise unknown. Clinias appears in several other sources, including Aristoxenus' list of Pythagoreans.

71 Diogenes makes the same point at 3.25.

72 The Greeks assigned various dates to the capture of Troy, but the most common one in Diogenes' day was 1184 BC; that date would mean that Democritus' *Lesser Cosmology* was composed in 454.

73 This Olympiad began in 460 BC.

74 The year indicated spans 470 and 469 BC (since the Greek year began and ended in summer).

75 Archelaus is discussed at 2.16–17; Oenopides is little known apart from the mention at 9.37.

76 Parmenides and Zeno of Elea are discussed at 9.21–23 and 9.25–29, respectively. Their "doctrine of the One" held that the universe is homogeneous and composed of a single essence, "Being," and that the appearance of multiplicity is an illusion.

77 Protagoras (c. 490–420 BC) was the most successful of the sophists in Athens. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 9.50–56.



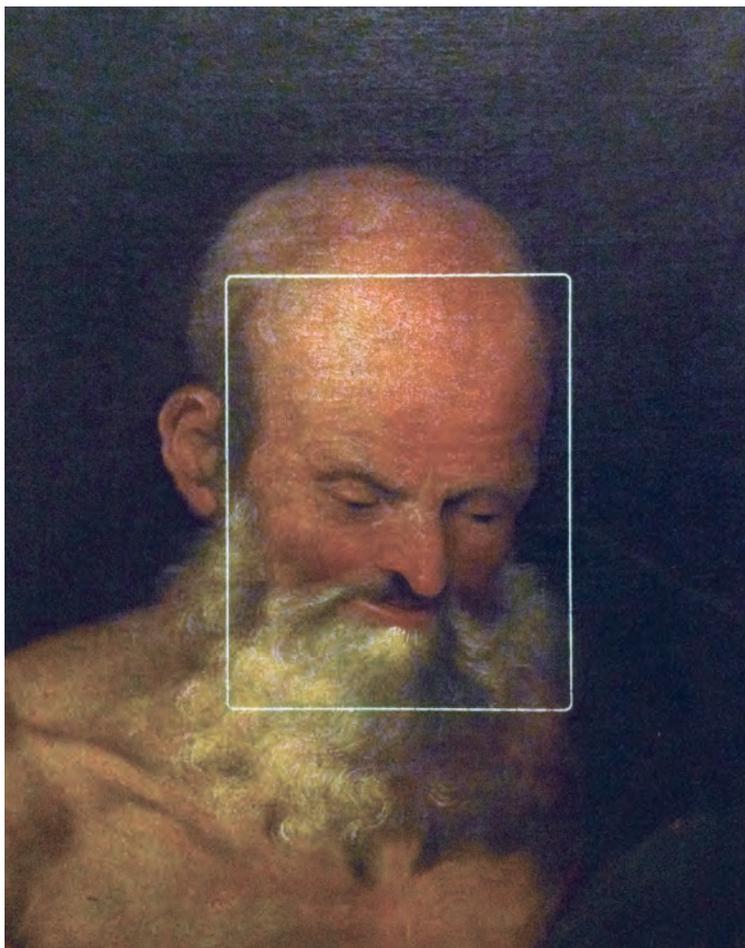
*Hippocrates Visiting Democritus* (detail), by Nicolaes Moeyaert, 1636.

Athenodorus, in the eighth book of his *Discourses*, says that when Hippocrates came to see him, Democritus ordered milk to be brought, and on inspecting the milk said it was from a black goat that had borne her first kid. Hippocrates was duly astonished at Democritus' perspicacity. And what is more, Hippocrates had brought along a serving girl; and on the first day Democritus greeted her with "Good morning, my girl!"; but on the next day with "Good morning, woman." And it was true that the girl had been deflowered during the night.

Hermippus says that Democritus died in the following way. He had become quite elderly and was nearing his end. And when his sister was grieved that he was likely to die during the festival of Thesmophoria<sup>78</sup> and she would therefore be unable to perform her duties to the goddess, he told her to take courage and ordered warm loaves to be brought to him every day. Applying these to his nostrils, he managed to outlast the festival. And when the days had elapsed, of which there were three, he gave up his life quite painlessly, as

43

<sup>78</sup> A yearly panhellenic festival held in honor of the goddess Demeter and celebrated only by women. The rites, which lasted for three days and were associated with the harvest, included fasting and throwing piglets into pits as a sacrifice to the goddess.



*Facial Recognition Halo—Democritus*, by Paul Stephenson, 2014.  
Follower of Ubaldo Gandolfi. Oil and ink on canvas, 50 × 40 cm.

Hipparchus says, having lived for 109 years. My own verses about him in the *Pammetros*<sup>79</sup> run as follows:

And who was so wise, who performed a deed  
So great as the all-knowing Democritus?  
When Death drew near, the man kept him in his house for three days,  
Regaling him with the steam of hot loaves.

Such was the life of our philosopher.

<sup>79</sup> A collection of Diogenes' verse, now lost.

He held the following views. The first principles of the universe are atoms and void; everything else is merely thought to exist. The worlds are unlimited in number; they come into being and they perish. Nothing can come into being from that which does not exist, nor be destroyed into that which does not exist. Atoms are unlimited in size and number; they move about in the entire universe in a vortex and thereby generate all composite things—fire, water, air, and earth; for these things are in fact aggregates of various atoms. And because of their solidity these atoms are impassive and unchangeable. The sun and moon are composed of masses of this kind, smooth and spherical, and so is the soul, which is identical with intellect. We see by virtue of the impact of images on our eyes. 44

All things happen by necessity, the vortex being the cause of the creation of all things; this is what he means by “necessity.” The goal is tranquillity, which is not identical to pleasure, as some have mistakenly understood it to be, but a state in which the soul proceeds calmly and steadily, untroubled by any fear or superstition or any other emotion. This he calls well-being and gives it many other names. The qualities of things exist by convention; atoms and void exist by nature. These are his views. 45

Thrasyllus has drawn up a list of his books, arranging them in tetralogies, as he also arranged Plato’s works.

His ethical works include the following: 46

*Pythagoras*

*On the Disposition of the Wise Man*

*On Those in Hades*

*Tritogeneia*<sup>80</sup> (so called because three things, on which all human life depends, come from her)

*On Manly Excellence* or *On Virtue*

*Amaltheia’s Horn*

*On Contentment*

*Ethical Commentaries*

These are his works on ethics.

His works on nature include:

*The Great Cosmology* (which Theophrastus and his circle attribute to Leucippus)

*The Lesser Cosmology*

*Description of the Universe*

*On the Planets*

*On Nature*, first book

*On the Nature of Man* (or *On Flesh*), second book

*On Mind*

80 An epithet for Athena in the *Iliad* (4,514) and in Hesiod’s *Theogony*.

- 47 *On the Senses* (some group these works under the title *On the Soul*)  
*On Flavors*  
*On Colors*  
*On the Different Shapes*  
*On Changes of Shape*  
*Confirmations* (which are critical justifications of the above-mentioned works)  
*On Images* or *On Foresight*  
*On Logic* or *Canon*, three books  
*Problems*

These are his works on nature.

His unclassified works include the following:

- Causes of Celestial Phenomena*  
*Causes of Phenomena in the Air*  
*Causes of Phenomena on the Earth's Surface*  
*Causes Concerned with Fire and the Things in Fire*  
*Causes Concerned with Sounds*  
*Causes Concerned with Seeds, Plants, and Fruits*  
*Causes Concerned with Animals*, three books  
*Miscellaneous Causes*  
*On the Magnet*

These are his unclassified works.

His mathematical works include the following:

- 48 *On a Difference in an Angle* or *On Tangency with a Circle and a Sphere*  
*On Geometry*  
*Geometrical Matters*  
*Numbers*  
*On Irrational Lines and Solids*, two books  
*Projections*  
*The Great Year* or *Astronomy, a Calendar*  
*Contest of the Water-Clock and the Heaven*  
*Description of the Heaven*  
*Geography*  
*Description of the Pole*  
*Description of the Rays of Light*

These are his mathematical works.

His works on literature and music include the following:

- On Rhythms and Harmony*  
*On Poetry*  
*On the Beauty of Verse*  
*On Sweet-Sounding and Harsh-Sounding Letters*



*Large Atom*, by Pamela Sunday, 2016.  
Stoneware with gunmetal glaze, 43.2 × 43.2 × 43.2 cm.

*On Homer or On Correct Diction and On Glosses*

*On Song*

*On Words*

*A Vocabulary*

These are his works on literature and music.

His works on the arts<sup>81</sup> include the following:

*Prognostication*

*On Diet or Dietetics*

*Medical Judgment*

*Causes Concerned with Things Timely and Untimely*

*On Agriculture or On Land Measurement*

<sup>81</sup> The Greek term for these works is *technika*, derived from the word *technē*, which can refer to any form of expertise.

*On Painting*  
*Treatise on Tactics, and*  
*Treatise on Fighting in Armor*

So much for these works.  
 Some list separately the following excerpts from his notebooks:

- 49 *On the Sacred Writings in Babylon*  
*On Those in Meroe*  
*A Voyage Around the Ocean*  
*On History*  
*A Chaldaean Treatise*  
*A Phrygian Treatise*  
*On Fever and on Coughing as a Symptom of Disease*  
*Legal Causes*  
*Problems Concerned with the Functioning of the Hand*

As for the other works that some have attributed to him, several are compilations from his writings; the rest are generally thought to have been written by others. So much for his books.

There have been six men named Democritus: the first was our present subject, the second a musician of Chios of the same era, the third a sculptor whom Antigonos mentions, the fourth an author who wrote about the temple at Ephesus<sup>82</sup> and the city of Samothrace, the fifth a writer of epigrams whose style was lucid and flowery, and the sixth a native of Pergamon who wrote rhetorical discourses.

## PROTAGORAS

- 50 Protagoras, son of Artemon, or of Maeandrius (according to Apollodorus, and Dinon in the fifth book of his *History of Persia*), was a native of Abdera, as Heraclides Ponticus says in his treatise *On Laws*; Heraclides also says that Protagoras made laws for Thurii.<sup>83</sup> Eupolis, however, in his *Flatterers*, says that Protagoras was a native of Teos;<sup>84</sup> for he says,

Inside we have Protagoras of Teos.

82 The temple of Artemis, one of the Seven Wonders of the World.

83 Abdera, a Greek city on the Thracian coast, was also the home of Democritus and Anaxarchus. Thurii was a panhellenic colony in southern Italy founded in 443 BC.

84 City on the western coast of Asia Minor.

He and Prodicus of Ceos used to give readings at which fees were charged;<sup>85</sup> and Plato in the *Protagoras* says that Prodicus had a deep voice.<sup>86</sup> Protagoras was a student of Democritus;<sup>87</sup> he was nicknamed Wisdom, as Favorinus says in his *Miscellaneous History*.

Protagoras was the first to say that there are two sides to every question, 51  
opposed to each other; he even conducted his arguments in this manner, being  
the first to do so. Moreover, he began one of his works thus: “Man is the mea-  
sure of all things, of things that are, that they are, and of things that are not, that  
they are not.” He used to say that soul is nothing apart from the senses, as Plato  
says in his *Theaetetus*,<sup>88</sup> and that all things are true. He begins another work as  
follows: “As for the gods, I cannot know either that they exist or that they do  
not exist; for many things hinder knowledge, including uncertainty and the  
brevity of human life.” For this introduction to his book he was expelled by 52  
the Athenians, who burned his books in the marketplace after sending a herald  
around to collect them from all who had obtained a copy.

He was the first to charge a fee of a hundred minas<sup>89</sup> and the first to  
distinguish the parts of time,<sup>90</sup> to stress the importance of the opportune  
moment, and to furnish disputants with rhetorical gambits. In argument he  
neglected meaning in favor of verbal jousting, and he gave rise to today’s  
throne of shallow debaters. This is why Timon alludes to him as

Protagoras, man of the crowd, a cunning wrangler.

He was also the first to deploy the Socratic form of argument.<sup>91</sup> And 53  
according to Plato in the *Euthydemus*<sup>92</sup> he was the first to address the argu-  
ment advanced by Antisthenes to prove that contradiction is impossible.  
He was also the first to demonstrate how any proposition may be attacked,  
as Artemidorus the Dialectician says in his work *A Reply to Chrysippus*. He

85 The charging of fees for instruction distinguished the so-called sophists, including Protagoras and Prodicus, from pure philosophers like Socrates. Plato highlights the differences between the two models in his dialogue *Protagoras*.

86 316a.

87 Democritus (b. 460/57 BC) is discussed just above. He was in fact a generation younger than Protagoras and thus is unlikely to have been his teacher.

88 152a ff.

89 A significant sum, as one mina was worth one hundred drachmas. A drachma was the average daily wage for a skilled worker.

90 Perhaps meaning the tenses of the Greek verb.

91 The use of short questions and answers came to be called the Socratic method. Protagoras, who was about twenty years older than Socrates, was renowned for his flexibility in teaching, using both short questions and answers, as Socrates did, and also for giving longer speeches (see Plato, *Protagoras* 329b).

92 286c.

54 was also the first to invent the *tulē*, on which porters carry their wares,<sup>93</sup> as Aristotle says in his work *On Education*. For Protagoras had been a porter, as Epicurus somewhere says.<sup>94</sup> And this was how he came to be noticed by Democritus, who had observed him bundling wood. He was the first to divide discourse into four parts: wish, question, response, and command; others divide it into seven parts: narration, question, response, command, description, wish, and invocation; these he called the foundations of speech. (Alcidamas<sup>95</sup> says there are four kinds of speech: affirmation, denial, question, and address.)

The first of his books that he read in public was *On the Gods*, whose opening we quoted above. He read it in Athens at Euripides' house, or, as some say, at the house of Megaclides; others say he read it in the Lyceum,<sup>96</sup> where he availed himself of the voice of his student Archagoras, son of Theodotus. His accuser was Pythodorus, son of Polyzelus, one of the Four Hundred;<sup>97</sup> Aristotle, however, says that it was Euathlus.

55 His surviving books include the following:

< . . . ><sup>98</sup>  
*The Art of Eristics*  
*On Wrestling*  
*On Mathematics*  
*On Government*  
*On Ambition*  
*On Virtues*  
*On the Primitive State*  
*On What Happens in Hades*  
*On the Misdeeds of Mankind*  
*Imperative Discourse*  
*A Lawsuit Concerning a Fee*  
*Opposing Arguments*, two books

These are his books. Plato also wrote a dialogue about him.

Philochorus says that when Protagoras was on a voyage to Sicily his ship

93 No evidence survives of how this device was used.

94 See 10.8.

95 Alcidamas was a fourth-century BC rhetorician.

96 An open grove outside the walls of Athens, later the site of Aristotle's school.

97 The Four Hundred were an oligarchic council set up to rule Athens after a coup in 411 BC. Diogenes implies that Protagoras fell afoul of this regime because of his perceived impiety (see 9.51–52), but the whole account is unclear.

98 Because this list omits some otherwise well-known titles, including *On the Gods*, scholars assume some of the text is missing.

sank, and that Euripides hints at this in his *Ixion*.<sup>99</sup> And some say that he died on a journey, at nearly ninety years of age. But Apollodorus says that he was seventy when he died, and that he had been a sophist for forty years and flourished in the eighty-fourth Olympiad.<sup>100</sup> 56

My own verses about him run as follows:

I heard a rumor, Protagoras, that you died,  
 An old man, on your way from Athens;  
 For the city of Cecrops<sup>101</sup> chose to expel you; but you,  
 Though you escaped the city of Pallas,<sup>102</sup> did not escape that of Pluto.<sup>103</sup>

It is reported that once when he asked his student Euathlus for his fee, and the man said, “But I haven’t won a case yet,” Protagoras replied, “That doesn’t matter. For if I win this case, I should get the fee for winning it; and if you win it, I should get the fee because *you* did.”<sup>104</sup>

There was another Protagoras, an astronomer for whom Euphoriion wrote a funeral dirge, and a third, a Stoic philosopher.

## DIOGENES<sup>105</sup>

Diogenes, son of Apollonhemis, a native of Apollonia,<sup>106</sup> was a natural philosopher and was held in very high regard. According to Antisthenes he was a student of Anaximenes.<sup>107</sup> He was a contemporary of Anaxagoras.<sup>108</sup> Demetrius of Phalerum, in his *Apology of Socrates*, says that owing to the Athenians’ strong dislike, Diogenes was in no small danger in Athens. 57

99 Only a few fragments of this tragedy survive. Euripides was fond of making anachronistic allusions to recent events in his dramas, which are otherwise set in a mythic past.

100 This Olympiad began in 444 BC.

101 A reference to Athens: Cecrops was the city’s mythical king.

102 Another reference to Athens, whose patron was the goddess Pallas Athena.

103 Hades, or the god of the underworld.

104 The backdrop to the story is told more fully elsewhere (Aulus Gellius, *Attic Nights*, 5.10): Euathlus had promised to pay Protagoras his full fee only after winning a case, then avoided undertaking any cases in order to avoid payment; Protagoras then brought suit against Euathlus so that he would have to plead a case.

105 In discussing Diogenes of Apollonia here, Diogenes Laertius may have confused two thinkers named Diogenes. In the very next chapter, he says that Anaxarchus was a student of Diogenes of *Smyrna*, so that is probably whom he meant to discuss here. In any case both men should be distinguished from the more famous Diogenes of Sinope, discussed in Book 6.

106 A city on the coast of the Black Sea.

107 Anaximenes of Miletus (fl. c. 545 BC) is discussed at 2.3–5.

108 On Anaxagoras, see 2.6–15.

His views were as follows. The basic element is air; there are numberless worlds and an unlimited void. The air, condensing and rarefying, gives birth to the worlds. Nothing comes into being from what is not, nor perishes into what is not. The earth is round; it is supported in the center, deriving its constitution from the rotation that results from heat and from the congelation caused by cold.

The opening of his treatise runs thus: “At the beginning of every discourse, it seems to me, one should provide an unequivocal starting point and a simple and dignified exposition.”

## ANAXARCHUS

- 58 Anaxarchus was a native of Abdera.<sup>109</sup> He was a student of Diogenes of Smyrna. Diogenes had been a student of Metrodorus of Chios, who used to say that he knew nothing, not even the fact that he knew nothing. Metrodorus had studied with Nessas of Chios, though some say he was a student of Democritus. Anaxarchus accompanied Alexander<sup>110</sup> and flourished in the 110th Olympiad.<sup>111</sup> He made an enemy of Nicocreon, the tyrant of Cyprus. Once at a drinking-party, when Alexander asked him what he thought of the banquet, Anaxarchus is said to have replied, “Perfectly splendid, sire. The only dish we lacked was the head of some satrap,” a barb aimed at Nicocreon.<sup>112</sup> Nicocreon never forgot this; and after the king’s death, when in the course of a voyage Anaxarchus was forced against his will to land at Cyprus, the tyrant had him arrested, thrown into a mortar,<sup>113</sup> and beaten with iron pestles. But Anaxarchus, belittling the punishment, made the well-known remark “Pound the sack that contains Anaxarchus, but you will never pound Anaxarchus.” And when Nicocreon commanded that Anaxarchus’ tongue be cut out, the story goes that Anaxarchus bit off his tongue and spat it at the tyrant. My own verses about him run as follows:
- 59

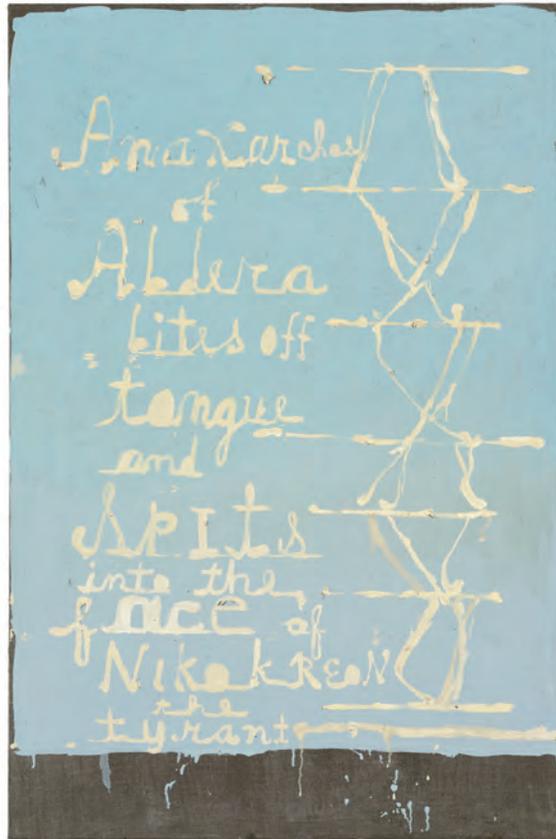
109 A Greek city on the coast of Thrace, also the home of Protagoras and Democritus.

110 Anaxarchus was one of several Greek philosophers who attended on Alexander the Great during his campaign of conquest through Asia (334–323 BC). Historical sources represent him as a supporter of Alexander’s claims to absolute power and superhuman status. By contrast, Diogenes depicts him reminding Alexander of his humanity (see 9.60).

111 This Olympiad began in 340 BC.

112 Nicocreon was king of Salamis in Cyprus, and an ally of Alexander. The story Diogenes relates here seems to be a variant of one Plutarch tells at *Alexander* 28. There, Anaxarchus makes an arrogant remark about preferring to dine on satraps’ heads rather than on meager fish; Alexander takes the comment ill.

113 Here, a large kneading or grinding trough.



*Anaxarchos of Abdera Bites Off Tongue*, by Peter Gallo, 2014.  
Oil on linen, 122 × 81 × 4 cm.

Pound, then, Nicocreon, and pound again even harder: it's only a sack.  
Pound away: Anaxarchus has long been with Zeus.  
And after Persephone tears you for a while < . . . >,<sup>114</sup>  
She will say these words: "Be off with you, wicked miller."

Because of his impassivity and contentment in life, Anaxarchus was called Eudaimonicus ("Sir Happy"). And he was capable of recalling people to reason with the greatest ease. When Alexander, at any rate, imagined that he was a god,

60

114 A portion of this line has become corrupted. Persephone here stands for the underworld, where the souls of the wicked were judged and punished.

Anaxarchus managed to deter him: seeing blood flowing from a wound Alexander had sustained, Anaxarchus pointed to it and said, “That’s blood, and not ichor, which flows in the veins of the blessed gods.”<sup>115</sup>

Plutarch says that Alexander himself said this to his friends. And on another occasion, when Anaxarchus was toasting Alexander, he pointed to his goblet and said,

“One of the gods will be struck by a mortal hand.”<sup>116</sup>

## PYRRHO

61 Pyrrho of Elis<sup>117</sup> was the son of Pleistarchus, as Diocles relates. According to Apollodorus in his *Chronology*, he was first a painter. He studied with Bryson, son of Stilpo,<sup>118</sup> according to Alexander in his *Successions*, and then with Anaxarchus,<sup>119</sup> whom he accompanied everywhere, so that he even associated with the Naked Sages in India and with the Magi.<sup>120</sup> As a result, he seems to have adopted a profoundly noble philosophy, having introduced the notion of inability to attain conviction and that of suspension of judgment, as Ascanius of Abdera reports. For he said that nothing is beautiful or ugly, or just or unjust, and that likewise in all instances nothing exists in truth, but men do everything by custom and by habit; for each thing is no more this than that.

62 He lived a life consistent with these doctrines, avoiding nothing, taking no precautions, facing everything as it came, whether wagons, cliffs, or dogs, and in general judging nothing by the evidence of his senses. But he was kept

115 The verse occurs at *Iliad* 5.340, where Diomedes stabs Aphrodite. As Diogenes goes on to note, his retelling of this anecdote reverses the roles of the participants as compared with Plutarch’s (see *Alexander* 28). Plutarch gave the quote to Alexander and credited him with recognizing his mortality; then, in another story immediately following this one, he belittled Anaxarchus for comparing Alexander with Zeus.

116 A quote from Euripides’ *Orestes* (line 271), where Orestes threatens to shoot an arrow at the Furies who are pursuing him. The quote sounds like a veiled threat; that would fit with a parallel story in Plutarch, in which Anaxarchus spoke the line after Alexander had pelted him with fruit (*Convivial Questions* 737a).

117 A city in the western Peloponnese.

118 Not otherwise known. Some editors emend the text to read “Bryson or Stilpo.” Diogenes discusses Stilpo at 2.113–20. Bryson the Achaean (fl. c. 330 BC) was a pupil of Stilpo. Chronology would seem to rule out Pyrrho’s having studied under either of them.

119 The life and views of Anaxarchus (c. 380–320 BC) are discussed just above.

120 The Naked Sages were Indian religious ascetics whom the Greeks dubbed “Gymnosophists” after seeing them exposing themselves to the elements. The Magi were Persian priests skilled in astronomy, astrology, and other arts.

safe, as Antigonus of Carystus says, by the friends who accompanied him. Aenesidemus, however, says that though in his philosophy Pyrrho embraced the principle of suspension of judgment, he nevertheless exercised forethought in his daily life. He lived to be nearly ninety.

Antigonus of Carystus, in his work *On Pyrrho*, reports about him as follows. At first he was a poor and unknown painter. And some of his middling portraits of torch runners may still be seen in the gymnasium at Elis. He used to go off by himself and live in solitude, showing himself rarely to his relatives. He did this because he had heard an Indian reproach Anaxarchus, saying that he would never teach anyone to be good while he himself frequented the courts of kings.<sup>121</sup> He remained always in the same state—to the point where, if someone left him in the middle of a conversation, he would complete the conversation by himself—though he was excitable < . . . > in his youth. Often, says Antigonus, he would go abroad without telling anyone, and would roam about with whomever he met. One day, when Anaxarchus fell into a muddy pool, Pyrrho walked by without helping him; and when others reproached him, Anaxarchus himself praised his indifference and lack of attachment. 63

One day he was discovered talking to himself; when asked the reason, he said that he was training to be good. In dialectical investigations he was despised by no one, since he could speak at length and respond to questioning. This was how he captivated Nausiphanes<sup>122</sup> when the latter was still a young man. In any case, Nausiphanes used to say that a man should emulate the character of Pyrrho, but adopt his own doctrines. And he often said that Epicurus, who admired Pyrrho's way of life, was constantly asking for information about him.<sup>123</sup> He also said that Pyrrho was so honored by his native city that they named him chief priest, and that it was on his account that they voted to exempt all philosophers from taxation. 64

In fact, there were many who emulated his indifference to public life. Hence Timon speaks of him thus in his *Python* < . . . ><sup>124</sup> and in his *Lampoons*:

O Pyrrho, old fellow, how and where did you find a means of escape  
From servitude to sophists and their vain opinions?  
How did you free yourself of the bonds of all deceit and persuasion?  
You did not care to inquire about what delusions prevail in Greece,  
Whence and whither each unfolds. 65

121 As related in the preceding biography, Anaxarchus attached himself to Alexander the Great.

122 Nausiphanes of Teos (b. c. 360 BC), a follower of Democritus, became Epicurus' teacher c. 324. He passed on to Epicurus Democritus' physics and theory of knowledge.

123 The account of Epicurus' opinion of Pyrrho given at 10.8 is rather different.

124 The promised quote from *Python* has fallen out of the manuscripts.

And again in his *Conceits*:

This, O Pyrrho, my heart longs to hear,  
 How <, though a man,> you proceed so easily and calmly,  
 Alone among men, leading the way like a god.

66 The Athenians awarded him citizenship, as Diocles says, for having slain Cotys<sup>125</sup> of Thrace. He lived piously with his sister, a midwife, as Eratosthenes says in his work *On Wealth and Poverty*, and there were times when he took birds to the market to sell, if any were to be found, and piglets, and he would clean and dust at home, not minding any task. He is even reported to have washed a pig, so indifferent was he to what he did. Once when he was angered on behalf of his sister, who was called Philista, and someone took him to task for it, he said that where a little woman was concerned it was not appropriate to display indifference. Once when a dog attacked him and he was scared away, he said to someone who criticized him that it was difficult entirely to strip away human nature; but one should struggle against adversity, by deeds if at all possible, and if not, by word.

67 They say that when septic ointments and surgery and cautery were used to treat a wound he had sustained, he would not even grimace. Timon brings his character to light in the detailed account he gives of him to Python.<sup>126</sup> Philo of Athens, who became an intimate of his, used to say that Pyrrho most often cited Democritus,<sup>127</sup> and then Homer, whom he admired, often quoting the line

As is the generation of leaves, so is that of men.<sup>128</sup>

He also enjoyed Homer's likening men to wasps, flies, and birds; and he used to quote the verses

No, friend, you too die. Why groan in this way?  
 Patroclus also died, a far better man than you.<sup>129</sup>

68 and all the passages that draw attention to the waywardness, vain pursuits, and childish folly of man.

Posidonius also relates some such story about him. When on a voyage the crew were disconcerted by a storm, he himself, remaining calm and confident,

125 According to Aristotle and Plutarch, it was Python, a disciple of Plato (see 3.46), and not Pyrrho, who assassinated Cotys II, king of Thrace, in 360 BC.

126 In the *Python*, a lost prose work, Timon recounted to Python a conversation between himself and Pyrrho.

127 Diogenes discusses the life and views of Democritus (b. 460/57 BC) at 9.34–49 above.

128 *Iliad* 6.146.

129 *Iliad* 21.106–7, in a passage in which Achilles confronts the Trojan Lycaon, then kills him.



*The Philosopher Pyrrho in a Stormy Sea*, by Hans Weiditz, early sixteenth century.

The texts read, from top to bottom: “Pyrrho—Greek—Son of Plistarchus”; “It is right wisdom then that all imitate this security”; “Whoever wishes to avail himself of true wisdom should pay no heed to worry and grief.”

pointed to a little pig on board that went on eating, and told them that that was the imperturbable state the wise man should maintain. Only Numenius says that Pyrrho affirmed doctrines. In addition to these men, Pyrrho had a number of distinguished students, one of whom was Eurylochus, who failed to live up to his principles. For they say that he was once so enraged that he brandished a spit (with its roasted meat still on it) and chased his cook all the way to the marketplace. And in Elis, harassed by his interlocutors’ questions, he stripped off his clothes and swam across the Alpheus. He was exceedingly hostile to the sophists, as Timon also says.

Philo, in turn, was always talking <to himself>, which is why Timon speaks of him thus:

The man who, far from men, passes his time alone and talks to himself—  
Philo, who cares nothing for fame or quarrels.

Besides these, Pyrrho's students included Hecataeus of Abdera and Timon of Phlius, the author of the *Lampoons*, of whom we will speak,<sup>130</sup> and Nausiphanes of Teos, whom some say was a teacher of Epicurus. All of these are called Pyrrhonians after their teacher, but are also known as Aporetics, Sceptics, and even Ephectics and Zetetics, from their doctrines, if we may thus refer to them. The Zetetics were so called because they were constantly seeking (*zēteîn*) the truth; the Sceptics because they were always researching (*skeptesthai*) and never discovering; the Ephectics because of the state of mind that attended their search (I mean their suspension of judgment [*epochē*]); and the Aporetics because < . . . >.<sup>131</sup> The Pyrrhonians derived their name from Pyrrho. Theodosius, in his *Skeptical Chapters*, says that one should not call Scepticism Pyrrhonian; for if the movement of the mind in any direction cannot be comprehended, then we will never know Pyrrho's state of mind. And without knowing that, we cannot call ourselves Pyrrhonians; furthermore, there is the fact that Pyrrho was not the founder of Scepticism, nor did he have any doctrine. But someone who resembles Pyrrho in thought and life could be called a Pyrrhonian.

Of this school some say that Homer was the founder, since on the same subjects, more than anyone, he gives now one answer, now another, and never affirms any answer categorically. Then, too, the sayings of the Seven Sages are said to be skeptical, for example, "Nothing in excess," and "A pledge is a curse," which means that anyone who reposes his trust firmly and confidently invites his own ruin. Moreover, both Archilochus<sup>132</sup> and Euripides, they say, were of a skeptical turn of mind, for Archilochus says,

Man's soul, Glaucus, son of Leptines,  
Resembles nothing so much as a day sent by Zeus.

And Euripides:

Why in the world do they say that wretched mortals  
Have minds? In fact, we depend on you,  
And we do whatever you happen to wish.<sup>133</sup>

Furthermore they find Xenophanes, Zeno of Elea, and Democritus<sup>134</sup> to be Sceptics, Xenophanes in the passage where he says:

Plain truth no man has seen or will ever know.

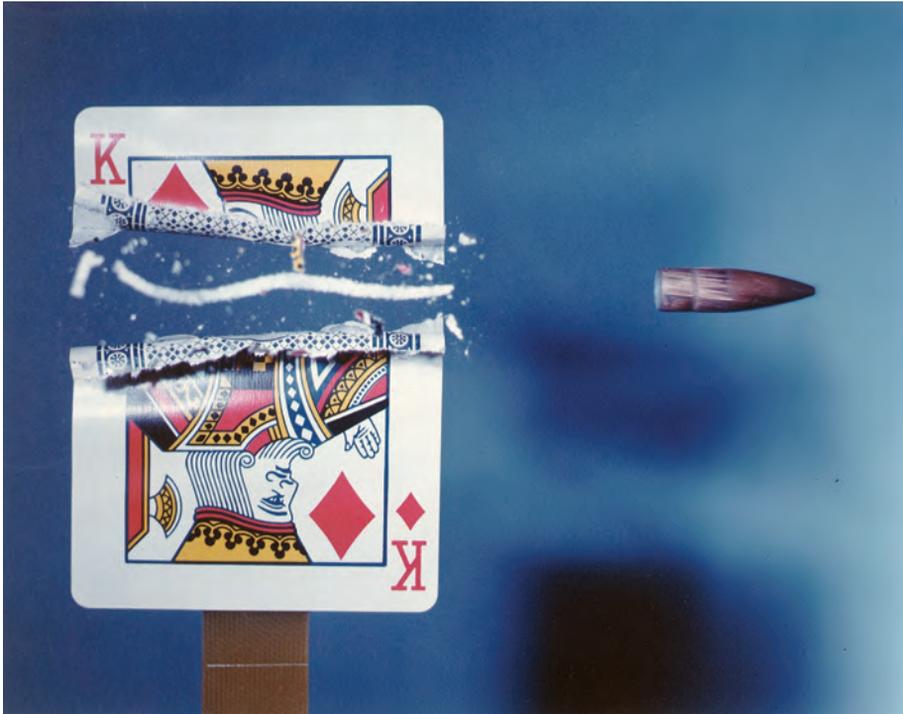
130 See 9.109–16.

131 The text is damaged here, but it surely referred to the derivation of Aporetics from *aporeō*, "to be at a loss."

132 A seventh-century BC lyric poet.

133 *Suppliant Maidens* 735–37.

134 All three philosophers are discussed earlier in Book 9.



*Cutting the Card Quickly*, by Harold Edgerton, 1960 or 1964.

And Zeno abolishes motion when he says, “That which moves, moves neither where it is, nor where it is not.” And Democritus rejects qualities, saying, “By convention, cold and hot; in reality, atoms and void”; and “In reality, men know nothing; for truth is in an abyss.” And Plato, according to them, leaves truth “to the gods and the children of gods,” and pursues only the “probable explanation.”<sup>135</sup> And Euripides says:

Who knows if to die is to live,  
And what men believe to be life is death?

73

And also Empedocles:<sup>136</sup>

These things, then, are not to be seen by men,  
Or heard, or grasped by the mind.

<sup>135</sup> *Timaeus* 40d.

<sup>136</sup> Diogenes discusses the life and views of Empedocles (c. 492–c. 432 BC) at 8.51–77.

And earlier:

Each man trusts only his own experience.

And even Heraclitus: “Let us not hazard guesses about the most important matters.” And Hippocrates, in turn, declares his views in an ambiguous and suitably human manner. And earlier, Homer:

Glib is the tongue of mortals, and abounding in tales;

And:

The field of words is wide in all directions;

And:

Whatever word you speak, such could you also hear;<sup>137</sup>

where he is speaking of the equal force of opposing arguments.

74 The Skeptics, then, devoted themselves to overturning all the dogmas of the schools, while they themselves affirmed nothing dogmatically; and although they would put forward and interpret the dogmas of the other schools, they themselves determined nothing, not even this. And consequently they even rejected not determining, for example by saying “We determine nothing” (since otherwise they would have been determining something); instead, they say “we bring forward these assertions in order to demonstrate our freedom from rashness, just as we could have done had we assented to them.” Accordingly, by means of the phrase “We determine nothing,” they demonstrated their state of equilibrium. This is likewise indicated by their other expressions: “Not more (one thing than another),” “For every assertion there is an opposing assertion,” and the like.

75 But the phrase “Not more (one thing than another)” can also be taken positively, as meaning that certain things are similar—for example, “The pirate is no worse than the liar.” But the Skeptics mean this not positively but negatively, as when one who seeks to reject a proposition says, “Scylla had no more existence than Chimaera.”<sup>138</sup> And the expression “more than” is sometimes used in a comparative sense, as when we say, “Honey is more sweet than grapes”; sometimes also in a sense at the same time positive and negative, as

137 Three successive verses from *Iliad* 20.248–50.

138 Scylla was a mythical monster with six heads who lurked in a cave beside a strait. Chimaera was another mythical monster; this beast had the head of a fire-breathing goat, the body of a lion, and the tail of a snake.



*Askos* (flask with a handle over the top), c. 300 BC, Greek.

The *askos* itself is in the shape of a Scylla, the snakelike body of which lends its form to the handle on top. On the body, a dog chases a hare, with the head of a woman above.

when we say, “Virtue helps more than it harms”; for here we mean that virtue helps, and that it does not harm.

But the Skeptics even reject the phrase “Not more (one thing than another).” For just as providence is no more existent than nonexistent,<sup>139</sup> so “Not more (one thing than another)” is no more existent than not. Thus, as Timon says in his *Python*, the statement implies “Affirm nothing, but suspend judgment.” The other statement, “For every assertion . . .” also induces suspension of judgment. For when facts conflict and the arguments on either side possess equal force, ignorance of the truth necessarily follows. But even for this assertion there is an opposing assertion, since after destroying other ideas it turns around and destroys itself, like purgatives, which begin by evacuating certain substances and are then themselves evacuated and destroyed. To this the dogmatic philosophers reply that < . . . > does not abolish assertion, but reinforces it.

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77

139 The example refers to a characteristic dogma of the Stoics, who held that a kind of divine order and purpose pervades all things.

The Skeptics were therefore using words merely as aids, since it was not possible to refute a proposition without using its words; just as we are in the habit of saying that space does not exist, and yet we are forced to speak of “space,” not dogmatically, but for the purposes of demonstration; and just as we say that nothing happens by necessity, and yet are forced to speak of “necessity.”<sup>140</sup> This was the sort of interpretation they would offer: though things appear to be “such and such,” they are not such by nature, but only by appearance. And they used to say that they were investigating not what one thinks, since what one thinks is clear, but what our thoughts can reach by means of sensation.

78 The Pyrrhonian discourse is a report about phenomena or about thoughts of any kind, a report in which all things are confronted with one another, and are shown, when they are compared, to be full of irregularity and confusion, as Aenesidemus says in his *Outline of Pyrrhonism*. As for the contradictions that come to light in their researches, the Skeptics would begin by revealing the modes according to which things gain credence, and then by the same modes they would demolish our belief in the object in question. For they hold that those things gain credence that our senses are agreed upon and that never or rarely change, as well as things that are habitual or are determined by law and those that give pleasure and arouse admiration. Thus they demonstrated, on the basis of that which is

79 contrary to what is persuasive to us, that the probabilities are equal on each side.

The perplexities that they have identified, and that concern the agreements between appearances or conceptions, are divided into ten modes in which the objects in question appear to vary. They propose the following ten modes.

The first concerns the differences between living creatures with respect to what gives them pleasure and pain, and what is harmful and beneficial to them. In light of this, one concludes that they do not receive the same impressions from the same things, and that this sort of conflict leads to suspension of judgment. For some living creatures are generated without intercourse, for example, those that live in fire,<sup>141</sup> and the Arabian phoenix, and worms; others by intercourse, such as human beings and the rest. Some are constituted in one way, others in another, and this is why they also differ in their senses: hawks, for example, having the keenest eyesight, and dogs having the keenest sense of smell. It is reasonable, therefore, that if the eyes of animals differ, their visual impressions will differ as well. Accordingly, to a goat, olive vines are edible, but to man they are bitter; and hemlock is nourishing to quail, but to man it is fatal; and a pig will eat manure, but a horse will not.

80

140 In this sentence and other places below, Diogenes (or his source) appears to use the first-person plural to speak for the Skeptics.

141 In the ancient world the salamander was believed to have the ability to live in fire and to extinguish flames (see, e.g., Aelian, *De Natura Animalium* 17.2.31).



Relief head of a Persian, Greek, c. 330–300 BC.

The head scarf tied around the neck and pulled over the chin identifies this figure as Persian.

The second mode concerns the various natures of men and their idiosyncrasies. Demophon, at any rate, Alexander’s majordomo, would get warm in the shade and shiver in the sun. And Andron of Argos, as Aristotle says, journeyed across the Libyan desert without water.<sup>142</sup> And one man has a passion for medicine, another for farming, and another for commerce. And the same things harm some men and benefit others. Hence one must suspend judgment.

81

The third mode concerns the differences between the sensory channels. An apple, at any rate, seems yellow to the eye, sweet to our sense of taste, and fragrant to our sense of smell. The same shape appears different when reflected by different mirrors. It follows, therefore, that an appearance is no more “such and such” than something else.

142 This statement is not found in Aristotle’s surviving works. According to other sources, it comes from the dialogue titled *Symposium* or *On Intoxication*.

82 The fourth mode concerns conditions and variations in general; for example, health and disease, sleep and waking, joy and grief, youth and old age, courage and fear, want and satiety, hate and love, heat and cold, as well as breathing freely and having the respiratory passages obstructed. The impressions received appear to vary as the subject's condition varies. Even the condition of madmen is not contrary to nature. For why should their state be so more than ours? We ourselves, after all, see the sun as stationary. And Theon of Tithorea,<sup>143</sup> the Stoic, when he went to bed, used to walk in his sleep, while Pericles' slave did the same on the housetop.<sup>144</sup>

83 The fifth mode concerns ways of life, customs, mythological beliefs, covenants between peoples, and dogmatic assumptions. This mode encompasses notions about what is beautiful and ugly, true and false, good and bad, about the gods, and about the creation and destruction of all phenomena. In any case, the same thing is regarded by some as just and by others as unjust, or as good by some and as bad by others. For the Persians do not think it inappropriate for a man to sleep with his daughter; the Greeks deem it unlawful. The Massagetae,<sup>145</sup> as Eudoxus<sup>146</sup> says in the first book of his *Voyage Around the World*, share their wives; the Greeks do not. The Cilicians<sup>147</sup> used to delight in piracy; the Greeks did not. Different people believe in different gods; some believe in providence, others do not. The Egyptians embalm their dead, the Romans burn them, and the Paeonians<sup>148</sup> cast them into lakes. Hence the suspension of judgment with regard to what is true.

84 The sixth mode concerns mixtures and combinations, by virtue of which nothing appears purely by itself, but always in combination with air, light, moisture, solidity, heat, cold, motion, exhalations, and other forces. Purple, at any rate, reveals different hues in sunlight, moonlight, and lamplight. And our own complexion does not appear the same at noon and at sunset. And a rock that takes two men to raise in the air is easily moved about in water (either because, though heavy, it is made light by the water, or, though light, it is made heavy by the air). We are ignorant of its intrinsic character, as we are of the oil in an unguent.

143 Otherwise unknown.

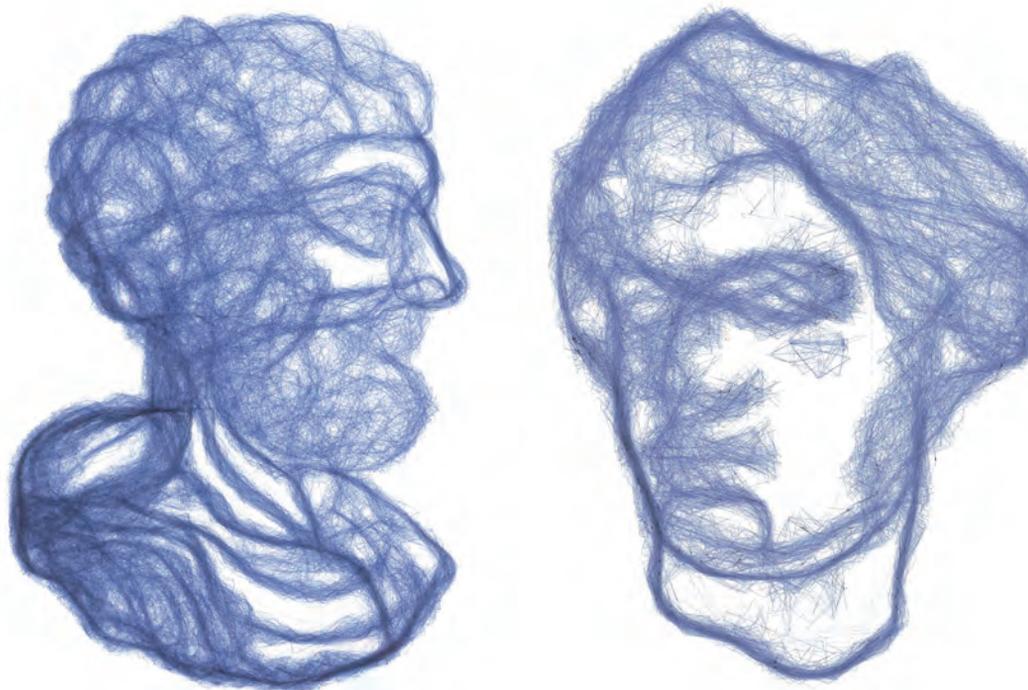
144 According to Pliny (*Natural History* 22.20.44) and Plutarch (*Pericles* 13), the great Athenian statesman Pericles had a beloved slave who was helping to build the Parthenon. He fell asleep on top of the temple and rolled off the building.

145 The Greeks located the Massagetae vaguely in the far northeast of the world, somewhere beyond the Caspian Sea, and imagined them as a nomadic people much like the Scythians.

146 Eudoxus of Cnidus (c. 390–c. 340 BC) was a mathematician and did important work in astronomy and geography. Diogenes discusses him at 8.86–91.

147 The inhabitants of a district in southern Asia Minor.

148 A Balkan people living north of Macedonian territory.



*Sextus Empiricus* (left) and *Pyrrho of Elis* (right),  
from the series “Seismoscopes,” by Rafael Lozano-Hemmer, 2009.

The seventh mode concerns distances, positions of various types, places, and the things that occupy places. In this mode, things that are thought to be large appear small, square things round, flat things bumpy, straight things bent, and pale things colorful. The sun, at any rate, owing to its distance, appears small; and the mountains, when seen from afar, appear misty and smooth; seen from nearby, they appear jagged. Moreover, the sun has a certain appearance at its rising, another at the zenith. The same body has one appearance in the woods, another in open country. The image also varies according to how it is placed, and a dove’s neck according to how it is turned. Since, therefore, one cannot observe these things apart from places and positions, their nature remains unknown.

86

The eighth mode concerns the quantities of things, for example, heat, cold, swiftness, slowness, paleness, or variety of color. In any case, wine taken in moderation imparts strength, taken in excess it causes weakness. The same holds true with food and other such things.

87 The ninth mode concerns that which is continual, strange, or rare. Earthquakes, at any rate, are not astonishing to those among whom they regularly occur; nor is one astonished by the sun, since it is seen every day. Favorinus makes this ninth the eighth, while Sextus<sup>149</sup> and Aenesidemus make it the tenth. But the tenth is made the eighth by Sextus, the ninth by Favorinus.

88 The tenth mode is based on the comparison of one thing with another—for example, light with heavy, strong with weak, greater with less, and up with down. At any rate, that which is on the right is not on the right by nature, but is conceived to be so in light of its position with respect to something else; in any case, if the latter thing is moved, the former is no longer on the right. Likewise “father” and “brother” are relative terms, and “day” is relative to “sun,” and all things are relative to the mind. Relative terms are therefore unknowable in and of themselves. These, then, are the ten modes.

89 Agrippa<sup>150</sup> and his school introduce five additional modes; these are concerned, respectively, with disagreement, infinite regress, relativity, hypothesis, and reciprocity. The mode concerned with disagreement demonstrates that any inquiry one pursues, whether in philosophy or in everyday intercourse, abounds in conflicts and confusion. The mode concerned with infinite regress does not permit the thing one is trying to prove to be firmly established, given that one thing derives its credibility from another, and so on *ad infinitum*. The mode concerned with relativity says that a thing can never be understood in and of itself, but only in relation to something else. Hence all things are unknowable. The mode concerned with hypothesis arises when people think that one must assume the primary things to be intrinsically credible, rather than postulating them. This is futile, since someone will adopt the opposite hypothesis. The mode concerned with reciprocity arises whenever that which should confirm the thing one is seeking to prove has to derive credibility from the latter—for example, if someone seeking to prove that pores exist, given that emanations occur, should take their existence as proof that there are emanations.<sup>151</sup>

90 They rejected all demonstration, criterion,<sup>152</sup> sign,<sup>153</sup> cause, motion, learning,

149 The physician and philosopher Sextus Empiricus (fl. late second century AD) was the author of *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* and *Against the Mathematicians*. These works offer the most complete surviving account of Pyrrhonian Skepticism.

150 A Skeptic who flourished sometime after the first century BC.

151 The example alluded to concerns physiological arguments about the cause of moisture appearing on the skin.

152 This term was used by both the Stoics and Epicureans to refer to an ultimate standard that could serve as the basis for all knowledge.

153 The term *sēmeion* (“sign”) is commonly used in Greek philosophical discourse to refer to any consideration that serves as evidence for a further conclusion. In effect, the Skeptics reject any use of evidence to draw conclusions about things not immediately evident.

coming into being, and the idea that anything is good or bad by nature. All demonstration, they say, is built on things that are either already proved or indemonstrable. Accordingly, if from things already proved, those things will need some proof, and so on *ad infinitum*; if from things indemonstrable, then whether all or some or only a single one of the steps are doubtful, the whole is indemonstrable. And if anyone thinks, they say, that there are things that require no demonstration, their judgment is quite outlandish, since they do not understand that the first thing one needs is a demonstration that the things on which one's argument depends carry conviction themselves. Nor should we conclude that the elements are four from the fact that there are four elements. Furthermore, if particular demonstrations are not to be trusted, then demonstration in general is also not to be trusted. And in order that we may know that an argument *is* a demonstration, we require a criterion; but in order that we may know that it *is* a criterion, we require a demonstration. Hence both are incomprehensible, since each is referred to the other. How, then, could we grasp the things that are uncertain, if the demonstration is unknown to us? For we are seeking to determine not that things *appear* to be "such and such," but that they actually *are* so. 91

They declared that the dogmatic philosophers are fools. For that which is inferred from a hypothesis does not have the value of an investigation, but of an assumption. And with the dogmatic method of reasoning, one could also argue on behalf of impossibilities. They used to say that those who think that we should not, when judging of the truth, take circumstantial considerations into account or legislate on the basis of what conforms with nature, made *themselves* the measure of all things, and did not see that all phenomena are a function of circumstances and conditions. In any case, we must affirm either that all things are true or that all things are false. If certain things *are* true, how are we to discern them? Not by the senses, in the case of sensory phenomena, since to the senses all phenomena appear to be on an equal footing; or by the mind, for the same reason. But beyond these faculties, one can discern no other that could help us to judge. 92

Anyone therefore, they say, who would be convinced about anything sensible or intelligible must first set in order the prevailing opinions about it; for some have rejected some views, while others have rejected others. But things must be judged either by the sensible or by the intelligible. And both are controversial. It is therefore impossible to pass judgment on opinions about things either sensible or intelligible. And if, by reason of the conflict in our thoughts, we must disbelieve them all, the standard by which it is assumed that all things are precisely determined will be destroyed, and we will therefore consider every statement equally valid. Furthermore, they say, the person who shares our 93



*Pyrrho*, from an edition of Petrarch's *Il Libro degli Homini Famosi*, printed by Felix Antiquarius and Innocens Ziletus at Pogliano, Italy, in 1476.

inquiry into a phenomenon is either to be trusted or not. If he is trusted he will have nothing to say to the man to whom it appears to be the opposite. For just as our fellow inquirer, when he describes what appears to him, is to be trusted, so is his opponent. If he is not to be trusted, he will be disbelieved when he describes what appears to him.

We should not suppose that what is convincing is true. For the same thing does not convince everyone, nor does it convince the same people consistently. Persuasiveness also depends on external circumstances: on the good reputation of the speaker, on his soundness as a thinker or his wiliness, on the familiarity or pleasantness of his subject. 94

They also rejected the criterion by this sort of reasoning: The criterion has either been critically determined or not. If it has not, it is untrustworthy and does not determine truth and falsehood. If it has, it will become one of the particular things determined by a criterion, with the result that the very same thing determines and is determined, and the determined criterion will have to be determined by another, and that one by another, and so on *ad infinitum*.

Furthermore, there is disagreement with regard to the criterion; some hold that man is the criterion, for some it is the senses, for others reason, and for still others the comprehending impression.<sup>154</sup> And a man disagrees both with himself and with others, as is evident from the diversity of laws and customs. The senses deceive, and reason is inconsistent. The comprehending impression is judged by the mind, and the mind changes in a variety of ways. Hence the criterion is unknowable, and therefore so is truth. 95

There is no such thing as a sign, according to them. For if a sign exists, they say, it is either sensible or intelligible. Well, it is not sensible, since what is sensible is common, whereas a sign is particular. And the sensible thing is in the class of things that exist by virtue of difference, whereas the sign belongs to the category of relatives. But a sign is not intelligible, since intelligible things are either apparent judgments on apparent things, nonapparent judgments on nonapparent things, nonapparent judgments on apparent things, or apparent judgments on nonapparent things; and a sign is none of these things; therefore there is no such thing as a sign. It is not an apparent judgment on an apparent, since that which is apparent requires no sign; and it is not a nonapparent judgment on a nonapparent, since what is disclosed by something must appear; it cannot be a nonapparent judgment on an apparent, since that which provides a means of comprehending something must itself be apparent; finally, it is not an apparent judgment on a nonapparent, since the sign, being relative, should be comprehended together with that of which it is the sign, which is not the case here. Thus nothing uncertain could be comprehended; for it is by signs that uncertain things are said to be comprehended. 96

They reject cause in the following way. A cause is something relative, since it is relative to what is caused. But what is relative is only an object of thought; 97

154 A technical term in Stoicism, used to refer to an experience in which an object appears as it truly is; the Stoics make this their criterion for all knowledge (see 7.46).

98 it has no actual existence. Therefore a cause could only be an object of thought. What is more, if there truly is a cause, it ought to have with it that of which it is said to be the cause; otherwise it will not be a cause. Just as a father, in the absence of that in relation to which one is called a father, would not be a father, so too with a cause. But that in relation to which the cause is thought of is not present; for there is no coming into being or destruction or anything else; so there is no such thing as a cause.

Moreover, if there is a cause, either a body is the cause of a body, or an incorporeal thing of an incorporeal thing, <or an incorporeal thing of a body, or a body of an incorporeal thing>; but this is not the case; so there is no such thing as a cause. To begin with, a body could not be the cause of a body, since both have the same nature. And if either is called a cause insofar as it  
99 is a body, the other, being a body, will also become a cause; but if both are likewise causes, there will be nothing that is acted upon. An incorporeal thing would not be the cause of an incorporeal thing, for the same reason. And an incorporeal thing would not be the cause of a body, since nothing incorporeal produces a body. Finally, a body could not be the cause of anything incorporeal, because the thing produced must be made from the material acted upon; but it is not acted upon, because it is incorporeal, nor could it be produced by anything whatsoever; therefore there is no such thing as a cause. A corollary to this is the idea that the first principles of the universe have no actual existence. For something must have been there to produce and act.

Furthermore, there is no motion; for that which moves either moves in the place where it is, or in a place where it is not. But it cannot move in the place where it is, nor can it move in a place where it is not. Therefore there is no such thing as motion.

100 They also rejected the possibility of learning. If anything is taught, they say, either the existent thing is taught by virtue of its existence, or the non-existent thing by virtue of its nonexistence. But the existent thing is not taught by virtue of its existence, for the nature of existing things is obvious to and recognized by all; nor is the non-existent thing taught by virtue of its nonexistence; for to the non-existent thing nothing happens, and consequently it cannot be taught.

Nor is there any coming into being, they say. For that which exists does not come into being, since it is; and neither does that which does not exist, since it has no substance; and that which has no substance or existence cannot have succeeded in coming into being.

101 Nothing is good or bad by nature; for if anything is good or bad by nature, it must be good or bad for everyone, just as snow is cold to everyone; but there is nothing that is universally good or bad to everyone; therefore there is



Two views of a bronze statuette of a veiled and masked dancer, Greek, third to second century BC.

nothing good or bad by nature. For either all that is thought good by anyone must be called good, or not all. But all cannot be called good, because the same thing is thought good by one person and bad by another; for example, pleasure is thought good by Epicurus, while Antisthenes thought it bad. So it will follow that the same thing will be good and bad. But if we say that not all the things that someone thinks good are good, we will have to judge the various opinions; and this is not possible because of the equal force of opposing arguments. It is therefore impossible to know what is good by nature.

It is possible to comprehend their whole mode of reasoning from their surviving treatises. For while Pyrrho himself left no written work, that is not

102

the case with the line of his disciples: < . . . > Timon, Aenesidemus, Numenius, Nausiphanes, and others of the same stamp.

Seeking to refute them, the dogmatic philosophers say the Skeptics themselves comprehend and dogmatize regarding certain things; for when they seem to be limiting themselves to refuting, they are comprehending; for at that very moment they are affirming and dogmatizing. Thus even when they say that they affirm nothing, and that to every argument there is an opposing argument, they are actually affirming these things and dogmatizing.

103 To them the Skeptics reply, “We acknowledge our human feelings; for we recognize that it is day, that we are alive, and many other things that appear in life; but with regard to the things the dogmatic philosophers affirm so positively in argument, claiming to have comprehended them, we suspend judgment on the grounds that they are not certain, and we know only what we feel. For we admit that we see, and we recognize that we think this or that; but how we see or how we think we do not know. And in ordinary conversation we say that a certain thing appears white, but without affirming strongly that it actually *is* white. As for our ‘We determine nothing’ and the like, we use these expressions undogmatically; for they do not resemble an assertion like ‘The world is spherical.’ For the latter statement is not certain, while the others are mere admissions. Thus when we say ‘we determine nothing,’ we are not determining even that.”

104 Again, the dogmatic philosophers declare that the Skeptics reject life, since they reject everything of which life consists. The Skeptics reply that this is false; for they do not deny that we see; they maintain only that they do not know how we see. “Indeed, we admit a given object’s appearance, without admitting that the object really *is* as it appears. We perceive that fire burns; but as to whether it has a flammable nature, we suspend our judgment. We see that a man moves and that he perishes. How these things happen we do not know.” “We only take issue,” they say, “with the nonapparent things that underlie appearances. For when we say that a picture has depth, we are describing its appearance; but when we say that it has no depth, we are no longer speaking of its appearance, but of something else.”<sup>155</sup> That is why Timon, in his *Python*, says that he has not transgressed the limits of ordinary usage. And in the *Conceits* he says:

But the apparent holds sway wherever it goes.

106 And in his treatise *On Sensations* he says, “That honey is sweet I do not affirm, though I concede that it appears so.” Aenesidemus too, in the first

155 The example refers to pictures drawn in perspective so as to give the illusion of depth. The Skeptics aim to describe how the picture appears, without opposing this appearance to any underlying reality.

book of his *Pyrrhonian Discourses*, says that Pyrrho affirms nothing dogmatically when he makes use of contradiction, and that he follows appearances. He says the same in his works *Against Wisdom* and *On Inquiry*. Furthermore, Zeuxis, Aenesidemus' friend, in his work *On Two-Sided Arguments*, Antiochus of Laodicea, and Apellas<sup>156</sup> in his *Agrippa* affirm appearances only. Therefore the apparent, according to the Skeptics, is the criterion, as Aenesidemus says; Epicurus holds the same position. Democritus, on the other hand, says that none of the apparent things is a criterion, and that they themselves do not exist.

Against this idea of appearances as the criterion the dogmatic philosophers say that when the same appearances produce different impressions, for example a round or square tower, the Skeptic, unless he prefers one view to the other, will do nothing; if, on the other hand, he adheres to either view, he is then no longer, they say, according equal validity to all appearances. To this the Skeptics reply: when different impressions are produced, we will say that each has appeared; for apparent things are so called because they appear. 107

The Skeptics say that their goal is suspension of judgment, which is attended by tranquillity as if by its shadow, as Timon and Aenesidemus declare. For when we are faced with matters that are for us to decide, we will neither choose this nor avoid that; and things that are *not* for us to decide, but depend on necessity, such as hunger, thirst, and pain, we cannot escape; for these are not to be removed by force of argument. And when the dogmatic philosophers say that the Skeptic would be able to live in this way but could not avoid butchering his father if ordered to do so, the Skeptics reply that he will be able to live in such a way as to suspend judgment in inquiries that concern dogmatic questions, but not in those that pertain to life and ordinary usages. Accordingly, they say, we may choose or avoid a thing by habit, and may adhere to laws and customs. According to some, the Skeptics made impassivity the goal; according to others, gentleness. 108

## TIMON

Our Apollonides of Nicea, in the first book of his *Commentaries on the Lampoons*, which he dedicated to Tiberius Caesar, says that Timon was the son of Timarchus and a native of Phlius.<sup>157</sup> Orphaned at a young age, he 109

156 None of the three are otherwise known.

157 Tiberius became emperor of Rome in AD 14 and ruled until his death in 37. Phlius is a city in the northeast Peloponnese.

became a dancer; later, having changed his mind, he went abroad to Megara to stay with Stilpo;<sup>158</sup> and after spending some time with him, he returned home and married. Then he went with his wife to Pyrrho<sup>159</sup> at Elis, and lived there until his children were born. He called his elder son Xanthus, taught  
 110 him medicine, and made him his heir. The son was highly regarded, as Sotion says in his eleventh book. But Timon, having no means of support, sailed to the Hellespont and the Propontis.<sup>160</sup> Living as a sophist in Chalcedon,<sup>161</sup> he enhanced his reputation; after making a fortune, he sailed to Athens and lived there until his death, except for a brief stay at Thebes. He was known to King Antigonos<sup>162</sup> and to Ptolemy Philadelphus,<sup>163</sup> as he himself bears witness in his own iambics.

Antigonos<sup>164</sup> says that he was also a friend of the poets, and that if he had time to spare from philosophy he used to write poems, including epics, tragedies, satiric dramas (thirty comedies and sixty tragedies), lampoons, and  
 111 obscene verse.<sup>165</sup> Also attributed to him are prose works, running to nearly twenty thousand lines, mentioned by Antigonos of Carystus, who also wrote his life. There are three books of *Lampoons*,<sup>166</sup> in which, from his Skeptic's point of view, he abuses everyone and lampoons the dogmatic philosophers by parodying them. The first book has a first-person narration; the second and third are in dialogue form. Timon represents himself, at any rate, as questioning Xenophanes of Colophon<sup>167</sup> about each of the philosophers, and Xenophanes describes them to him; in the second he deals with the more ancient philosophers, and in the third, the later ones, which is why some have  
 112 entitled it *Epilogue*. The first deals with the same subjects, except that the poem is a monologue. It begins as follows:

158 On Stilpo, see 2.113–20.

159 The life and views of Pyrrho (c. 365–275 BC) are discussed earlier in Book 9.

160 The ancient term for the Sea of Marmara.

161 A city in Asia Minor near Byzantium, today part of the city of Istanbul.

162 Antigonos II Gonatas (c. 320–239 BC) was a king of Macedonia, who sought to fill his court at Pella with philosophers, poets, and intellectuals.

163 Ptolemy II Philadelphus (308–246 BC) was the second ruler in the Ptolemaic dynasty that dominated Hellenistic Egypt; he founded the famous Library and Museum at Alexandria.

164 Not the king Antigonos just mentioned, but Antigonos of Carystus, a Hellenistic source often consulted by Diogenes (including later in this paragraph).

165 The Greek word *kinadoi* normally refers to people, not poems, and is translated “catamites” elsewhere in this volume. Only here does it denote a literary genre, if the text is sound (some editors have emended it).

166 This is the work that Diogenes has quoted throughout for scurrilous verses about the philosophers he discusses.

167 On Xenophanes, see 9.18–20.



*The Sophists*, by Daniel Niklaus Chodowiecki, 1790.

Tell me now, all you busybody sophists . . .<sup>168</sup>

He died near the age of ninety, as we learn from Antigonus and from Sotion in his eleventh book. I have heard that he had only one eye, since he used to call himself Cyclops. There was another Timon, the misanthrope.<sup>169</sup>

The philosopher was very fond of gardens and of keeping to himself, as Antigonus says. There is a story, at any rate, that Hieronymus the Peripatetic said of him, “Just as among the Scythians, those who are in flight shoot as well as those in pursuit,<sup>170</sup> so among the philosophers some catch their students by pursuing them, others by fleeing from them, like Timon.”

He was quick to perceive and to sneer. He was fond of books and good at sketching plots for poets and collaborating in dramas. He used to give

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168 The meter is dactylic hexameter, so the conventions of Greek epic, according to which a muse is invoked in the opening lines, are being parodied.

169 Plutarch and Lucian immortalized the fifth-century BC Athenian misanthrope named Timon, and Shakespeare relied on their portraits for his play *Timon of Athens*.

170 The Scythians, dwelling north of the Black Sea, were known for their skill as archers, including an ability to fire arrows backward while riding away from battle.

Alexander and Homer<sup>171</sup> material for their tragedies. When disturbed by maidservants and dogs he would do nothing, as his sole desire was to live in peace. They say that when Aratus<sup>172</sup> asked him how he could obtain a sound text of Homer he said, “By reading the ancient copies, and not the corrected copies we have today.” His poems used to be left lying around, sometimes half-eaten.<sup>173</sup> Hence, when he wanted to read something to Zopyrus the orator, he would unroll the book and recite whatever passage he found; it was only when he had got halfway through that he would come upon the piece he had not been able to find earlier. Such was his indifference. What is more, he was so easygoing that he could readily skip a meal. They say that one day, when he noticed Arcesilaus<sup>174</sup> passing through the Cercopes’ Market,<sup>175</sup> he said, “Why have you come here, where we are all free men?” To those who accepted the evidence of the senses if confirmed by the mind, he was constantly in the habit of quoting the line:

Attagas and Numenius have arrived together.<sup>176</sup>

He was in the habit of making jokes of that kind. To a man who marveled at everything, he said, “Why don’t you marvel that between the three of us we have four eyes?” For he had only one eye himself, as did his student Dioscurides, while the man he was addressing had a normal pair. When asked one day by Arcesilaus why he had come there from Thebes he said, “To have you all in plain view and enjoy a good laugh.” Yet though he attacked Arcesilaus in his *Lampoons*, he praised him in his work *The Funeral Feast of Arcesilaus*.

As Menodotus says, he left no successor, and his school lapsed until Ptolemy of Cyrene<sup>177</sup> revived it. But Hippobotus and Sotion say that he had as pupils Dioscurides of Cyprus, Nicolochus of Rhodes, Euphranor of Se-leucia, and Praylus of the Troad. The latter had such powers of endurance,

171 Both Alexander of Pleuron (b. c. 315 BC) and Homer of Byzantium were members of the so-called Pleiad, a group of seven Alexandrian poets.

172 Aratus of Soli (c. 315–c. 240/39 BC), the author of *Phenomena*, an extant didactic poem about the constellations.

173 That is, by worms or insects.

174 Arcesilaus of Pitane is discussed at 4.28–45.

175 In mythology the Cercopes were mischievous apelike creatures, and the market in Athens named for them was evidently an unsavory place frequented by slaves.

176 In Greek, *attagas* and *noumenios* are both types of birds; they are also the proper names of known thieves. Timon’s phrase has been interpreted variously, but since he uses it to discredit the idea that the mind is able to assist the senses, its point may lie in the idea that the two birds (or thieves) can agree without being correct.

177 An obscure figure, perhaps of the first century AD.



Gold laurel wreath, third to second century BC, Greek.

as Phylarchus says in his history, that he suffered the punishment for treason that had been unjustly inflicted on him without deigning to say a word to his fellow citizens.

Euphranor had as a pupil Eubulus of Alexandria; the latter taught Ptolemy, who taught Sarpedon and Heraclides; Heraclides taught Aenesidemus of Cnossus, who compiled the *Pyrrhonian Discourses* in eight books. Aenesidemus taught Zeuxippus, his fellow citizen; Zeuxippus taught Zeuxis the Crook-Footed, and the latter taught Antiochus of Laodicea-on-the-Lycus. Antiochus taught Menodotus of Nicomedia, an empiric doctor,<sup>178</sup> and Theodas of Laodicea. Menodotus taught Herodotus, son of Arieus, of Tarsus; the latter taught Sextus Empiricus,<sup>179</sup> who left us *Skeptical Writings*<sup>180</sup> in ten books and other excellent works. Sextus taught Saturninus, called Cythenas,” who was also an empiric.

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178 In antiquity, the term “empiric” was applied to a school of medical thought that emphasized observation and experiment over theory.

179 The only thinker in this list whose works are still known today, Sextus Empiricus lived in the late second and early third centuries AD. His second name is an epithet indicating his allegiance to the empiric school of medicine.

180 Perhaps the work we know today as *Against the Mathematicians* is meant. That work, in its surviving form, has eleven books rather than ten, but two of these books may have been conjoined in antiquity.



Klee

# BOOK 10

EPICURUS

341-270 BC

## EPICURUS

- 1 Epicurus, son of Neocles and Chaerestrata, was an Athenian of the deme of Gargettus and a member of the Philaadae,<sup>1</sup> as Metrodorus says in his work *On Noble Birth*. Others, including Heraclides in his *Epitome of Sotion*, say that he was raised at Samos<sup>2</sup> after the Athenians had established a cleruchy there,<sup>3</sup> and that he came to Athens at the age of eighteen, at which time Xenocrates was living at the Academy<sup>4</sup> and Aristotle was living in Chalcis.<sup>5</sup> When Alexander of Macedon died and the Athenians were expelled from the cleruchy by Perdicas,<sup>6</sup> Epicurus went to live with his father in Colophon.<sup>7</sup>
- 2 After living there for a time and gathering students, he returned to Athens during the archonship of Anaxicrates.<sup>8</sup> For a while he pursued his philosophical studies in company with others, but afterward advanced his own views < . . . >, when he founded the school that bears his name.

- He himself says that he took up philosophy at the age of fourteen. Apollodorus the Epicurean,<sup>9</sup> in the first book of his *Life of Epicurus*, says that Epicurus turned to philosophy out of contempt for his schoolmasters, who were unable to explain the passages about Chaos in Hesiod.<sup>10</sup> But Hermippus says that Epicurus became a schoolmaster himself, and then, after coming upon the works of Democritus,<sup>11</sup> turned eagerly to philosophy. This is why Timon refers to him as:
- 3

1 A prominent aristocratic family in Athens.

2 A Greek island in the eastern Aegean, also reputed to be the birthplace of Pythagoras.

3 A cleruchy was a kind of colony in which the settlers retained citizenship ties to the mother city. Athens established such a colony on Samos around 360 BC.

4 Xenocrates served as head of the Academy from 339 to 313 BC. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 4.6–15.

5 Aristotle moved from Athens to Chalcis in 323 BC, and died there the following year. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 5.1–35.

6 Perdicas became regent of the Macedonian empire after Alexander the Great's death in 323 BC. He resolved the following year that the Athenian settlers on Samos had to be removed.

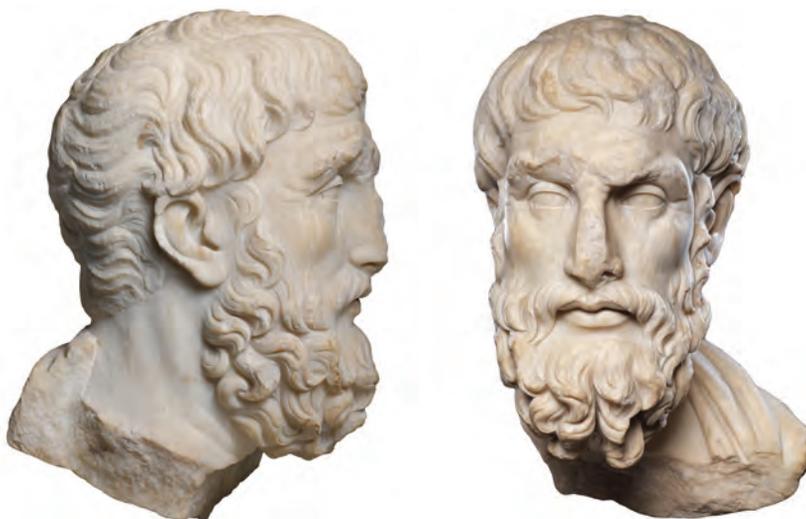
7 A Greek city on the Ionian coast near Samos.

8 307–306 BC.

9 Elsewhere referred to as Apollodorus of Athens.

10 Hesiod (c. 700 BC) composed a genealogy of the gods entitled *Theogony*, in which Chaos represents the primal void from which the universe arises.

11 Democritus of Abdera (b. 460/57 BC), a philosopher who advanced atomism, a position later adopted and modified by Epicurus. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 9.34–49.



Two views of a marble head of Epicurus.  
Second-century Roman copy of a Greek original of the first half of the third century B.C.

The last and most shameless<sup>12</sup> of the natural philosophers, hailing from Samos,  
A schoolmaster, and the most ill-bred of animals.

Epicurus was joined in his philosophical pursuits, at his urging, by his three brothers—Neocles, Chaeredemus, and Aristobulus—as Philodemus the Epicurean says in the tenth book of his collection *On Philosophers*, and by a slave named Mys (“Fly”), as Myronianus says in his *Historical Parallels*.

Diotimus the Stoic, who is hostile to Epicurus, has slandered him harshly, citing fifty licentious letters that he claimed were written by the philosopher; and so has the writer who ascribed to Epicurus the letters allegedly written by Chrysippus.<sup>13</sup> He was also slandered by Posidonius the Stoic and his school, Nicolaus, Sotion in the twelfth book of his *Refutations of Diocles*, <the work contains twenty-four>, and Dionysius of Halicarnassus. For they say that Epicurus went about with his mother to cottages and read rites of purification, and taught at his father’s school for a paltry wage; that one of his brothers was a procurer,<sup>14</sup> and that he spent time with the courtesan Leontion;<sup>15</sup> that he

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12 The Greek word is *kuntatos*, “most doglike,” perhaps with a double reference to Cynic (“dog-gish”) mores.

13 After Zeno, Chrysippus was the most prominent of the Stoic philosophers (c. 280–207 BC). His life and views are discussed at 7.179–202. Diogenes mentions scandals associated with him at 7.187–88.

14 The Greek could also mean “that he prostituted one of his brothers.”

15 This claim at least appears to be true (see 10.5–6).

presented as his own the doctrines of Democritus about atoms, and those of Aristippus about pleasure;<sup>16</sup> and that he was not a genuine citizen, a charge brought by Timocrates<sup>17</sup> and by Herodotus<sup>18</sup> in his work *On Epicurus' Ephemeric Training*.<sup>19</sup> It is said that he shamelessly flattered Mithras, Lysimachus' administrator, whom in his letters he addressed as "Healer" and "Lord";<sup>20</sup> that he praised Idomeneus,<sup>21</sup> Herodotus, and Timocrates, who had divulged his esoteric doctrines; and that he flattered them for that very reason.

They say that in his letters to Leontion he writes, "O Lord Healer! My dear Leontion, your letter, as we read it, filled us with thunderous applause," and that in a letter to Themista, the wife of Leonteus, he says, "I am capable, if you don't come to me, of spinning round three times and being whirled to any place that you and Themista propose."<sup>22</sup> And to the beautiful young man Pythocles<sup>23</sup> he says, "I will sit down and await your lovely, godlike approach." On another occasion, writing to Themista, he supposes it right < . . . >,<sup>24</sup> as Theodorus says in the fourth book of his work *Against Epicurus*. He is also said to have written to many other courtesans, but particularly to Leontion, with whom Metrodorus was also smitten. And in his work *On the Goal* he writes thus: "For I, at any rate, do not know what I would consider good apart from the pleasures derived from taste, sex, sound, and beautiful form." And in his letter to Pythocles, he writes, "Hoist every sail, my dear boy, and flee from all education." Epictetus calls Epicurus a writer of obscenities and utterly reviles him.<sup>25</sup>

And Timocrates, the brother of Metrodorus, who studied with Epicurus and then left his school, says in his work *Festivities* that Epicurus vomited twice a day from overindulgence, and relates that he himself had difficulty extricating himself from those nocturnal philosophy seminars and that

16 Aristippus of Cyrene is discussed at 2.65–104.

17 Timocrates of Lampsacus was for a time a pupil of Epicurus. He eventually renounced Epicurus' teachings and criticized his way of life (see 10.6–8).

18 A different Herodotus than the famous historian; possibly the addressee of Epicurus' letter on natural science, quoted below starting at 10.35.

19 In ancient Athens, young men (in Greek, *ephebōi*) of citizen status were required to undergo military training.

20 Lysimachus (c. 355–281 BC) was one of Alexander's officers who later became king of Thrace and, eventually, Macedonia. The "administrator" (*διοικητής*) in question must have been one of his emissaries or deputies. The terms of address quoted here and in the following chapter, normally addressed to Apollo (see next section), suggest servile flattery and impiety.

21 Idomeneus of Lampsacus (c. 325–c. 270 BC), a biographer and politician, was a friend of Epicurus.

22 Despite Diogenes' introduction, the letter appears to have been addressed to Leonteus, the husband of Themista. Both spouses were students of Epicurus.

23 The addressee of Epicurus' letter on celestial phenomena (see 10.84–116).

24 The text is corrupt here and no convincing restoration has been proposed.

25 The great Stoic teacher Epictetus (c. AD 55–135) is known today through the *Encheiridion* and *Discourses*, records of his teaching set down by his student Arrian.



*Epicurus and Leontion*, by Ludwig Gottlieb Portman, 1803.

gathering of the Mysteries.<sup>26</sup> He adds that Epicurus was unacquainted with reasoning and knew even less of life; that his body was in a sorry state, since for many years he had been unable to rise from his litter; that he spent a mina<sup>27</sup> a day on his table, as he himself says in his letter to Leontion and in the one he wrote to the philosophers at Mytilene; and that other courtesans consorted both with him and with Metrodorus, including Mammarrion, Hedia, Erotion, and Nicidion.<sup>28</sup> Timocrates also claims that Epicurus, in the thirty-seven books of his work *On Nature*, often repeats himself and writes primarily to refute others, especially Nausiphanes.<sup>29</sup> Here are Timocrates' own words: "But < . . . ><sup>30</sup> for he too, when laboring with an idea, had the sophist's long-winded boastfulness, like many other slaves." Timocrates mentions that Epicurus himself, in his letters, says of Nausiphanes, "This so infuriated him that he abused me and called me 'schoolmaster.'" Epicurus used to call Nausiphanes "jellyfish," "illiterate," "fraud," and "whore"; he called Plato's

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26 The Mystery cult of Demeter at Eleusis involved ecstatic and secret rites. According to Timocrates, Epicurus parodied these rites as a kind of riotous party.

27 A significant sum of money, since one mina was equal to one hundred drachmas, and one drachma was the pay for a single day's skilled labor. But Epicurus lived with his followers communally and the "table" in question was meant to feed the entire group.

28 Little is known of these figures.

29 Nausiphanes of Teos (fl. c. 340–320 BC), a follower of Democritus, became Epicurus' teacher c. 324. He passed on to Epicurus Democritus' physics and theory of knowledge.

30 Some words have fallen out of the manuscript here.



Attic red-figure cup by the Foundry Painter, c. 470 BC, designed for use at a symposium. According to the Greek orator Demosthenes, symposia were largely exercises in “revelry, sex, and drinking.” The cup, with its explicit depiction of a sexual encounter between a young man and a woman who is probably a *hetaira*, or courtesan, lends credence to Demosthenes’ characterization.

followers “flatterers of Dionysius,” and Plato himself “golden”;<sup>31</sup> Aristotle “a spendthrift, who after consuming his patrimony sought employment in the army and as a druggist”; Protagoras “porter,” “scribe of Democritus,”<sup>32</sup> and “village schoolmaster”; Heraclitus “the agitator,”<sup>33</sup> Democritus “Lerocritus,”<sup>34</sup> Antidorus “Sannidorus,”<sup>35</sup> the people of Cyzicus<sup>36</sup> “enemies of Greece,” the dialecticians “full of envy,” and Pyrrho<sup>37</sup> “ignorant and uneducated.”

9 But these people<sup>38</sup> are out of their minds. For there are a great many witnesses who attest to the man’s matchless courtesy toward everyone: his native land,

31 The charge that Plato or his school had benefited from the wealth of Dionysius II, tyrant of Syracuse, was deployed by several rivals (see 6.25, e.g.). “Golden” here implies self-enrichment.

32 Protagoras was thought (incorrectly) to have been the student of Democritus (see 9.50 and corresponding note).

33 The epithet given to Heraclitus, *kukētēs*, parodies one of his cosmologic writings, which compared the universe to a *kukeōn*, a kind of porridge made up of disparate elements.

34 The first element of this mocking name, *lēros*, means “trash” or “nonsense.”

35 Both the meaning of the nickname and the identity of its target are obscure.

36 A Greek city in Asia Minor.

37 Diogenes discusses the life and views of Pyrrho, a prominent Skeptic, at 9.61–108.

38 That is, the critics of Epicurus cited at 10.3 and following.

honoring him with bronze statues; his friends, so numerous they could not be measured by entire cities; and all who knew him, captivated as they were by the siren spells of his doctrines (with the exception of Metrodorus of Stratonicea,<sup>39</sup> who defected to Carneades,<sup>40</sup> perhaps because he found Epicurus' incomparable goodness oppressive); the school itself, which, at a time when all the others have nearly died out, lives on forever as one leader succeeds another; his gratitude to his parents, his generosity to his brothers, his gentleness to his servants, which is clear both from the contents of his will and the fact that they themselves studied philosophy with him, the most distinguished of them being the above-mentioned Mys;<sup>41</sup> and, in general, his kindness toward everyone. His piety toward the gods and his devotion to his native land defy description. For it was on account of his exceptional honesty that he did not engage in public life at all. 10

And at a period when Greece was afflicted with her worst calamities<sup>42</sup> he continued to live there, traveling only two or three times to Ionia to visit friends. And they, in turn, flocked to him from all sides and lived with him in his garden, as Apollodorus says (Epicurus purchased the garden for eighty minas, as Diocles mentions in the third book of his *Epitome*), living very frugally and simply. "They made do, at any rate," he says, "with a half pint of weak wine; otherwise, all they drank was water." He says that Epicurus did not think it right that their property should be held in common, as did Pythagoras, who said that the possessions of friends are common property;<sup>43</sup> for such a practice, according to Epicurus, implied mistrust, and without trust there could be no friendship. He himself says in his letters that he managed on a diet of plain bread and water. Elsewhere he says, "Send me a small pot of cheese, that I may feast luxuriously whenever I like." Such was the man who asserted that pleasure is the goal of life—the man whom Athenaeus commemorates in this epigram: 11

You toil, men, at worthless tasks, and in your greed 12  
 For gain you start quarrels and wars;  
 But nature's wealth has its modest limit,  
 Though empty judgment treads a limitless path.  
 So heard the wise son of Neocles, either from the Muses  
 Or from the holy tripod of Pytho.<sup>44</sup>

39 A different person than the Metrodorus mentioned at 10.6 above.

40 Carneades of Cyrene (214/13–129/28 BC) served as head of the Academy. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 4.62–66.

41 See 10.3.

42 Epicurus moved to Athens near the end of the fourth century BC, at a time when the wars between the successors of Alexander the Great were roiling the political life of Greece.

43 See 8.10.

44 The seat of the priestess at the oracle of Delphi.

But we will grasp this better from his own doctrines and sayings.

Among the ancients, says Diocles, Epicurus especially admired Anaxagoras (though he disagreed with him on various points) and Archelaus,<sup>45</sup> the teacher of Socrates. Diocles adds that he trained his disciples to commit his treatises to memory.

13 Apollodorus, in his *Chronology*, says that Epicurus also studied with Nausiphanes <and Praxiphanes>,<sup>46</sup> though Epicurus himself denies it and claims, in his letter to Eurylochus, that he was self-taught. Both Epicurus and Hermarchus<sup>47</sup> deny that the philosopher Leucippus<sup>48</sup> ever existed, though some claimed (among them Apollodorus the Epicurean) that Leucippus was Democritus' teacher. Demetrius of Magnesia says that Epicurus also studied with Xenocrates.

He used his own words when speaking of things, on which account Aristophanes the grammarian faults him for an idiosyncratic style. But his prose was so lucid that in his work *On Rhetoric*<sup>49</sup> he says that nothing is required but clarity. And in his letters, instead of the salutation "Greetings," he would write, "Do well" or "Live well."

14 But Ariston says in his *Life of Epicurus* that the philosopher's *Canon* was inspired by *The Tripod* of Nausiphanes; he adds that Epicurus had been Nausiphanes' student and had also studied with Pamphilus the Platonist in Samos. He says that Epicurus began to study philosophy at the age of twelve, and founded his school at the age of thirty-two.

15 He was born, according to Apollodorus in his *Chronicles*, in the third year of the 109th Olympiad, during the archonship of Sosigenes, on the seventh day of the month of Gamelion,<sup>50</sup> seven years after the death of Plato. At the age of thirty-two he founded a school, at first in Mytilene and Lampsacus, where he taught for five years. He then returned to Athens, where he died in the second year of the 127th Olympiad,<sup>51</sup> during the archonship of Pytharetus, at the age of seventy-two. His school passed to Hermarchus, son of Agemortus, of Mytilene.

Epicurus died of a kidney stone after an illness of fourteen days, as Hermarchus says in his letters. Hermippus reports that Epicurus got into a bronze

45 Anaxagoras and Archelaus are discussed at 2.6–15 and 2.16–17, respectively.

46 There is a philosopher named Praxiphanes whose life span overlapped with that of Epicurus, but some editors delete the name here on the assumption that it arose through scribal error.

47 Hermarchus of Mytilene, a prominent disciple of Epicurus and his successor as the head of the Epicurean school. He was named heir to Epicurus' library in the philosopher's will.

48 A fifth-century BC philosopher jointly credited, along with his pupil Democritus, with originating the atomic theory. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 9.30–33.

49 No one else attributes such a work to Epicurus, and the title is not found in Diogenes' list of Epicurus' works below.

50 The date corresponds to late January of 341 BC.

51 In 271 or 270 BC.

bathtub filled with warm water, asked for unmixed wine,<sup>52</sup> and drained the cup. After he had urged his friends to remember his doctrines, he died. 16

My own verses about him run as follows:

“Farewell, and remember my doctrines.”  
Such were Epicurus’ dying words to his friends.  
He sat in a warm bath, downed unmixed wine,  
And forthwith quaffed chill Hades.

Such was the man’s life and such his death.

He disposed of his property as follows:

I hereby give all my goods to Amynomachus, son of Philocrates, of Bate, and to Timocrates,<sup>53</sup> son of Demetrius, of Potamus, in accordance with the terms of the gift inscribed in the Metröon,<sup>54</sup> on condition that they make the garden and its appurtenances available to Hermarchus,<sup>55</sup> son of Agemortus, of Mitylene, and his associates, and to those whom Hermarchus may leave as his successors, so that they may live and study there. I charge my school in perpetuity with the task of helping Amynomachus and Timocrates and their heirs preserve to the best of their ability < . . . > the communal life in the garden in whatever way is most secure, and I direct the trustees’ heirs, and likewise those to whom our successors in the school may bequeath it, to maintain the garden. Let Amynomachus and Timocrates allow Hermarchus and his associates to inhabit the house in Melite<sup>56</sup> during Hermarchus’ lifetime. 17

From the revenues of the property given by me to Amynomachus and Timocrates, let them, to the best of their ability, in consultation with Hermarchus, provide funds for the funeral offerings to my father, mother, and brothers, and for the customary celebration of my birthday each year on the tenth of Gamelion, and for the assembly of my school on the twentieth of each month to commemorate Metrodorus and myself in the traditional manner. Let them also celebrate the day in Poseideon<sup>57</sup> that commemorates my brothers, and likewise the day in Metageitnion that commemorates Polyaeus,<sup>58</sup> as I have done myself. 18

52 Greek wine would normally be mixed with water. Unmixed wine was thought to be bad for one’s health or sanity.

53 A different person than the Timocrates mentioned above.

54 The Metröon (literally, “mother’s building”) was a temple dedicated to the mother goddess; it was also used as an archive and council hall.

55 Because Hermarchus was not a citizen of Athens, he could not legally inherit the estate of Epicurus directly.

56 Melite was a village near ancient Athens.

57 Another Athenian month, which fell during December and January.

58 Polyaeus of Lampsacus was one of Epicurus’ chief disciples, as mentioned at 10.24. Metageitnion fell during August and September.

19 Let Amynomachus and Timocrates take care of Epicurus,<sup>59</sup> son of Metrodorus, and Polyaenus' son, provided that they live and study philosophy with Hermarchus. In like manner, let them also take care of Metrodorus' daughter, and when she has come of age let them give her in marriage to whomever Hermarchus selects from those who philosophize with him, provided that she is well behaved and obedient to Hermarchus. From the revenues of my property, let Amynomachus and Timocrates, in consultation with Hermarchus, provide them with as large an annual allowance as seems adequate for their needs.

20 Let them make Hermarchus their fellow trustee of the revenues, so that everything may be done with the approval of him who grew old with me in philosophy and was left as head of my school. And whenever Metrodorus' daughter comes of age, let Amynomachus and Timocrates provide her with as large a dowry as can be spared from the revenues, with Hermarchus' approval.

Let them also take care of Nicanor,<sup>60</sup> as I have always done, so that no members of the school who have been helpful to me in private life and shown me every kindness and chosen to grow old with me in philosophy may lack the necessities, so far as my means allow.

21 Give all the books I own to Hermarchus.

And if anything happens to Hermarchus before Metrodorus' children come of age, let Amynomachus and Timocrates give each of them an allowance for their necessities (provided they are well behaved), drawing on my remaining revenues as far as possible. And let them manage all other matters in accordance with my arrangements so that everything may be carried out to the best of their ability. As for my slaves, I hereby free Mys, Nicias, and Lycon; I also grant Phaedrium her liberty.

22 As he was dying, he wrote Idomeneus the following letter:

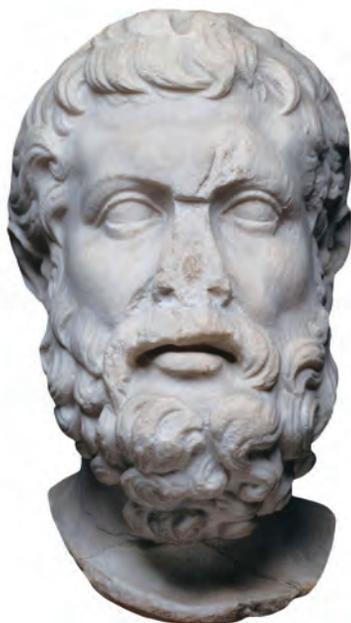
Passing a delightful day, which will also be the last of my life, I write you this note. Dysentery and an inability to urinate have occasioned the worst possible sufferings. But a counterweight to all this is the joy in my heart when I remember our conversations. I beseech you, in light of how admirably, from childhood, you have stood by me and by philosophy, to keep watch over Metrodorus' children.

Such were the terms of his will.

23 Epicurus had many students, and among the most distinguished was Metrodorus of Lampsacus, son of Athenaeus (or of Timocrates) and Sande. From their first meeting, Metrodorus never left his side except for a six-month visit to his native place, after which he returned. He proved his

59 If the name is correct, then Metrodorus perhaps named his son after his teacher, as two other students, Leonteus and his wife, Themista, apparently also did (see 10.26).

60 Otherwise unknown.



Marble head of Metrodorus, second-century Roman copy of a c. 275 BC Hellenistic original. As Epicurus' beloved friend and one of his most important followers, Metrodorus was portrayed as very similar in appearance to his teacher. This head would have been set up in the grounds of the Epicurean school at Athens.

goodness in every way, as Epicurus attests in the introductions to his works and in the third book of *Timocrates*. Such was his character that he gave his sister Batis in marriage to Idomeneus, and took the courtesan Leontion of Athens as his concubine. He was dauntless in the face of troubles and death, as Epicurus says in the first book of *Metrodorus*. They say that he died seven years before Epicurus, at the age of fifty-three. (Epicurus himself, in the will previously cited, clearly speaks of him as departed and instructs his executors to take care of his children.) Epicurus also had as a student the above-mentioned Timocrates, Metrodorus' shiftless brother.

Metrodorus wrote the following works:

24

*Against Physicians*, three books

*On Sensations*

*Against Timocrates*

*On Magnanimity*

*On Epicurus' Bad Health*

*Against the Dialecticians*

*Against the Sophists*, nine books  
*On the Path to Wisdom*  
*On Change*  
*On Wealth*  
*Against Democritus*  
*On Noble Birth*

There was also Polyaeus of Lampsacus, son of Athenodorus, a fair and amiable man, according to Philodemus and his students; and Epicurus' successor, Hermarchus, son of Agemortus, of Mitylene, the son of a poor man and originally a student of rhetoric.

To him are attributed the following excellent works:

25 *Collected Correspondence*  
*On Empedocles*, twenty-two books  
*On the Disciples*  
*Against Plato*  
*Against Aristotle*

He died of paralysis, having proved a capable man.

26 There is also Leonteus of Lampsacus and his wife, Themista, with whom Epicurus corresponded;<sup>61</sup> and Colotes<sup>62</sup> and Idomeneus, both from Lampsacus. All of these were well-regarded, as was Polystratus,<sup>63</sup> who succeeded Hermarchus. (Polystratus was succeeded by Dionysius, and Dionysius by Basilides.) Apollodorus, the “tyrant of the Garden,”<sup>64</sup> was also distinguished, having written more than four hundred books; and the two Ptolemies from Alexandria: the Black and the White;<sup>65</sup> and Zeno of Sidon, a student of Apollodorus, a prolific writer; and Demetrius, who was called the Laconian, and Diogenes of Tarsus, who compiled *The Selected Letters*; and Orion and others whom the genuine Epicureans call “sophists.”

There were three other men named Epicurus: the son of Leonteus and Themista;<sup>66</sup> another from Magnesia; the fourth a drill sergeant.

61 A letter from Epicurus to this couple was briefly quoted at 10.4.

62 Colotes of Lampsacus (c. 325–260 BC) was a prominent Epicurean, later used as a straw man by Plutarch in the work entitled *Against Colotes*.

63 A disciple of Epicurus, Polystratus followed Hermarchus as head of the school. His published works included a treatise entitled *On Philosophy* and a critique of Skepticism.

64 The Garden referred to here is the Epicurean school, which Apollodorus headed in the second century BC. Apollodorus is cited frequently by Diogenes as a source.

65 Otherwise unknown, and almost certainly not among the dynastic rulers of Egypt who took the name Ptolemy.

66 See 10.19 and corresponding note. It is curious that Diogenes does not here mention the son of Metrodorus in the list of men named Epicurus.

Epicurus was extraordinarily prolific, surpassing everyone in the number of his works. For there are roughly three hundred rolls, and they do not include any quotations from other authors, but contain only his own words. Chrysippus sought to rival him in productivity, which is why Carneades calls him “Epicurus’ literary parasite.” For if Epicurus wrote a book, Chrysippus ventured to write one just as long. This is why he often repeated himself and wrote the first thing that came to mind, and in his haste left his text uncorrected; and his quotations were so numerous that they alone fill his books,<sup>67</sup> something one also finds in the works of Zeno and Aristotle. 27

This, then, is the character and quantity of Epicurus’ writings. The best of them are the following:

*On Nature*, thirty-seven books  
*On Atoms and Void*  
*On Love*  
*Epitome of Arguments Against the Natural Scientists*  
*Against the Megarians*  
*Problems*  
*Chief Maxims*  
*On Choice and Avoidance*  
*On the End*  
*On the Criterion or The Canon*  
*Chaeredemus*<sup>68</sup>  
*On Gods*  
*On Piety*  
*Hegesianax*  
*On Ways of Life*, four books  
*On Just Dealing*  
*Neocles*, dedicated to Themista  
*Symposium*  
*Eurylochus*, dedicated to Metrodorus  
*On Vision*  
*On the Angle in the Atom*  
*On Touch*  
*On Fate*  
*Views about the Emotions*, dedicated to Timocrates  
*Prognostication*  
*Protrepitic*  
*On Oratory*

28

67 The same complaint is raised at 7.181. For Chrysippus, see 7.179–202.

68 One of Epicurus’ brothers (see 10.3).

*On Images*  
*On Impressions*  
*Aristobulus*<sup>69</sup>  
*On Music*  
*On Justice and the Other Virtues*  
*On Gifts and Gratitude*  
*Polymedes*  
*Timocrates*, three books  
*Metrodorus*, five books  
*Antidorus*, two books  
*Opinions about Diseases and Death*, dedicated to Mithras<sup>70</sup>  
*Callistolas*  
*On Kingship*  
*Anaximenes*  
*Letters*

29 I will try to set forth the views expressed in these works by quoting three of his letters, in which his entire philosophy has been summarized. I will also present his *Chief Maxims* as well as any utterance of his that seems worth citing, so that you<sup>71</sup> may study the man from every vantage point and I may know how to judge him.

The first letter is addressed to Herodotus and <deals with natural science>; the second, to Pythocles, deals with astronomy; and the third, to Menoeceus,<sup>72</sup> deals with ways of life. We must begin with the first, after a few remarks about his division of philosophy.

30 He divided philosophy into three parts—canonic, physics, and ethics. The canonic part presents his system's methodology and is contained in a single book titled *The Canon*; the physical part includes his entire theory of nature and is contained in the thirty-seven books of his work *On Nature* and, in an abridged form, in the letters; the ethical part deals with choice and avoidance; this material is found in his work *On Ways of Life*, in his letters, and in his work *On the End*. Usually, however, the Epicureans class canonic with physics; they call the former the science that concerns criteria and first principles, or the fundamentals of philosophy; the physical part deals with becoming, perishing, and nature; the ethical part deals with things to be chosen and avoided, and with ways of life and the end.

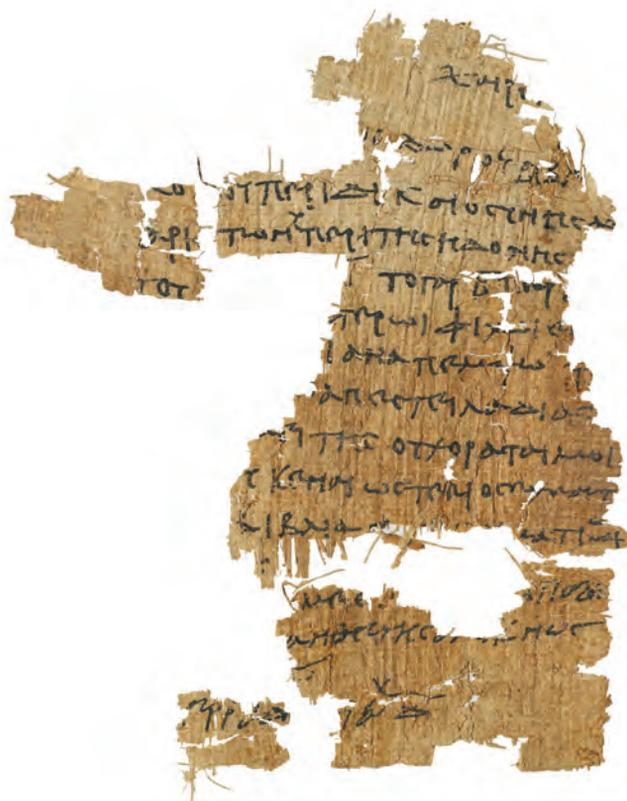
69 Another of Epicurus' brothers (see 10.3).

70 Possibly the Mithras mentioned at 10.4.

71 A rare form of direct address, used only one other time by Diogenes in this volume (see 3.47).

Presumably *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers* was dedicated or presented to a particular person.

72 Otherwise unknown.



Fragment of a letter from Roman Alexandria about works of Epicurean philosophy,  
second half of the second century AD.

The fifteen lines of Greek inscription preserved read: “. . . greetings / book(s) of (?)  
Metrodorus / Epicurus’ (book) ‘On Justice’ / best ‘On Pleasure’ / For the second book  
‘On . . .’ / (to?) another friend / I will send / I sent through the hand of / -leites does not  
seem to me / so that to me / books / Greet / Farewell. Year 4, Choiak 4.”

They reject dialectic as superfluous, maintaining that it is sufficient that  
natural philosophers should proceed in accordance with the ordinary words  
for things. In *The Canon* Epicurus says the criteria of truth are our sensations,  
preconceptions, and feelings. (But the Epicureans say that applications of the  
intellect to impressions are also criteria.) He makes this claim also in the *Epito-*  
*me* addressed to Herodotus and in his *Chief Maxims*. “Every sensation,” he says,  
“is devoid of reason and incapable of memory; for it is not self-caused, nor, if  
caused by something else, can it add or subtract anything; nor can anything  
refute our sensations. For one sensation cannot refute another produced by the  
same sense, since they are of equal strength; nor can sensations produced by

31

32



Bronze statuette of a man working, Greek, fifth century BC.

different senses be superior to one another, since they do not judge or discriminate the same things. And the same holds true where reason is concerned, since all reason is derived from sensation. Nor is any one of the senses superior to another, since we pay heed to them all. And the fact that our perceptions exist guarantees the truth of our sensations; for seeing and hearing are as real to us as feeling pain.” Hence, it is from phenomena that we must draw inferences about nonevident realities. For all our thoughts are derived from sensation, either by contact, analogy, resemblance, or synthesis (with some assistance from reasoning). And the delusions of madmen, as well as the visions we see in sleep, are real, since they have effects; whereas what is unreal has no effect.

- 33 By “preconception,” the Epicureans mean a kind of apprehension or a correct opinion or reflection, or general idea stored in the mind; that is, the memory of an external object often presented, as when one says, “Such and such a thing is a man”; for as soon as the word “man” is uttered, we think of the shape of a man by an act of preconception derived from previous sensations. Thus the object primarily denoted by every term is clear; and we would not have embarked on a search for something unless we had known previously what it was we were seeking. Accordingly, if we say, “The object standing there is a horse” or “a cow,” we must at some point have known, by means of a preconception,

the shape of a horse or a cow; nor would we have given anything a name had we not previously learned its form by means of a preconception. So it follows that preconceptions are clear.

The object of an opinion is derived from something previously clear, to which we refer when speaking, as when we say, for example, “How do we know that this is a man?” Opinion they also call assumption, and claim that it admits of truth and falsity. For if something is attested by evidence, or is not contested, it is true; but if it is not attested by evidence, or *is* contested, it is false. Hence the introduction of the phrase “that which awaits” confirmation; for example, one waits, when approaching a tower, and learns what it looks like from near at hand.<sup>73</sup>

34

The Epicureans maintain that there are two states of feeling, pleasure and pain, both of which arise in every living creature: and that the former is friendly to it, the latter hostile; and that these become the basis of choice and avoidance. They also say that there are two kinds of inquiry, one concerned with things, the other only with words. So much for the division and criterion as Epicurus outlined them.

But we must proceed to the letter.

Epicurus to Herodotus, greetings.

35

For those who are unable, Herodotus, to make a detailed study of all my works on nature, or to examine my longer treatises, I have myself prepared a summary of the whole system as an aid to preserving in memory enough of the principal doctrines so that on each occasion readers may be able to assist themselves on the most important points, insofar as they take up the study of nature. And even those who have made sufficient progress in the examination of the whole system should retain in their memory the outline, arranged according to the elementary principles, of the entire doctrine. For a comprehensive view is needed often, the details only on occasion. We must return constantly to those main points and commit to memory an amount of doctrine sufficient to secure a reliable conception of the facts; furthermore, all the details will be discovered accurately if the general outlines are well understood and remembered, since even for the advanced student the chief condition of accurate knowledge is the ability to make ready use of his conceptions by referring each of them to fundamental facts and simple terms. For it is not possible to obtain the results of a continuous diligent study of the universe unless we can embrace in brief terms everything that could

36

73 This is a response to the Skeptical argument that adduces the case of a square tower which appears round from a distance, in order to undermine attempts to draw conclusions from the senses (see 9.107). The Epicureans argue that priority should be given to the appearance of the tower on closer inspection.

37 have been accurately known down to the smallest detail. Since such a course is useful for all who take up natural science, I recommend an unremitting and energetic study of it; it is with this sort of activity, more than any other, that I attain serenity in life. That is why I have composed for you just such a summary and elementary exposition of the entire set of doctrines.

First, Herodotus, we must grasp what it is that words denote, so that with reference to this we may be in a position to test opinions, inquiries, or perplexities, and so that all our proofs may not lead on *ad infinitum*, and our words may not be devoid of meaning. For the principal conception of each word  
38 must be clearly grasped, and should not need to be proved; it is on this basis that we obtain something to which the point at issue or the perplexity or the opinion we are addressing may be referred. Furthermore, we must by all means observe our sensations, and in general our present apprehensions, whether of the mind or of any other criterion whatsoever; and likewise our actual feelings, so that we can have some means of drawing inferences both about whatever awaits confirmation and about that which remains nonevident to sense.

Once we have adopted this course, we must consider what remains nonevident to sense. In the first place, nothing comes into being from that which does not exist. For in that case anything could have arisen out of anything, without any need for seeds. And if what disappears were destroyed and ceased to exist, all things would have been destroyed, since that into  
39 which they were dissolved does not exist. Furthermore, the sum total of things was always what it is now, and will remain so forever. For there is nothing into which it can change, since nothing exists besides the totality that could enter it and effect the change.

Furthermore [*He also says this in the Greater Epitome, near the beginning, and in the first book of his work On Nature*],<sup>74</sup> the whole of being is made up of <bodies and void>. As to bodies, sensation itself in all cases confirms their existence, and it is on sensation that reason must rely when it infers the nonevident from the evident. And if what we call void and space and intangible nature did not exist, bodies would have nothing in which to be and through which to move, as in fact they are seen to move. Apart from void and bodies there is nothing that we are able, whether by apprehension or something analogous to it, to conceive of as existing, when they are grasped as whole natures and not as the concomitants or accidents of such entities.

Moreover [*this is also in the first book of On Nature and in the fourteenth and fifteenth books of the Greater Epitome*], some bodies are composite, while others are the elements from which compounds are formed. These  
41 elements are indivisible and unchangeable, since otherwise all things will be destroyed and become nonexistent; they will be strong enough to survive

<sup>74</sup> The first of many passages that have been identified as commentary, rather than part of the original text. They are inside square brackets throughout and typeset in italics.

the disintegration of compounds because they are solid by nature and not subject to dissolution in any manner or fashion. Thus the basic elements of bodies must be indivisible entities.

Furthermore, the totality of things is unlimited. For what is limited has an extremity, and the extremity is discerned by way of a comparison with something else; accordingly, as the totality has no extremity, it has no limit; and as it has no limit, it must be unlimited and infinite.

In addition, the totality of things is unlimited both by virtue of the multitude of the bodies and the magnitude of the void. For if the void were unlimited but the bodies finite in number, the bodies would not have stayed anywhere but would have been transported and dispersed throughout the unlimited void, having nothing to support them or check them by collision. And if the void were finite, the unlimited number of bodies would not have anywhere to be.

42

Furthermore, the solid atoms, from which compounds come into being and into which they dissolve, possess more different shapes than the mind can grasp; for so many variations could not have come into being from a limited number of the same shapes. The like atoms of each shape are absolutely unlimited, whereas the variety of shapes is not absolutely unlimited, but only ungraspable [*for he says later on that the divisibility does not continue ad infinitum, but comes to a stop, adding, "Since the qualities change."*], unless one is willing to keep enlarging their magnitudes also, simply *ad infinitum*.

43

The atoms are in constant motion for eternity. [*He says later on that they also move with equal velocity, the void yielding equally to the lightest and the heaviest.*] Some travel great distances from one another, while others continue to oscillate in place when they find themselves entangled or enclosed in a mesh of atoms.

44

This is because each atom is separated from the rest by void, which cannot provide any resistance; and the atom's solidity makes it rebound after any collision, no matter how distant, whereupon it finds itself entangled in a mesh of atoms. Of these motions there is no beginning, since they are caused by the atoms and the void. [*Later on he says that the atoms have no quality except shape, size, and weight. That their color varies with their arrangement he says in the Twelve Fundamentals. He also maintains that atoms are not of every size; an atom, at any rate, has never been seen by the human eye.*]

A recapitulation of this length, if all these points are remembered, provides an adequate outline for our conception of the nature of things.

45

Furthermore, there is an unlimited number of worlds, some of them like ours, others unlike. For the atoms, being unlimited in number, as has just been shown, travel to the most distant points. For atoms of this description, out of which a world might arise, or from which it might be composed, have not been used up either on one world or on a limited number of worlds, whether resembling ours or not. Hence, nothing stands in the way of an unlimited number of worlds.

Furthermore, outlines exist that are of the same shape as the solids, though their thinness far exceeds that of visible objects. For it is not impos-

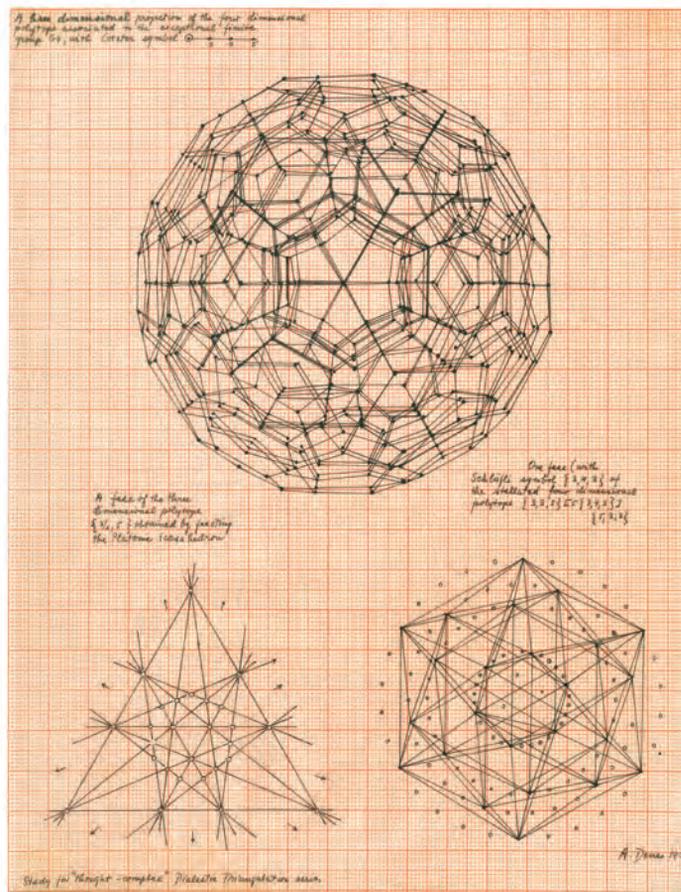
46

sible that such compounds should come into being in the surrounding air, or that there should be suitable opportunities for the production of hollow and thin films, or that effluences should retain the orderly arrangement and position they had in the solid objects. We call these outlines “images.” Furthermore, if as they travel through the void they encounter no resistance, they can cover enormous distances in an inconceivably brief interval of time. For resistance and lack of resistance are the equivalents of slowness and speed. In the intervals of time *mentally* conceivable, the image as it travels cannot itself reach more than one place at the same time—for that would be inconceivable; but in a *perceptible* interval of time it does arrive simultaneously, even if its actual point of departure is not the one we imagined. For if it were delayed, that would be equivalent to its meeting with resistance, even if until that point we allow nothing to hinder the speed of its motion. (This is a useful basic notion to bear in mind.) Also, the exceptional thinness of the images is contradicted by none of the phenomena we observe. Accordingly, the speeds of the images cannot be surpassed, given that they always find a passage to accommodate them, and meet with little or no resistance, whereas a great many atoms, if not an unlimited number, do at once encounter resistance. Besides this, one must bear in mind that the genesis of the images occurs with the speed of thought. For there is a continuous flow of particles from the surface of bodies (objects do not appear to have grown smaller, because these losses are replenished), and the image retains the arrangement and order of the atoms in the solid for a long time, though it is occasionally disrupted. These entities form rapidly in the surrounding air because they need not attain the compactness of solid bodies. They are also formed in other ways. For none of these possibilities is contradicted by our sensations if we consider how we ascribe to them the effects and qualities coming from external objects to us.<sup>75</sup>

We must also believe that it is when something from the external objects enters us that we see and think of them; for external objects could not stamp in us the nature of their own color and shape through the air that is between them and us, nor by means of the rays of light or any sorts of currents that travel from us to them, but rather by the entrance into our eyes or minds (as their size determines) of certain rapidly moving outlines that have the same color and shape as the external objects themselves; the same cause explains how they present the appearance of a single, continuous object and preserve their mutual interconnection at a distance from the substratum, their corresponding impact on our senses being due to the oscillation of the atoms in the solid object from which they come.

And whatever image we derive by focusing the mind or the sense organs, whether on the object’s shape or its concomitant properties, this shape is the

<sup>75</sup> This passage is obscure and probably corrupt.



*Study for Thought Complex*, by Agnes Denes, 1970.  
Ink on graph paper, 28.6 x 21.6 cm.

shape of the solid object and is due either to the continuous compacting or to the residue of the image. Falsehood and error always reside in the added opinion [*when a fact is awaiting confirmation or the absence of contradiction, which fact is subsequently not confirmed by virtue of an immovable opinion in ourselves that is linked to the imaginative impression, but distinct from it; it is this that gives rise to the falsehood*].<sup>76</sup> For impressions like those received from a picture, or arising in dreams, or from any other form of apprehension by the mind, or by the other criteria, would not have resembled what we call the real and true things had it not been for certain actual things on which we

51

<sup>76</sup> This passage, presumed to be part of the commentary, is regarded as corrupt.

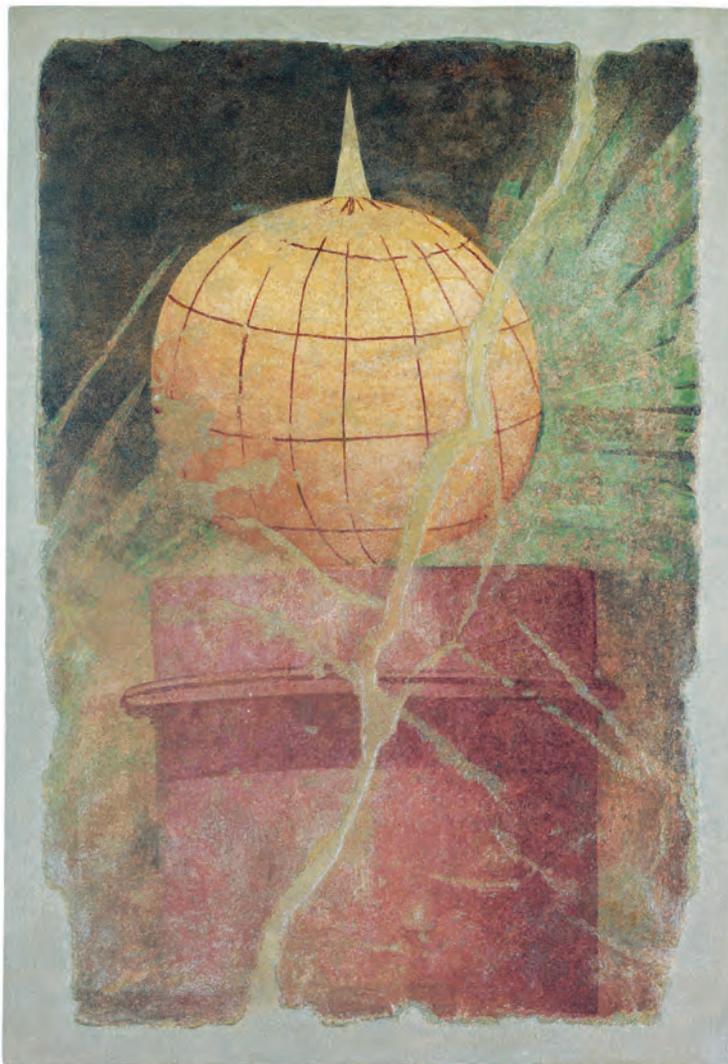
52 had cast our eyes. Error would not have occurred unless we had experienced some other movement in ourselves that was linked to, but distinct from, the apprehension of the impression; and from this movement, if it is not confirmed or *is* contradicted, falsehood results; whereas if it *is* confirmed, or *not* contradicted, truth results. And to this view we must adhere, lest the criteria based on clear evidence be repudiated, or error, strengthened in the same way, throw all these things into confusion.

53 Moreover, hearing occurs when a stream emanates from the person or thing that emits a sound, voice, or noise, or stimulates in any way whatsoever our auditory sense. This stream is dispersed into homogeneous masses, which at the same time retain a mutual connection and a distinctive unity, extending back to their source and thus for the most part producing the perception themselves, or at any rate indicating their external source; for without a certain interconnection that is transmitted from it, such a perception would not arise. Accordingly, one must not believe that the air itself is shaped by the sound being emitted or anything of the kind, for it is far from being the case that it is affected in this way by the voice. The blow that is struck within us whenever we utter a sound causes an expelling of masses suitable for producing a breathlike stream; and it is this stream that gives rise to the sensation of hearing.

Furthermore, we must believe that where smell is concerned, just as with sound, the experience would not occur unless masses emanated from the object that are the proper kind for stimulating the organ of smell, some of them exciting it disturbingly and strangely, others soothingly and familiarly.

54 Furthermore, we must believe that the atoms possess none of the qualities of phenomena except shape, weight, size, and all the properties necessarily bound up with shape. For every quality changes; but the atoms do not change at all, since something must remain solid and indissoluble in the dissolutions of the compounds—something that will ensure that changes are not into the nonexistent or from the nonexistent, but come about by rearrangements in many cases, and sometimes also by additions and subtractions. Hence it is necessary that the things that are rearranged be indestructible and unchangeable, and that they possess their own masses and characteristic shapes. For it is necessary that these things remain unchanged. For even when things in our experience change their shapes by the removal of matter, we grasp that the shape is inherent, while the qualities are not; unlike the shape, which is left behind, the qualities vanish entirely from the body. Thus the elements that are left behind are sufficient to account for the differences among the compounds, since it is necessary that some things be left behind and not pass into nonexistence.

56 Furthermore, we should not believe that atoms are of all sizes, lest the evidence prove us wrong; instead we should admit that there are some variations in size. For this will make it easier to explain what, according to our feelings and sensations, actually happens. But the notion that every magni-



Fresco showing a globe, also identified as a sundial, from the peristyle of the Villa of Publius Fannius Synistor at Boscoreale, Roman, c. 50–40 BC.

tude exists does not help to explain the differences of quality, since in that case visible atoms should have reached us, which has not been seen to occur; nor is it possible to conceive how an atom could become visible. Besides this, we must not believe there can be an unlimited number of masses, no matter how small, in any finite body. Accordingly, not only must we reject unlimited division into smaller pieces, lest we make everything weak, and

57 in our conceptions of compound things be forced to squeeze existing things into nonexistence; we must also not believe that the passages in finite bodies can be divided infinitely or into smaller and smaller increments. For it is not possible, once one says that the masses in an entity, however small they may be, are infinite in number, to conceive how the entity could be limited in size. For it is clear that the unlimited number of masses are of some size; accordingly, no matter how small they are, their aggregate would be infinitely large. And given that when something is finite its limit is distinct, even if one cannot observe it, it is not possible *not* to think of another such entity placed beside it; and it is therefore possible, when mentally adding one such entity to the next, to arrive in thought at infinity. We must conceive of the smallest perceptible mass as neither similar to one that can be traversed, nor as wholly dissimilar to it, but as having something in common with those that can be traversed, though parts cannot be distinguished in it. But whenever, by reason of the resemblance created by this common property, we think we will distinguish something in it—one part here, the other there—we must be encountering something else of equal size. We discern these one after another, beginning with the first, and not as occupying the same space or as touching each other's parts; instead we see them measuring out magnitudes in their characteristic way, more of them measuring out a larger magnitude, fewer of them a smaller. We must consider that this analogy also applies to the smallest part in the atom. For clearly, only in its minuteness does it differ from what is observed by the senses, though the same analogy applies. For precisely because of this analogy we have asserted that the atom has magnitude; we have merely projected something small onto a larger scale. Furthermore, we must regard the smallest and indivisible parts as the limits of lengths, furnishing from themselves as units the means of measuring the lengths of larger or smaller atoms, when we mentally contemplate invisible realities. For what the atoms have in common with things that do not admit of any passage is sufficient to take us this far. But it is not possible for these smallest parts to form compounds, supposing that they possessed motion.

60 Furthermore, one must not assert that the unlimited has an up or down as if it had a highest and lowest point. Yet we know that what is overhead from where we stand, or what is below any point we can conceive of (it being possible to extend a line indefinitely in either direction), will never appear to us as being simultaneously up and down in relation to the same point; for this is inconceivable. Consequently, it is possible to grasp as one the motion thought of as extending indefinitely upward and the motion thought of as extending indefinitely downward, even if it should happen ten thousand times that what moves from us to the places above our heads arrives at the feet of those above us, or that what moves downward from us arrives at the heads of those below. Nevertheless the entire motion, in both cases, is conceived of as extending indefinitely in opposite directions.



Bronze box mirror with the head of the god Pan in relief,  
Greek, late fourth century BC.

Furthermore, it is also necessary that the atoms possess equal velocity whenever they travel through the void without meeting resistance. Neither will the heavy atom travel faster than the small and light in the absence of resistance, nor will the small travel faster than the large, provided that all of them find passageways of suitable size and nothing hinders them; nor will their upward or lateral motion, which is due to collisions, nor their downward motion, due to weight, affect their velocity. For to whatever distance each motion continues, it does so at the speed of thought until it meets with resistance, either from an external source or from the atom's own weight counteracting the force of a blow. But in the case of compounds, some will travel faster than others, though the atoms themselves travel at the same velocity; this is because the atoms in the compounds travel in one direction in the shortest continuous time, even if they do so in intervals too brief for the mind to register; but they frequently collide, until the continuity of their motion is registered by the senses. For the additional assumption about the invisible, namely that the intervals of time distinguishable by reason will afford continuity of motion, is not true in such cases; for everything that can be observed by the senses or apprehended by the mind is true.

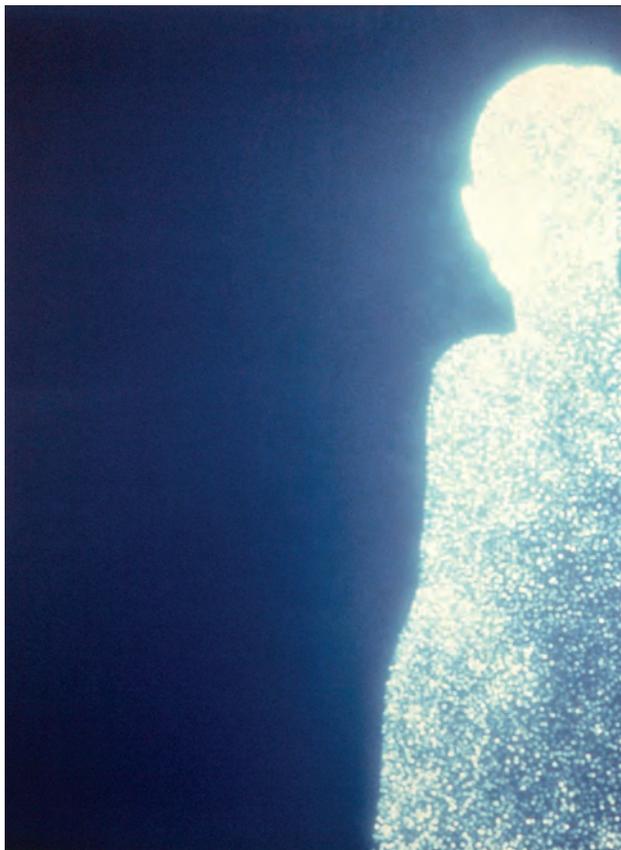
Next, we must consider, by referring to our sensations and feelings (for it is here that we will find the strongest confirmation of our beliefs), that the soul

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is a body made up of finely structured parts distributed throughout the aggregate, and most closely resembling breath with a certain admixture of heat, in one way resembling breath and in another resembling heat. But there is the part that greatly exceeds these others in the fineness of its particles and is therefore in closer harmony with the rest of the aggregate. The soul's faculties make all of this apparent, as do its feelings, its ease of motion, its processes of thought, and the things by the loss of which we would die. Furthermore, we must keep in mind that the soul is most responsible for the capacity for sensation; but it would not have had this capacity if it were not somehow enclosed by the rest of the aggregate. But the rest of the aggregate, though it has furnished this condition to the soul, gets a share of it itself; yet it does not retain all of the soul's properties, which is why, when the soul departs, it loses sensation. For the body did not acquire this power all by itself; instead, *something else* that grew together with it imparted it to the body; this *something*, through the power imparted to it by motion, immediately acquired for itself a capacity for sensation, and then, thanks to the proximity and interconnection of body and soul, imparted it to the body, just as I said. That is why the soul, as long as it remains in the body, will never lose sensation even if some other part is removed. But no matter what parts of it are destroyed along with the dissolution of its envelope (whether in whole or in part), if the soul survives, it will have sensation. But the rest of the aggregate, whether all of it or only a part, will no longer have sensation even if it survives, once those atoms that make up the nature of the soul, however small their number, have departed. Furthermore, when the entire aggregate is destroyed, the soul is dissipated and no longer has the same powers or mobility, so that it no longer possesses sensation. For it is not possible to think that it is capable of sensation if it is not in this complex and not performing these movements, when its surrounding envelope is not such as now contains it and makes these movements possible. [*He says that the soul is composed of the smoothest and roundest of atoms, which are greatly superior in this respect to those that constitute fire. One part of it, which is irrational, is diffused throughout the body; the rational part, on the other hand, resides in the chest, as is evident when we experience fear and joy. Sleep occurs when the parts of the soul that have been scattered throughout the aggregate are either contained or dispersed, and subsequently collide with one another by their impacts. Our semen is derived from the body as a whole.*] We must also consider this: that the term "incorporeal," according to the most widespread usage, is applied to what can be conceived of as self-existent. But it is not possible to regard anything incorporeal as self-existent except the void. And the void can neither act nor be acted upon, but merely allows bodies to move through it. Accordingly, those who say that the soul is incorporeal talk nonsense. For if it were incorporeal, it could neither act nor be acted upon; but as it happens, both of these properties are distinctly grasped as accidents of the soul. Accordingly, when we refer all these arguments about the soul to our feelings and sensations, bearing in mind the premises stated at the outset,



*Guest*, by Christopher Bucklow, 1995. Silver dye bleach print, 100.6 x 76.2 cm.

we will see that they have been adequately comprehended in the outlines, and hence we will be able, on this basis, to work out the details with accuracy and confidence.

Yet the shapes, colors, magnitudes, weights, and all those qualities that are predicated of a body, insofar as they are accidents either of all bodies or of visible bodies, are knowable in themselves by sensation; and we must think of them not as having their own independent existence (for that is inconceivable), or as wholly nonexistent, or as alien incorporeal entities clinging to body, or as parts of body; instead we must think of the whole body as deriving its permanent nature from all of them; but it is not, as it were, formed by their aggregation—as when a large aggregate is built up from the masses themselves, whether these masses are primary or any magnitudes smaller

than the given whole; instead, as I say, it is only from all of these that a body derives its own permanent nature. And all of them have their own characteristic ways of being perceived and distinguished, always in conjunction with the aggregate and in no way separated from it; for it is by being conceived of as a whole that the body is referred to as such.

70 Furthermore, accidents often attend bodies without becoming permanent concomitants; they are neither invisible nor incorporeal. Accordingly, when we use the term “accidents,” we make it clear that these properties have neither the nature of the whole thing to which they belong—the entity that we, conceiving of it as a whole, call a body—nor that of the permanent properties without which one cannot conceive of a body. Each of these “accidents” could be referred to according to certain apprehensions of the aggregate that  
71 accompanies them, though only when each is actually seen to accompany the body, since such accidents are not permanent. One need not banish from reality this clear evidence that the impermanent accidents do not have the nature of the whole that they accompany, which we call body, nor of the permanent properties that accompany the whole. Nor should we suppose, on the other hand, that the impermanent accidents have independent existence, since this is not conceivable either in their case or in the case of permanent properties; on the contrary, as is evident, they should all be regarded as accidents, not as permanent concomitants, of bodies, nor as things that have the status of independently existing entities. Instead, they are seen to be exactly as sensation itself characterizes them.

72 We should also pay the utmost attention to the following point. We must not investigate time as we do other things in a subject or substratum, that is, by reference to our own mental preconceptions; instead, we must examine the bare fact itself, in light of which we speak of time as being long or short, since we possess a sense of it. We need not use new terms as though they were preferable, but should employ the existing ones; nor should we attribute any other thing to time, as if this other thing shared the property that we attribute to time (for there are some who do so), but should only consider that to which we connect this property and by which we measure  
73 it. For this requires no demonstration; we need only reflect that we apply the notion of time to the days and nights and their parts, just as we do to states of emotion and apathy, and to motion and rest, conceiving in connection with them this very particular property to which we give the name “time.” [*He also says this in the second book of his work On Nature and in the Greater Epitome.*]

In addition to the above, we must also consider that worlds and every finite compound that closely resembles things we commonly see have arisen out of the unlimited, since all of these, whether large or small, have been separated off from particular aggregates of atoms; and all things are again dissolved, some faster, some slower, some through one set of causes, some  
74 through another. [*Hence it is clear that he also regards worlds as perishable,*

*since their parts undergo change. Elsewhere he asserts that the earth is supported on the air.] Furthermore, we should not suppose that the worlds necessarily have only one shape < . . . > [Indeed, he himself says in the twelfth book of his work On Nature that their shapes differ; for some are spherical, others egg-shaped, and still others of different shapes. Nevertheless, they are not of every shape. Nor are they living beings that have been separated from the unlimited.<sup>77</sup>] For no one could prove that a world of one sort might not have contained the sorts of seeds from which animals and plants and all other visible things are formed, or that another sort of world could not possibly contain them. [The same holds true of their nurture. And one must believe that it also happens likewise on the earth.]*

Furthermore, one must suppose that human nature has received all sorts of lessons from the facts themselves, and has been compelled to learn them, and that reason later refined what it thus received and made additional discoveries, among some peoples more swiftly, among others more slowly, progress being greater at certain seasons and times, at others less. Hence even the names of things were not originally due to convention, but in each of the various tribes, under the influence of particular feelings and particular impressions, men emitted air in a particular way, as determined by each of their feelings and impressions, which varied from region to region. Later on, each tribe imposed its own particular names so that their communications might be less ambiguous and more concise. As for things that are not visible, those who were aware of them introduced them, circulating as names for them the sounds they were moved to utter or which they selected by reasoning, relying on the most readily understood explanation as to why they would express themselves in that way. 75

Furthermore, with regard to celestial matters, we must believe that motions, solstices, risings, and settings of celestial bodies, and all such phenomena occur without the direction or command, now or in the future, of a being who at the same time enjoys perfect happiness along with immortality. For troubles, worries, rages, and partialities do not accord with bliss, but arise in weakness, fear, and dependence on neighbors. Nor, in turn, should we hold that swirling masses of fire, while endowed with bliss, undertake these motions at will. Instead, in the case of every term we employ, we must preserve the utter majesty that attaches to such concepts as bliss and immortality, lest we generate views that are out of keeping with that majesty; for such incongruity will engender the gravest mental disturbance. Hence we should attribute this necessity and periodic recurrence to the original entanglements among physical masses that created the world. 76

Furthermore, we must hold that arriving at precise knowledge of the 77

77 That the world is itself a living organism was a prominent doctrine of the Stoics (see 7.139 and 7.142–43).



*A Hunting Scene*, by Piero di Cosimo, c. 1505–1508.

79 cause of the most important things is the work of natural science, and that our happiness depends on this, and upon understanding what the heavenly bodies actually are, and everything related to them that contributes to the accuracy of our knowledge. Moreover, on such questions we must admit no plurality of causes or alternative explanations, but must simply assume that nothing suggestive of conflict or confusion is compatible with a nature that is immortal and blessed; and the mind is capable of grasping the absolute truth of this. But with regard to subjects for specific inquiry, there is nothing in the knowledge of settings, risings, eclipses, and all related phenomena that contributes to our happiness; on the contrary, those who have obtained some information about these matters and yet remain ignorant about their nature and principal causes feel as much fear as those who have not obtained such information; indeed, their fears might even surpass those of the wholly ignorant, when the dread that results from this additional knowledge prevents them from finding a solution or understanding how these phenomena are regulated in relation to the highest causes. Accord-

80 ingly, if we discover multiple causes for solstices, risings, settings, eclipses, and the like, as we did in matters of detail, we must not suppose that our treatment of these matters fails to achieve a degree of accuracy sufficient to ensure our undisturbed and happy state. Thus when we investigate the causes of celestial phenomena and everything that is not known, we must take into account the array of ways in which analogous phenomena occur in our experience; and we should disdain those who fail to recognize the difference between what exists or comes to be from a single cause and that which may come about from a variety of causes, because they overlook the fact that the actual objects transmit their impressions from a distance, and



*Return from the Hunt*, by Piero di Cosimo, c. 1505–1508.

The principal inspiration for these companion panels showing a hunt by men and satyrs and their return from the hunt was the fifth book of the *De Rerum Natura* by the Epicurean poet and philosopher Lucretius (c. 99–c. 55 BC).

are also ignorant of the circumstances under which it is not possible to be free of distress. Hence, if we think that an event might happen in one of several possible ways, then when we discover that it could occur in many different ways we will be as free of distress as if we knew that it occurred in that particular way. In addition to all these considerations, one must grasp one more point, namely that the greatest anxiety for the human mind arises from the belief that these celestial bodies are blessed and indestructible, yet at the same time have volitions, actions, and purposes that conflict with that belief; and from expecting or fearing some everlasting evil, either the kind portrayed in myths, or the actual absence of sensation that attends death, as if it had to do with us; and from the fact that these feelings are due less to our convictions than to a certain irrational propensity. Accordingly, if men do not contain their fear, they suffer an anxiety equal to or greater than that of the man who gives these matters only the occasional random thought. But tranquillity can be attained only by freeing ourselves of all these fears and keeping the principal and most important truths constantly in mind. Hence, we must take note of our present feelings and sensations, whether universal or particular, and pay heed to all the available evidence in light of each of the criteria. For by studying them we shall fully and correctly explain the cause of our anxiety and fear and free ourselves, accounting for celestial phenomena and for all the other regularly occurring phenomena that afflict mankind with its worst fears.

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Here then, Herodotus, you have in summary form the chief points about the nature of all things. Accordingly, if this statement is accurately retained and takes effect, a man will, I presume, be far better prepared than others, even if he does not go into all the exact details. For he will himself elucidate

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many of the points I have worked out in detail in my complete treatise; and this summary, if retained in memory, will be of constant use to him.

Its character is such that those who are already adequately, or even perfectly, acquainted with the details can, by distilling their observations into such fundamental concepts as these, best pursue their diligent study of nature as a whole; those, on the other hand, who have not fully mastered the material, will be able to review, silently and with the speed of thought, the doctrines most likely to ensure peace of mind.

This is his letter on natural science. Next comes his letter on celestial phenomena.

Epicurus to Pythocles, greetings.

84 Cleon brought me a letter from you in which you continue to express the affection that my zeal on your behalf has earned me, and you try in a convincing manner to recall the arguments that make for a happy life. You also request a concise and well-organized account of the celestial phenomena as an aid to memory; for our other works on the subject are, as you say, hard to remember, though you refer to them constantly. I was glad to receive your  
85 request and am full of pleasant expectations. Accordingly, having completed all my other writing, I will grant your request, since these arguments will be useful to many others too, especially to those who have only recently embarked on a genuine study of nature, as well as those who are engaged in pursuits that go deeper than any of the ordinary branches of education. Grasp these doctrines well and, once you have committed them to memory, survey them along with the others in the short epitome I sent to Herodotus.

86 First of all, one must bear in mind that, like everything else, knowledge of celestial phenomena, whether studied in connection with other things or in isolation, has no other purpose than to foster tranquillity and firm conviction. We must not try to establish by force what is impossible, nor apply the same method as in our discussions of human lives or the other problems of natural philosophy (where we maintain, for example, that the world consists entirely of bodies and intangible nature, or that the elements are indivisible, or any of the other propositions that admit of only one possible explanation of the phenomena observed). But this is not the case when we come to celestial  
87 phenomena, which admit of multiple causes and multiple accounts of their origin and nature that are consistent with the evidence of our senses. For the study of nature must be based not on empty rules and arbitrary principles, but on what the phenomena dictate. For our life has no need now for subjective reasoning or empty opinion; instead we need to free our lives of anxiety. Everything proceeds smoothly and in conformity with the phenomena if all is explained in accordance with the method of multiple causes, once we have given due consideration to what is plausibly said about them. But whenever we admit one argument, yet reject another that is equally consistent with



*Invisible Disparities, Anthropic Rock*, by Ernesto Klar, 2015.  
Fused dust and glass, 12.2 × 7.4 × 11.9 cm.

the phenomena, it is clear that we abandon the study of nature entirely and plunge into myth. There are certain things in our own experience that furnish evidence of what occurs in the celestial realm, and we see how *these* occur; but we do not see how celestial phenomena occur, for they may have a variety of possible causes. However, we must preserve each fact as it presents itself, and distinguish from it the attendant facts, the occurrence of which from a variety of causes is not contradicted by our own experience.

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A world is a circumscribed portion of heaven that contains stars, earth, and all visible things, the dissolution of which will bring about the annihilation of everything within it; it is separated from the unlimited and terminates at a boundary that is either rare or dense; it is either revolving or stationary; it has an outline that is either round or triangular or of any other shape; for every configuration is possible, since none is ruled out by the phenomena of our world, in which no limit is discerned. It can be comprehended that there is an unlimited number of such worlds, and that such a world can come into being in a world or in an *interspace* (our term for the space between worlds) in a place containing considerable void, but not, as some maintain, in a vast expanse that

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is completely void.<sup>78</sup> A world comes into existence when certain suitable seeds flow from one world or *interspace*, or from several, and undergo gradual additions, articulations, or migrations, as may chance to occur, and waterings from suitable sources, until they mature and attain a permanence commensurate with the capacity of the foundation previously laid down to sustain them. For more is required than an aggregate or a vortex in the void in which a world may arise (by necessity, as some believe) and grow until it collides with another, as one of the so-called natural scientists says. For this is at odds with the phenomena.

90 The sun and moon and the other stars did not come into existence independently, only to be enveloped later into our world and all the parts that preserve it; instead they began to form and grow at the outset [*like the earth and sea*] by the accretions and rotations of certain fine-grained substances, whether airy or fiery or both; for the evidence of our senses suggests this. The size of the sun and of the other stars relative to us is as great as it appears.<sup>79</sup> [*This he also says in the eleventh book of his work On Nature; “for if,” he says, “the size of a star had diminished on account of the distance, its brightness would have diminished much more.”*] For there is no other distance that could better correspond to this size. But in and of itself it may be slightly larger or smaller or precisely as large as it appears. For that is just how, in our own experience, fires are registered by sense when seen from a distance. And every objection to this part of the theory will easily be dispelled by anyone who pays attention to the evidence, as we demonstrate in our work *On Nature*. The risings and settings of the sun and moon and other stars may be due to a kindling and an extinguishing, provided that conditions are such, in each of the two regions, as to produce this result; for none of the appearances rules this out. And these risings and settings might be caused by the stars’ appearances above the earth or by occultation;<sup>80</sup> for this too is not ruled out by any appearances. And it is not impossible that their motions are caused by the rotation of the entire heaven or by *its* rest and *their* rotation according to some compulsion to rise that accompanied the world’s creation.

92 < . . . > owing to excessive heat caused by the spread of fire, which always travels to adjacent regions. The retrograde motions of the sun and moon may result from an obliquity of the heaven that is periodically imposed; likewise, they may be due to a counterthrust of the air or because the necessary fuel is insufficient or has been exhausted; they may even be due to a whirling motion imparted to these stars from the beginning, which causes them to move in a sort of spiral. For all such explanations and their like are not in conflict with any clear evidence, as long as where details are concerned one adheres to what is possible and can refer each of them to what is consistent with the phenomena, undaunted by the slavish artifices of astronomers.

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78 Perhaps Leucippus is meant (see 9.30).

79 Possibly a reply to another argument of the Skeptics against making inferences from the senses (see 9.85).

80 The passage of one celestial body in front of a second, thus hiding the second from view.

The waning and, in turn, the waxing of the moon may be due to the rotation of the body and equally well to configurations assumed by the air; they may also be due to occultations, or may happen in any of the ways the facts of our experience can suggest to explain such phenomena. But one must not be so enamored of the explanation based on a single cause as groundlessly to reject the others from ignorance of what can and cannot be understood by a human being, and the consequent longing to understand what cannot be understood. Furthermore, it may be that the moon's light emanates from itself; alternatively, it may be derived from the sun. For in our own experience many things are seen to give off their own light, while many derive their light from other things. None of the celestial phenomena stand in the way if one always bears in mind the method of multiple explanations and considers the many consistent hypotheses and causes, instead of paying heed to what is inconsistent and giving it a false importance so as always to fall back in one way or another upon the single explanation. The image of a face in the moon may result from a transposition of its parts or from an occultation, or in any of the other ways that might be seen to accord with the phenomena. With regard to all the celestial phenomena, one must not abandon a method of that kind; for he who fights against the clear evidence will never be able to achieve true peace of mind.

An eclipse of the sun or moon may occur as a result of the extinguishing of their light, as has been seen to occur in our own experience; and by now we know that it may be due to occultation by some other celestial body, either the earth or some other similar body. And thus one must simultaneously review the explanations that are mutually consistent and bear in mind that their simultaneous applicability is by no means impossible. [*He says this in the twelfth book of his work On Nature, and adds that the sun is eclipsed when the moon obscures it, and that the moon is eclipsed by the shadow of the earth; alternatively, an eclipse may be due to the moon's withdrawal. This is also said by Diogenes the Epicurean in the first book of his Selected Writings.*]

Furthermore, we must interpret the regularity of an orbit just as we do various events that regularly occur in our experience. May the nature of the divine not be brought forward to explain this, but let it remain in perfect bliss, relieved of duty. For if this is not done, the entire study of the causes of celestial phenomena will be fruitless, as it has by now proved to be for some who have not adopted a possible method but have fallen into the foolishness of thinking that all these events occur in one way only, and of rejecting all the others that are possible, allowing themselves to be swept away into the realm of the inconceivable, and being unable to take a comprehensive survey of the phenomena that must be taken as signposts.

The variations in lengths of nights and days may be due to the speeding up and slowing down of the sun's motion in the sky, given the variety of distances it traverses, since it covers some distances more swiftly or more slowly, as is also observed in our own experience; and with these phenomena our own explana-



Cypriot limestone inscribed relief, c. third century BC.

Zeus, holding a thunderbolt in his right hand, sits on a throne at center. Facing him is Apollo, playing the kithara; the smaller figure behind him is identified as Hermes by the caduceus, his winged herald's staff. Above the gods is a chariot pulled by four winged horses. At the bottom, a long inscription expresses homespun philosophical sentiments about fate and the gods.

tions must agree. But those who accept a single explanation find themselves at odds with the phenomena and have failed to consider how a man may acquire knowledge.

99 The signs indicating weather to be expected may be coincidental, as in the case of the animals we see among us, or they may be due to changes in the air. For neither of these explanations is in conflict with the phenomena; and it is not possible to see in which cases the effect results from one cause or from the other.

100 Clouds may form and gather either because the air contracts under the pressure of winds, or because atoms that adhere to one another and are suitable to produce this result become enmeshed, or because currents pool together from the earth and the waters; but it is not impossible that the aggregations of such bodies are brought about in several other ways. Rain may be produced when the clouds are either compressed or transformed; or it may be caused by exhalations of winds from appropriate places when there is a more forceful inflow from certain aggregates suitable for such discharges.

Thunder may be due to the rolling of wind in the hollows of the clouds (as occurs in our cisterns), or to the roaring of fire in them when fanned by a wind, or to their disintegration and dispersal, or to the friction and shattering of frozen clouds. As in our entire inquiry, so in this particular instance, the phenomena require us to entertain multiple explanations. Lightning too occurs in a variety of ways; for when clouds rub against one another and collide, the fire-producing atoms generate lightning. Or lightning may be caused by the wind-blown emission from the clouds of particles likely to produce such brightness, or by the squeezing out of these particles when the clouds are compressed either by one another or by the wind. Alternatively, the light diffused from the stars may be trapped in clouds and then driven through them by their own motions or by the wind. Lightning may also occur when light composed of the finest particles filters through the clouds (at which point the clouds themselves may ignite and produce thunder); or it may occur as a result of the combustion of the wind due to the violence of its motion and the intensity of its compression; or, when the clouds are broken up by winds and the fire-producing atoms are then expelled, these too cause lightning to appear. Lightning may occur in several other ways, as will easily be seen if one adheres to the phenomena and can contemplate what is similar to them. Lightning precedes thunder when the clouds are constituted as described above and the configuration that produces lightning is expelled at the moment when the wind falls upon the cloud; thereafter the pent-up wind produces thunder; or, if both occur at the same time, the lightning travels toward us at a greater speed, the thunder coming later, exactly as when people inflicting blows are observed from a distance.

A thunderbolt is caused when winds are repeatedly accumulated, compressed, and violently ignited; or when a part is severed and sent violently downward, the rupture occurring because the compression of the clouds has made the adjacent regions more dense; or it may be due like thunder to the emission of the pent-up fire, when this has accumulated and been inflated with gusts of wind and has shattered the cloud, being unable to escape to adjacent areas because it is increasingly compressed—typically near some high mountain, where thunderbolts mainly fall. Thunderbolts may be produced in many other ways as well. May myth only be banished! And it *will* be banished, if one adheres to the phenomena when drawing inferences about what cannot be observed.

Whirlwinds are due to the descent of a cloud forced downward like a pillar by a strong circular wind, while an outside wind simultaneously thrusts it sideways; or they may be due to a circular disposition of the wind, when a current of air from above forcibly compresses it; or it may be that a strong eddy of winds has been generated and is unable to flow out laterally because the surrounding air is condensed. As they descend to earth, they cause cyclones, in accordance with the various ways they are produced through the force of the wind; and on reaching the sea they cause waterspouts.



Statuette of Zeus or Poseidon, Greek, early fifth century BC.

The identity of this mature bearded figure would have been clear from the attribute that was originally held in its right hand. It would have been either a thunderbolt, weapon of Zeus, god of the sky and ruler of the Olympian deities, or a trident, wielded by Poseidon, lord of the sea.

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Earthquakes may be caused by the trapping of wind underground, and by its being dispersed among small masses of earth and then set in constant motion, thereby causing the earth to vibrate. And the earth either encloses this wind from outside or from the collapse of foundations into underground caves, which fans the trapped air into a wind. Or they may be due to the communication of the movement that results from the collapse of many foundations and to its being resisted when it encounters denser masses of earth. These motions inside the earth may have many other causes. Winds sometimes arise when some foreign substance gradually enters the air, and also through the gathering of abundant water. All the other winds arise when a small number of them fall into the earth's many cavities, where they divide and multiply.

Hail is caused by the stronger freezing of certain breathlike particles that have collected from all sides and are distributed into drops; and also by the more moderate freezing of watery particles and their simultaneous rupture, which at one and the same time condenses them and breaks them up, so that they become frozen in parts and in the mass. The spherical shape of hailstones is not impossibly due to the melting of their extremities on all sides, and to the fact that freezing particles, whether watery or windlike, surround them evenly on all sides. 107

Snow may be formed when a fine rain issues from the clouds through pores of commensurate size because of constant pressure upon suitable clouds from a strong wind; and then this rain, as it falls, freezes as a result of some severe condition of coldness in the regions below the clouds; and also as a result of the freezing of clouds that have a fragile and uniform density, a fall of snow might occur when moisture-bearing clouds are densely packed against one another; these clouds, undergoing a sort of compression, produce hail—something that happens mostly in spring. And the rubbing together of frozen clouds may cause an accumulation of snow to be expelled. Snow may also have other causes. 108

Dew forms when particles capable of producing such moisture assemble from the air; it is also produced when such particles rise, either from damp regions or those containing water (where dew mainly forms), and subsequently reunite, pool their moisture, and fall to the regions below, just as, in our own experience, similar phenomena are frequently observed. The formation of frost is no different from that of dew, particles of a certain type becoming frozen in the presence of cold air. 109

Ice is produced by the expulsion from the water of the circular atoms, and the compression of the acute-angled and irregularly shaped atoms within it; it is also caused by the accretion of such atoms from without, which when driven together cause the water to freeze after a certain number of the spherical atoms are expelled.

The rainbow occurs when the sun shines on moist air; it may also result from a peculiar union of light and air that will produce the distinctive properties of these colors, either all together or one kind at a time. And from the reflection of this light the surrounding air will take on the colors we observe when the sun shines on its parts. Its curved appearance is due either to the fact that the distance from every point is perceived to be equal, or to the fact that the atoms in the air are compressed, or because the atoms in the clouds, which are derived from the same air, have been united in such a way that their aggregate displays a sort of roundness. 110

A halo around the moon occurs because the air on all sides extends to the moon, or because it uniformly elevates the currents from the moon until it disposes the cloudy mass in a circle, without separating it completely; or because it elevates the air surrounding the moon symmetrically from all sides to a circumference around it and there forms a dense ring. This occurs in 111

certain parts either because some current has forced its way in from outside or because enough heat has gained possession of suitable passageways to bring this about.

Comets occur either because fire is collected in the heavens at certain places and times under favorable conditions; or because at times the heavens have a particular motion above us so that such stars become visible; or because the stars themselves, at certain times and under certain conditions, are propelled into our vicinity and become visible. Their disappearance is caused by motions in the opposite direction.

112 Certain stars revolve in place, not only because this part of the world, around which the rest revolves, is stationary, as some say, but also because a circular eddy of air, surrounding this part, prevents those stars from wandering as the others do; or because there is no suitable fuel nearby, whereas there is plenty in the region where they are seen. And there are many other ways this could happen if one is capable of reasoning in accordance with the phenomena.

113 That some of the stars wander (if that is what they actually do) while others do not may be explained by supposing that though their original motions were circular, some of them were forced to be whirled around with the same uniform rotation, while others are whirled with rotations that vary. It may also be that some of the regions through which they travel have uniform expanses of air that push them forward in one direction and keep them burning uniformly, while elsewhere there are irregular regions of air and these account for the variations we observe. But to advance a single cause for these phenomena when the phenomena suggest a multiplicity is to adopt the deranged and improper method of those who espouse a groundless astronomy and who assign senseless causes for celestial phenomena whenever they press divinity into service.

114 That some heavenly bodies are seen to be overtaken by others as they proceed along the same orbit occurs because they travel more slowly or because the same whirling motion draws them in the opposite direction; or it may be that some travel over a larger and others over a smaller space in completing the same revolution. But to posit a single explanation for these phenomena is the proper work of those who wish to dazzle the crowd with marvels.

115 So-called falling stars may be due in some instances to their mutual friction, in others to the expulsion of certain fragments through the action of the wind, just as we said occurred in the case of lightning. They may also result from the meeting of fire-producing atoms (kindred material arising to produce this result), their subsequent paths determined by their initial encounter; alternatively, it may be that wind collects in certain dense mist-like masses and then, as a result of being trapped, ignites, bursts through its envelope, and travels wherever its motion impels it. There are other ways to account for this phenomenon without resorting to myth.

That signs indicating weather to be expected appear to be associated with animal behavior is mere coincidence; for the animals offer no necessary

reason that stormy weather should occur; and no divine being sits observing the comings and goings of these animals and then fulfills their signs. For such folly would not afflict the ordinary being, however little enlightened, let alone one who had attained perfect happiness. 116

Bear all these things in mind, Pythocles. For then you will keep far away from myth and will be able to comprehend related matters. Apply yourself especially to the study of first causes and infinity and related subjects, and again to the study of criteria and the feelings and our reasons for reflecting on these things. For to study these subjects together will easily enable you to grasp the causes of the particular phenomena; but those who have not felt the keenest devotion to these subjects will not have understood them well, nor will they have attained the end for which they should be studied.

These are his views on celestial phenomena. 117

With regard to the conduct of life, and how we ought to choose some things and avoid others, he writes as follows. But first let us go through what he and his followers have to say about the wise man.

Injuries inflicted by human beings arise from hate, envy, or contempt, to which the wise man proves superior by reason. Furthermore, he who has once become wise never again assumes the opposite character, nor does he willingly feign it. He will be more susceptible to feelings, but this will not impair his wisdom. Yet not every physical constitution would permit a man to become wise, nor every nationality. Even when he is tortured the wise man is content. He alone will feel gratitude toward friends, present and absent alike. When tortured, however, he moans and wails. The wise man will not consort with women in any manner proscribed by law, as Diogenes says in his *Epitome of Epicurus' Ethical Doctrines*. Nor will he punish his servants; instead he will pity them and pardon any who are of good character. The Epicureans do not think that the wise man will fall in love; nor will he be concerned about his burial; nor do they think that love is sent by the gods, as Diogenes says in his < . . . >. Nor will the wise man make fine speeches. They maintain that sexual relations are never beneficial, and that one should be grateful not to be injured by them. 118

The wise man will not marry and beget children, as Epicurus says in *Problems* and his work *On Nature*. Occasionally, under certain circumstances in his life, he may marry. He will avert himself from certain persons. He will not talk nonsense when drunk, as Epicurus says in his *Symposium*. He will not participate in politics, as he says in the first book of his work *On Life*, or make himself a tyrant, or live like a Cynic (as he says in the second book of his work *On Life*), or be a beggar. But even when he has lost his sight he will not withdraw from life, as he says in that same book. The wise man will also 119

- 120a experience grief, as Diogenes says in the fifth book of his *Selected Writings*. He will avail himself of the law courts; he will leave behind written works; but he will not deliver eulogies. He<sup>81</sup> will take thought for his property and for the future. He will love the countryside. He will face his destiny and will not make any possession dear to him. He will take thought for his reputation only to the extent that he avoids being looked down upon. He will enjoy himself more than others at state festivals.
- 121b He will set up statues; but it will be a matter of indifference to him whether one is set up in his honor. Only the wise man will be competent to discuss music and poetry, though he will not write poems himself. No wise man is wiser than another. He will earn money if he needs to, but only by his wisdom. He will, on occasion, pay court to a monarch. He will be grateful to anyone who corrects him. He will establish a school, but not so as to court the mob. He will give readings in public, but only upon request. He will assert his opinions and will not remain in doubt about them. He will be himself even when asleep.<sup>82</sup> And he will brave death on behalf of a friend.
- 120b Epicurus' followers hold that not all errors are equal; that health is in some instances a good, in others a matter of indifference; that courage does not come naturally but stems from a calculation of one's interest; and that friendship is based on our needs. It has to be initiated, of course, just as we have to plant a seed in the earth; but it is maintained by a shared enjoyment of life's pleasures. Two kinds of happiness may be conceived: the highest happiness, such as the gods enjoy, which cannot be increased; and the kind that allows for the addition and subtraction of pleasures.
- 121a But let us turn to Epicurus' letter.
- 122 Epicurus to Menoeceus, greetings.  
Let no one, because he is young, be slow to pursue philosophy, nor, because he is old, grow weary of the study; for no one is too young or too old to take thought for the health of the soul. And he who says that it is either too early or too late to study philosophy resembles one who says that it is too early or too late to pursue happiness. Therefore, both the young and the old man must seek wisdom, the latter so that as he ages he remains young in good things, by his joy in what has been, and the former so that while he is young he may at the same time be old, by being freed of the fear of what is to come. Thus we must act in such a way as to attain happiness; for if that is present we have everything; but if absent, we do all we can to attain it.
- 123 Perform and practice the actions I have constantly recommended, adopting

81 Scholars generally assume that the passages that begin here are out of order in the manuscripts.

82 That is, he will not be disturbed by improper dreams (see 10.135).



Two views of a marble head of a bearded man, second century Roman copy of a Greek statue of the fourth century BC. Since eight other Roman copies of this Greek portrait type are known, it probably represents a famous figure. Some scholars have suggested that the original statue portrayed the Athenian lawgiver Solon, one of the Seven Sages.

them as the essentials of a life well lived. First, believe that the gods exist, imperishable and blessed, in accordance with the common view of divinity, and refrain from attributing to them anything contrary to or at odds with their immortality and blessedness. Affirm, instead, everything that could safeguard their immortality and blessedness. For gods exist, and the knowledge of them is evident; but they are not such as the many believe them to be; for people do not maintain consistent views about them. The man who denies the gods of the many is not impious, but rather he who applies to the gods the beliefs of the many. For their views about the gods are not true preconceptions but false assumptions; from their point of view, the greatest evils accrue to the bad and the greatest blessings to the good through the agency of the gods.<sup>83</sup> For they always favor their own good qualities and embrace men who are like themselves, but regard everything that is unlike them as alien.

124

Accustom yourself to the idea that death is nothing to us. For all good and all bad are vested in sense perception, and death is deprivation of sense perception. Hence, a correct understanding that death is nothing to us makes the mortality of life enjoyable, not by giving life an unlimited span but by dispelling the desire for immortality. For life holds no fears for one who has truly grasped that there is nothing to be feared in not living. It is therefore

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83 An obscure and possibly corrupt passage.



Cypriot limestone grave marker (detail), fourth century BC, with two men reclining at a banquet. Such a scene may have simply evoked the pleasures of daily life or it may have been intended to elevate the deceased to a heroic level.

the foolish man who says that he fears death not because when present it will give pain but because the prospect of it gives pain. For anything that does not cause annoyance when it is present occasions a groundless pain when it is anticipated. Therefore death, that most horrible of evils, is nothing to us, since when we exist, death is not present, and when death is present, we do not exist. It is nothing, then, either to the living or to the dead, since it does not exist for the former, and the latter no longer exist. And as for the many, at times they flee death as the greatest of evils, at others they < . . . > as a respite from the bad things in life. The wise man neither rejects life nor fears death. For living does not offend him, nor does he regard not living as something bad. Just as, in the case of food, he chooses not the larger portion, but the more pleasant, so he seeks to enjoy not the longest time, but the most pleasant. And anyone who advises the young to live well and the old to die well is foolish, not only because life is desirable, but also because it is one and the same thing to live well and to die well. Far worse is the man who says that it is good not to be born, “but once born, to pass with all speed through the gates of Hades.”<sup>84</sup>

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127 For if he sincerely believes this, why does he not depart life? If he is firmly convinced, he should be prepared to do so. But if he is joking, he is being foolish in matters that do not admit of it. One must bear in mind that the future is not wholly ours nor wholly not ours; accordingly, we should neither await it as quite certain to come nor despair of it as quite certain not to come.

We must take into account that some of our desires are natural, others

84 A quotation from the elegiac poet Theognis, verse 427.

groundless; among the natural, some are necessary, others are merely natural; and among the necessary, some are necessary for happiness, others for the body's tranquillity, and still others for life itself. A steady observation of these things teaches one to relate every choice and every aversion to the health of the body and the tranquillity of the mind, since this is the goal of a happy life. For we do everything for the sake of being free of pain and fear; and once we achieve this state, the storm of the mind is completely dispelled, since the living creature has no need to go in search of something that is lacking, or to seek for anything else by which the good of the soul and that of the body will be fully attained. For we have a need for pleasure only when we are in pain because of the absence of pleasure; but when we are not in pain, we no longer feel the need for pleasure. 128

And this is why we say that pleasure is the beginning and the end of a happy life. For we have acknowledged that pleasure is a primary and innate good and the starting point of our every choice and aversion; and to it we return, since feeling is the criterion by which we judge every good. And it is because pleasure is our first and innate good that we choose every pleasure, though we often forgo many pleasures when a greater annoyance results from them. And we regard many pains as preferable to pleasures when a prolonged endurance of pains brings us greater pleasure. Accordingly, though every pleasure, because we have a natural predilection for it, is good, not every pleasure is to be chosen, just as all pain is bad, though not all kinds of pain are always to be avoided. But it is proper to judge all these matters by weighing and contemplating benefits and disadvantages; for there are times when we treat the good as bad, or, alternatively, the bad as good. 129

And we regard self-sufficiency as a great good, not so as to partake of little on every occasion, but so that if we do not have much we may be content with little, since we are genuinely persuaded that they take the greatest pleasure in luxury who need it least, and that what is natural is easy to procure, while the artificial is hard to come by. For simple fare brings as much pleasure as an extravagant feast, once the pain of want has been removed; and barley cake and water give a hungry man the greatest pleasure. To accustom oneself, therefore, to simple, inexpensive fare supplies the essentials of health, and enables a man to face the demands of life without shrinking, and puts us in a better condition when we encounter expensive fare from time to time, and makes us fearless of fortune. But when we say that pleasure is our goal, we do not mean the pleasures of the prodigal or the self-indulgent, as the ignorant think, or those who disagree with or misinterpret our views. By pleasure we mean the absence of pain in the body and of torment in the soul. For it is not drinking bouts and continuous carousals, nor the pleasures to be had with boys and women, nor the enjoyment of fish and all the other delicacies a luxurious table furnishes that produce a pleasant life, but the sober reasoning that examines the basis of every choice and aversion, and banishes the beliefs that afflict the soul with its worst torments. 130 131 132

Of all this the beginning and the greatest good is prudence. And that is why prudence, from which all the other virtues spring, is more valuable even than philosophy. For it teaches that it is not possible to live pleasantly unless one lives prudently, honorably, and justly; nor can one live prudently, honorably, and justly unless one lives pleasantly. For the virtues have been united with the pleasant life, and a pleasant life is inseparable from the virtues.

133 For whom do you consider superior to a man who holds pious beliefs about the gods and is utterly immune to the fear of death? He has taken nature's purpose into account and grasps how easily the limit of good things can be reached and attained, and how slight are either the duration or the intensity of bad things. As for fate, which some have posited as ruler over all things, he laughs at the notion, and claims instead that some things occur by chance, others through our own agency; for he sees that necessity is beyond human control and that chance is unstable, whereas our own actions, to which blame and its opposite naturally attach, are free. It would be better to adhere to the lore about the gods than be a slave to the destiny posited by the natural philosophers; for the former offers some hope of pardon if we honor the gods, while the philosophers' necessity is inexorable. He does not believe that chance is a god, as the many do, since there is no disorder in the acts of a god; nor that it is an uncertain cause. For he does not think that anything good or bad is given by chance to men so as to make life blessed, though it furnishes the starting points of great goods or great evils. He believes that the misfortune of the rational is better than the good fortune of the irrational. For it is better if what is well judged in our actions does not owe its success to chance.

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Adopt these and related practices day and night, and in company with a person like yourself, and you will never be disturbed by a dream or vision, but will live like a god among men. For a man living in the midst of immortal blessings resembles no mortal creature.

Elsewhere Epicurus rejects all divination, as in the *Short Epitome*, and says, "No means of foretelling the future exists; but even if it did, we should regard what happens according to it as nothing to us."

Such are his views on the conduct of life, and he has discussed them at greater length elsewhere.

136 He differs from the Cyrenaics about pleasure.<sup>85</sup> For they do not admit the pleasure that is static, but only the pleasure that involves motion. Epicurus admits both, of mind as well as body, as he says in his work *On Choice and Avoidance*, in his work *On the End*, in the first book of his work *On Life*, and in his letter to his friends at Mytilene. Likewise Diogenes, in the seventeenth book of his *Selected Writings*, and Metrodorus in his *Timocrates* speak of pleasure in this way: "pleasure being conceived as involving both motion and rest." And Epicurus, in

<sup>85</sup> Diogenes discusses the doctrines of the Cyrenaic school at 2.86–93.



*Sleeping Muse*, by Constantin Brancusi, 1910.

his work *On Choice*, says, “The absence of turmoil and the absence of pain are static pleasures, while joy and delight are seen to involve motion and activity.”

He also differs from the Cyrenaics in this: They hold that pains of the body are worse than those of the mind; criminals, at any rate, are made to suffer corporal punishment. But Epicurus holds that the pains of the mind are worse; the flesh, at any rate, is buffeted only by the present, whereas the mind is buffeted by the past, the present, and the future. By the same token, the greatest pleasures are those of the mind. As proof that pleasure is the goal, he points out that living creatures, as soon as they are born, are content with pleasure and averse to pain, by nature and without reason. By instinct, then, we avoid pain; as when even Heracles, devoured by his tunic, cries out,

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Biting and shouting; on all sides groaned the rocky peaks,  
And the headlands of Locris, and the Euboean cliffs.<sup>86</sup>

We choose the virtues not for their own sake but for the sake of pleasure, just as we take medicine for the sake of health. This is also said in the twentieth book of his *Selected Writings* by Diogenes, who also calls educa-

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<sup>86</sup> Sophocles, *Trachiniae* 787f. Heracles' wife, Deianira, smeared the tunic with poison, believing it was a love potion. Heracles, donning the tunic, is overwhelmed with burning pain. The fact that even the notoriously tough Heracles is averse to pain shows that this is a natural reaction.

tion (*agogē*) a way of life (*diagogē*). Epicurus says that virtue is the only thing inseparable from pleasure, everything else—food, for example—being separable from it.

Let me now put the finishing touch, as one might say, to my entire work and to the life of this philosopher by presenting his *Chief Maxims*, thereby bringing the whole work to a close and offering as its conclusion the beginning of happiness.

139 I. The blessed and immortal has no troubles himself and causes none for anyone else; hence he has nothing to do with resentments and partisanship; for all such impulses are a sign of weakness. [*Elsewhere he says that the gods are discernible by reason, being on the one hand numerically distinct, but on the other hand similar in form, because of a continuous flow of similar images to the same place; and that they are human in form.*]

II. Death is nothing to us. For what has been dissolved has no feeling; and what has no feeling is nothing to us.

III. The limit of pleasure is reached with the removal of all pain. Whenever pleasure is present, and for however long, there is neither pain nor grief nor any combination of the two.

140 IV. Pain does not last long in the flesh; in fact, extreme pain is present for the briefest time, while that which hardly outweighs pleasure does not last for many days. And illnesses that are prolonged may even afford the flesh more pleasure than pain.

V. It is not possible to live pleasantly without living prudently, honorably, and justly; nor can one live prudently, honorably, and justly without living pleasantly. Nor is it possible for the man who does not live prudently, though he may live honorably and justly, to live pleasantly.

VI. In order that men might not fear one another, there was a natural benefit to be had from government and kingship, provided that they are able to bring about this result.

141 VII. Some have longed to become famous and celebrated, thinking that they would thereby obtain security against other men. If the lives of such persons were secure, they attained what is naturally good; but if insecure, they did not attain the object that they were originally prompted by nature to seek.

VIII. No pleasure is intrinsically bad; but the means of producing certain pleasures may entail annoyances many times greater than the pleasures themselves.

142 IX. If all pleasure were condensed in space and time, and pervaded the whole aggregate, or the most important parts of our nature, pleasures would never differ, one from another.



Two views of a bronze statuette of an Epicurean philosopher on a lamp stand.  
First-century BC Roman adaptation of a third-century Greek statue.

X. If the objects that afforded pleasure to profligate men actually freed them from mental fears, namely those that relate to celestial phenomena and death and pain, and also taught them to limit their desires, we would never have any occasion to find fault with such men, since they would then be filled with pleasures from all sides and would be free of all pain and grief—that is, of all that is bad.

XI. If we were not harassed by apprehensions caused by celestial phenomena and by the fear that death somehow affects us, and by our failure to comprehend the limits of pains and desires, we would have no need for natural science.

XII. It would not be possible to dispel fear about the most important matters if a man did not know the nature of the universe, but lived in dread of what the myths describe. Hence, it would be impossible without the study of nature to enjoy unmixed pleasures.

XIII. It would be useless to obtain security against our fellow men while

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things above and below the earth, and in the unlimited in general, continued to terrify us.

XIV. While some degree of security from other men can be attained on the basis of stable power and material prosperity, the purest security comes from tranquillity and from a life withdrawn from the many.

144 XV. Nature's wealth is both limited and easy to procure; but the wealth of groundless opinions vanishes into thin air.

XVI. Fortune impinges but little on a wise man; reason has directed his greatest and most important pursuits; these it directs and will continue to direct over the course of his life.

XVII. The just man is utterly imperturbable, while the unjust is full of the utmost perturbation.

XVIII. Fleshly pleasure does not increase once the pain of want has been removed; it merely diversifies. But the limit of mental pleasure is reached when one reflects on these very realities, and others of the same kind, which afflict the mind with its worst fears.

145 XIX. Limited and unlimited time furnish an equal amount of pleasure if the limits of pleasure are measured by reason.

XX. The flesh receives the limits of pleasure as if they were unlimited; and an unlimited time is required to provide it. But the mind, grasping in thought the end and limit of the flesh, and ridding itself of fears of eternity, fashions a perfect life and no longer requires unlimited time. Yet it does not avoid pleasure; and even when circumstances bring life to an end, it dies having missed nothing of the best life.

146 XXI. The man who has discerned the limits of life knows how easy it is to procure what is needed to remove the pain of want and make his whole life perfect; he therefore needs none of the things that cannot be acquired without a struggle.

XXII. We must reason about the true goal and about all the evidence to which we refer our opinions; for otherwise everything will be full of confusion and disorder.

XXIII. If you fight against all your sensations, you will not have a standard by which to judge the ones that you claim are false.

147 XXIV. If you reject any sensation absolutely, and do not distinguish between an opinion that awaits confirmation and a present reality (whether of sensation, feeling, or perception), you will also throw your other sensations into confusion with your groundless belief, and in doing so will be rejecting altogether the criterion. But if, when assessing opinions, you affirm as true everything that awaits confirmation as well as that which does not, <. . .> you



Bronze *larva convivalis*, Roman, first century AD.

will not escape error; for you will be preserving complete uncertainty in every judgment between right and wrong opinion.

XXV. If on every occasion you do not refer each of your actions to the goal of nature, but instead divert your attention in the act of choice or avoidance toward something else, your actions will not accord with your theories.

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XXVI. All desires that do not lead to pain when unfulfilled are unnecessary, and such cravings are easily dissolved when the desired objects are hard to procure or are thought to do harm.

XXVII. Of the things wisdom contributes to happiness over the course of one's life, the greatest by far is friendship.

XXVIII. The same attitude that inspires confidence that nothing we dread

is eternal or even long-lasting also enables us to see that even in our limited conditions of life nothing affords us greater security than friendship.

149       XXIX. Some of our desires are natural and necessary; others are natural but unnecessary; still others are neither natural nor necessary, but arise from unwarranted opinion. [*Epicurus holds that desires that are natural and necessary bring relief from pain (as drink, for example, relieves thirst); by desires that are natural but unnecessary he means those that merely diversify pleasure without eliminating pain (luxurious food being an example); by those neither natural nor necessary he means desires for crowns or for statues dedicated in one's honor.*]

XXX. Natural desires that afford no pain if they are not indulged, though they are eagerly pursued, arise from groundless opinion; and when they are not dispelled it is not because of their own nature but because of the man's groundless opinion.

150       XXXI. Natural justice is a pledge of the advantage associated with preventing men from harming or being harmed by one another.

XXXII. Those animals incapable of making agreements with one another, that they may neither inflict nor suffer harm, are without justice or injustice. The same is true of peoples who are unable or unwilling to make such agreements.

XXXIII. Justice was not something in itself but existed in mutual relations wherever and whenever there was an agreement that provided against the inflicting or suffering of harm.

151       XXXIV. Injustice is not bad in itself, but only because of the terror aroused by the suspicion that it will be detected by its punishers.

XXXV. It is not possible for the man who secretly violates the compact to prevent the inflicting or suffering of harm to feel sure that he will escape notice, even if he has already escaped ten thousand times. For right to the end it is not clear whether he will escape.

XXXVI. In general, justice is the same for everyone, namely something that facilitates mutual intercourse; but in light of the peculiarities of a region and all sorts of other causes, it does not follow that the same thing is just for everyone.

152       XXXVII. That which has been considered just by convention because it benefits our mutual intercourse is therefore stamped as just, whether or not it is so in all instances; and if a law is made and does not prove beneficial to our intercourse, then it is no longer just. And if what the law considers expedient changes, and only corresponds for a time to the preconception,<sup>87</sup> it was none-

87 That is, the basic concept of justice, according to which it consists of an agreement for mutual advantage.

theless just for that time, if we do not trouble ourselves about empty forms but simply examine the facts.

XXXVIII. Where without any change in circumstances the conventional laws were seen not to accord with the preconception when judged by their consequences, such laws were not just. But whenever, in changed circumstances, the existing laws have ceased to be expedient, then they were just when they benefited the mutual intercourse of fellow citizens, but were no longer just later on when they ceased to be expedient. 153

XXXIX. He who could best address fear of external threats forged a community of all the creatures he could; but those he could not include he did not treat as enemies; and if even this could not be managed, he avoided all contact and drove away every creature it was expedient to drive away. 154

XL. All who could best obtain security against their neighbors, and thereby possessed the surest guarantee, lived most pleasantly with one another; and since they enjoyed the fullest intimacy they did not lament, as something to be pitied, the death of a member of their circle who predeceased them.



# ESSAYS

# DIOGENES LAERTIUS: FROM INSPIRATION TO ANNOYANCE (AND BACK)

Anthony Grafton

In sixteenth-century Italy, flamboyant men wrote spectacular autobiographies. Benvenuto Cellini described his success at everything from dueling in the streets of Rome and shooting enemy leaders from the battlements of the Castel Sant'Angelo in 1527 to creating a bronze statue of Perseus and Medusa that electrified even the critical inhabitants of Florence. Girolamo Cardano told the story not only of his brilliant career as mathematician and medical man, but also of the rich dream life that had sometimes predicted his accomplishments—and sometimes simply mystified him. Both were frank: Cellini narrated a sadomasochistic love affair with a model in graphic detail, and Cardano described his sexual impotence, his carelessness in important matters, and his silly walk as vividly as his algebraic discoveries.

But the wildest of all Renaissance autobiographies was written long before either of these men was born. In 1441 Leon Battista Alberti was a youngish writer whose accomplishments had not yet made him famous. Born in 1404, the illegitimate offspring of a rich Florentine family that had been exiled for political reasons, he joined the papal Curia as a secretary and accompanied Pope Eugene IV back to Florence. There he wrote a long series of highly original books: a treatise on the new Florentine painting of the 1420s and 1430s, dialogues on the new world of the merchant family, and the first grammar of Italian. But while Alberti made a modest splash in the piranha pool of Florentine intellectual life, he also found himself attacked from many sides. A poetry contest that he organized fizzled out, and he often found himself musing, angry and sad, at the injuries his enemies had inflicted on him. In this context, Alberti set out to avenge himself by describing his character, his accomplishments, and his way of life with unforgettable brio.

The *Autobiography*—written anonymously, in the third person—is a wild text, swarming with contradictions. Alberti describes himself as intensely active, buzzing with physical and mental energy; he could jump over the head of a man standing next to him, he threw a coin so high that it rang as it struck the ceiling of the Florentine cathedral, and he explored the arts and crafts with passion and energy. He mastered music without a teacher and made social life itself into an art—especially walking in public, riding a horse, and speaking. But he was also a neurasthenic invalid who suffered from vertigo and tinnitus, starved himself into ill health, and experienced dreadful visions of scorpions while reading. Easy and articulate, he seemed gay and lovable even when the most serious discussions were under way—but would fall into reveries even in company, and become taciturn and aloof. For all his originality and productivity as a writer, he tore himself apart when he saw

fields of flowers in the spring, denouncing his own failure to be fertile. The sovereign urban intellectual was at once a hero and a victim, a master of the crowd's applause who was always in search of a cork-lined room.

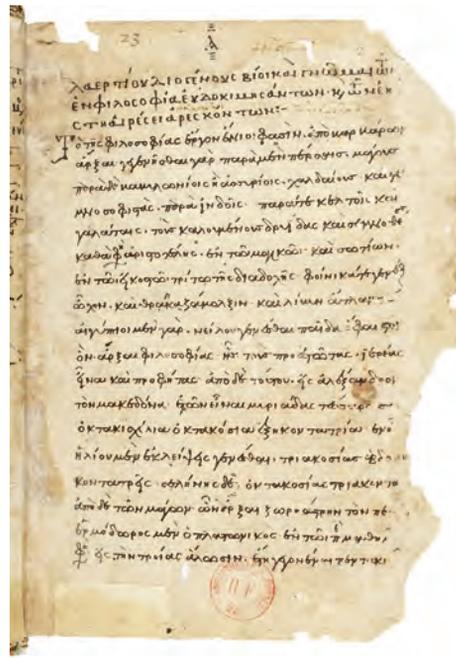
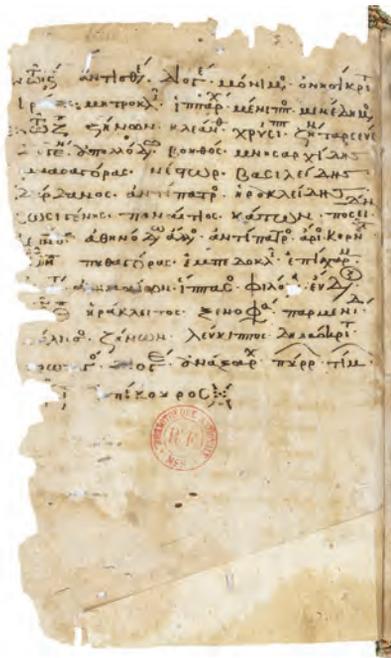
Alberti followed a model as he crafted this astounding anatomy of his own character. Diogenes Laertius, whose *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers* he was one of the first modern Westerners to read, showed him how to present his own life dramatically and effectively. Like Diogenes' life of Thales, the first Ionian philosopher, Alberti's autobiographical work was divided into two sections: an account of his character, as revealed through both his accomplishments and stories about him, and a collection of witty sayings. Both anecdotes and witticisms suggest how much Alberti learned from his ancient model.

Thales—according to Diogenes—was a polymath who studied politics, nature, and pretty much everything else. So was Alberti. Thales had no teacher. Neither did Alberti. Thales proved the value of the study of nature by predicting that an especially good olive harvest would take place. He rented all the olive presses and then profited from his prescience. Alberti also described himself as a lover and student of nature. Above all, Thales, like Alberti, was a creature of paradox. He used his knowledge of nature to become rich. But he also fell into a ditch while out at night to observe the stars—whereupon the old woman who was his guide mocked him for trying to understand the heavens when he could not see what was in front of him.

The sayings of Thales that filled the second part of the *Life* were as provocative as they were short: “[Thales] said that there was no difference between life and death. ‘Why, then,’ someone asked, ‘do you not die?’ ‘Because,’ he replied, ‘it makes no difference.’” Alberti's sayings—which echoed those of Thales in a craftily allusive way—were also charged with tough-minded wit: “Asked what would be the biggest of all things among mortals, he answered, ‘Hope.’ As to the smallest, he said, ‘The difference between a man and a corpse.’” For Alberti, in short, Diogenes' book was irresistibly exciting: a lifeline in his hour of intellectual need. It gave him a model for imagining and narrating the life of a new kind of thinker, a secular intellectual, to use an anachronistic but not inappropriate term, who lived out his life not in the seclusion of a monastery but as a walker in the city.

Nowadays, Diogenes Laertius seems an unlikely character to attract a reader as exacting as Alberti. His work—compiled in the third century AD—comprises ten books, which offer both biographies of ancient philosophers and doxographies, or collections of their opinions. Diogenes was not interested in the thinkers of his own day—such as

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Opening pages (“Prologue”) from a thirteenth-century Greek manuscript edition (“P”) of Diogenes Laertius’ *Lives*.

the public professors of Platonic and other schools of philosophy, whom Marcus Aurelius had appointed. Rather, he covered the period from the sixth to the third century BC—basically, from Thales to Epicurus—with a few excursions into the second century. Diogenes drew his material from a vast range of sources, many of which no longer survive, whose authors and titles he cited in exuberant and sometimes untrustworthy profusion. He used them to compose surveys of what he described as the major schools and practitioners of Greek philosophy—the Ionian and Italic sects, Plato and Aristotle and their followers, the Stoics, Sceptics, and Epicureans. Though he offered accounts of both his subjects’ thought and their lives, he made no effort to connect them, much less to use the larger contexts within which different schools of philosophy had taken shape to explain the differences in their views. Often dismissed with contempt in modern times as a derivative and untrustworthy source of curious but pointless anecdotes—such as the story that Zeno liked green figs—his book struck chords in many serious scholars and thinkers in the past. He and it have come to be appreciated in new ways in recent scholarship.

The path from Diogenes to Alberti was anything but direct. Later Greek scholars occasionally read—and mined—the *Lives*. Some forty Greek manuscripts of the work survive. But Diogenes’ book first found really cu-

rious readers in the twelfth century. The learned clerics of Latin Europe were at work rediscovering the riches of Greek philosophy—especially, but by no means only, the works of Aristotle, which had been preserved in Arabic translations and widely studied in the Islamic world. These swarmed with references to ancient philosophers whose works did not survive—figures like Pythagoras and his followers, whose obsession with numbers Aristotle criticized, and Plato, whose pupil Aristotle had been. In parts of the West—especially Sicily and southern Italy—Greek remained a living language. Scholarly circles in the Byzantine Empire continued to copy and study the Greek classics. Erudite Latins used their mastery of Greek to hunt for more texts and information. In the first half of the twelfth century, a Calabrian cleric named Henricus Aristippus, who traveled to Constantinople, translated Plato’s *Phaedo* and *Meno* from the Greek. He knew the work of Diogenes and in the 1150s he translated it.

Aristippus’ version found readers. Sometime before the 1320s, another Italian drew on it to create a compendium titled *On the Lives and Conduct of the Philosophers*. Wrongly ascribed to an influential philosopher, Walter of Burley, this paraphrase attained massive popularity: more than 270 manuscripts survive. It gave Western readers their first introduction to the lives and thought of philosophers outside the university canon. Pseudo-Burley did

not simply translate what he found. Diogenes' life of Pythagoras, for example, emphasized both his achievements in mathematics and his wisdom as a sage who taught his followers how to pursue virtue. Diogenes also identified Pythagoras as the head of a coherent school—the Italian school that had developed alongside the Ionian tradition founded by Thales. Pseudo-Burley abbreviated what he found in Diogenes to a bare report that Pythagoras had been a sage in both mathematics and ethics. Then he added material from other sources. He reported that Plato had based his account of the cosmos and Boethius his works on mathematics on Pythagoras, and that Augustine ascribed the invention of the word “philosophy” itself to him—though he also associated him with necromancy. In Pseudo-Burley's account, Pythagoras—and the other Greek sages who made an appearance—looked rather like the great scholastic philosophers of the thirteenth century and after, such as Albertus Magnus and Pseudo-Burley himself: wise, learned, sometimes more given to speculation about occult arts than was quite healthy. But that made his work all the more useful. Mendicant friars composing sermons and vernacular writers telling stories drew on his rich stores of material. Thanks to Pseudo-Burley, ancient thinkers long forgotten peopled the pages of late medieval texts of every kind.

For all Pseudo-Burley's popularity, his unsystematic book soon proved unsatisfying—especially to the humanists, the new breed of scholars that sprang up in late-fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Italy. These humanists disliked nothing more than the anachronistic way in which a learned medieval like Burley depicted the ancient past, presenting Greek philosophers as if they had been medieval savants and magicians rather than the independent-minded teachers of equally independent-minded pupils, who freely contradicted them. The humanists devoted themselves to finding and mastering as many ancient texts as they could—especially literary texts, which they valued for their beauty as well as their content. The humanists began with Latin. But the Latin writers they knew best, above all Cicero, reported that they themselves had gone to the Greeks to seek wisdom. They also suggested that the Greek philosophers had combined wisdom with eloquence—powerful language that could actually persuade readers and hearers to accept a writer's theses. The works of Aristotle—systematic treatises, carefully rendered into Latin from literal translations into Arabic—were hard to read and harder to love. (His dialogues were lost, something that Renaissance scholars did not at first realize.) By contrast, the humanists now read Plato, who had offered an alternate form of philosophy, couched in language of the greatest beauty and power. Other Greek philosophers—Stoics and Epicureans, Cynics and Skeptics—also cropped up in Cicero and Seneca. In the decades just before and after 1400, Italian scholars searched for Plato and his many fellow Greek philosophers. They studied the Greek language,

both in Florence—where a distinguished Byzantine scholar, Manuel Chrysoloras, taught for three years—and in Constantinople. And they began to translate the Greek classics, slowly at first, into more or less readable Latin.

One Florentine scholar in particular, Niccolò Niccoli, played a special role in the fortunes of Diogenes Laertius. An antiquary and collector whose library included some eight hundred manuscripts at his death, Niccoli did his best to live in the antique world that he loved better than his own. He ate off crystal plates, filled his house with fragments of ancient sculpture, and chastised his contemporaries, who asked him to correct their Latin writings, telling them that their work belonged in the outhouse rather than the library. What obsessed him most, however, were libraries: his own, and the older Christian ones that contained forgotten treasures. He read every ancient text to which he gained access with an eye to references to other texts he had not yet seen. He gathered every indication he could about the books still lurking in monastic libraries. And he dispatched eager young friends to find, copy, borrow, or steal every new text they could. Niccoli—who did much to shape the fifteenth-century revival of antiquity—clearly saw the potential value of the *Lives*. Diogenes Laertius was both a rich source of the information Niccoli craved and a guide for further searches.

Early in the 1420s, Niccoli and Cosimo de' Medici, the latter already a patron of letters, urged a Camaldolensian monk of their acquaintance, Ambrogio Traversari, to translate the full text of Diogenes Laertius into Latin. Traversari, a profoundly pious man, resisted their request. He wanted to translate the Greek Church fathers rather than pagans. Even when he began work, the task proved harder than his sponsors had suggested. The text was difficult and corrupt, so Traversari looked for better manuscripts. He found the technical terms that filled Diogenes' work bewildering, since he himself had never studied formal philosophy. Diogenes' verse epigrams bewildered him, and though a scholar of more literary tastes, Francesco Filelfo, promised to translate them, he failed to do so. Parts of Book 10, on Epicurus, the philosopher who had put the pursuit of pleasure at the core of his system, baffled Traversari completely. They presented ideas that had become completely unfamiliar to Western scholars. Only in 1433 did Traversari manage to present a manuscript of his complete translation to Cosimo.

Traversari did his best to convince himself, and others, that he was not doing something impious in loosing all this new material on Latin readers. He insisted, in his preface to the text, that the pagans whose lives and teachers Diogenes collected had had inklings of the truth:

In the writings of all the more notable philosophers, God, the heavens, the celestial bodies, and nature are truly and subtly discussed, and largely in agreement with Christian truth.

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Such singular effort of investigating truth, the work of such keen genius and constant study, did not deserve to be everywhere deprived of the fruit of its sweat. God permitted this so that the true faith might receive support and strength from their testimony as well.

Though they had not benefited from the true teachings of Christianity, moreover, the philosophers described by Diogenes had lived truly virtuous lives, which could still serve as models:

The pagans, though alien from the worship of God and religion, were more zealous for probity, moderation, frugality and the other ornaments of the human soul. There are many examples of this very close, I would say, to evangelical perfection, so that it should make a Christian blush and feel greatly ashamed if the philosopher of Christ exhibits this less than the philosopher of the world.

Niccoli read and approved this preface for Traversari, to the translator's gratification—even though Traversari insisted, in the end, on the difference between the “real virtue” of the Christians and the “shadowy image of virtue” presented by the pagan sages, a sentiment not exactly to the taste of the classicist Niccoli.

Traversari could put up all the warning signs he wanted. Diogenes remained, as he had seen, a dangerous writer, who could threaten to open up scary new perspectives on life, the universe, and everything else. Alberti, one of the first to read his new translation, found inspiration in it for an exercise in self-analysis that would have confirmed all the fears of the earlier man, had he lived to read it (Traversari died in 1439).

The *Lives* of Diogenes was not the only dangerous classical text the Medicis helped to resurrect. The most skillful and fortunate book hunter who worked with Niccoli was a young scribe and Latinist named Poggio Bracciolini. In 1417, taking a break from his work as a papal secretary to turn over the spiderwebbed volumes in a German monastery library, he discovered a manuscript of the ancient poem by Lucretius, *On the Nature of Things*. Lucretius was an Epicurean, and his work presented the basic principles of Epicurus' atomism: a totally unfamiliar vision of the cosmos, in which tiny particles came together by random collision to create the universe, while the gods looked on, uninvolved. Early readers of Diogenes valued his rich presentation of the life and teachings of Epicurus—which for centuries to come would offer by far the fullest resources for explicating Lucretius' complex and demanding text.

Diogenes' tenth book presented a detailed account of the thought of Epicurus, with documents to support it. He also defended the philosopher from the an-

cient canard that he had devoted his life to the pursuit of pleasure, spending vast amounts on food and drink and vomiting daily as a result of these excesses. Epicurus, Diogenes insisted, had defined pleasure in a cerebral and virtuous way that did honor to him.

For Alberti, Diogenes offered a new model of what it meant to be a philosopher—a model that snugly fit his own urban life and secular concerns. For Thomas More, Diogenes offered even richer resources. More's greatest book, first published in 1516, was *Utopia*: a description of a society radically different from that of Christian Europe. He portrayed this, through the mouth of one of his characters, as a real society on a previously undiscovered island. More's imagination was set to work, in part, by the discovery of the New World. Travel accounts by Amerigo Vespucci portrayed it as a world of wonders, and some emphasized the virtue of its inhabitants. But Diogenes also helped to open More's mind. The Utopians have their own religion and philosophy. They hold that humans should pursue pleasure: in particular, the permanent pleasures of the mind and soul (though they do not look down on the pleasures of the body). By doing so, they argue, one can achieve salvation: “God will recompense us for surrendering a brief and transitory pleasure here with immense and never-ending joy in heaven. And so they conclude, after carefully considering and weighing the matter, that all our actions and the virtues exercised within them look toward pleasure and happiness as their final virtues.” Here, as More's editors have pointed out, he echoed Diogenes' account of Epicurean morality: “We choose the virtues not for their own sake but for the sake of pleasure, just as we have recourse to medicine for the sake of health.” Similarly, as fifteenth- and sixteenth-century humanists discovered the ancient Sceptics in the works of Cicero and Sextus Empiricus, they read and drew on Diogenes' life of a very different sceptic, Pyrrho—which Pseudo-Burley had simply omitted.

In modern times, Diogenes has been much criticized for his mistakes. In the Renaissance, even his errors proved fertile. More's Utopians have no private property or money, and their laws forbid the accumulation of gold and the other false treasures valued most by Europeans. Raphael Hythloday—the European traveler who speaks through most of the work—not only praises their regime, but also denounces the effects of money on Europe, where sheep are eating people, as peasants are thrown off their land to make way for animals that can produce wool, and crippled soldiers who cannot fend for themselves are executed for petty theft. “When I consider all these things,” he reflects, “I become more sympathetic to Plato, and wonder the less that he refused to make laws for any people who would not share their goods equally. Wisest of men, he saw easily that the one and only path to the welfare of all lies through equality of possessions.”

In fact, Socrates did not argue in Plato's *Republic* that in an ideal society, all would have equal shares—though

he did insist that the Guardians, the men and women responsible for guiding and protecting society, should possess only common property. But Diogenes, in one of his flights of bibliographical pedantry, quoted a story from the work—now lost—of a female scholar, and that inspired More: “Pamphila, in the twenty-fifth book of her *Reminiscences*, says that the Arcadians and Thebans, when they were founding Megalópolis, invited [Plato] to be their lawgiver; but when he learned that they were opposed to equality of possessions, he would not go.”

Plato’s works, only a handful of which had been known in the Middle Ages, were translated into Latin by Marsilio Ficino and printed, first in Latin and then in Greek. His newly accessible *Republic* was More’s single most important literary model. But when it came to interpreting Plato’s views on property, More followed not the original text but the lore preserved by Diogenes Laertius. So did his close friend Desiderius Erasmus. When he argued in his influential collection of classical adages that “friends should have all things in common,” he claimed to be following Plato in approving community of property.

Even for a potentially dangerous text, utility ensured popularity. And the *Lives*, which offered vast resources of ready information for anyone faced—for example—with the task of teaching the very popular works of Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero, were more useful than most. The full Latin text of Diogenes’ work reached print by 1472 and was reprinted at least twenty-two times. The original Greek texts of Diogenes’ lives of Aristotle and Theophrastus were printed by Aldus Manutius, in his pioneering edition of the works of Aristotle in Greek, in 1497. The life of Xenophon in an edition of his works appeared in 1527. Six years later the Greek text was printed in full. Other editions followed—notably a very scholarly one by Johannes Sambucus, published in 1566, which the editor had improved by drawing on new manuscript evidence, and a Greek-Latin one, published in 1570, edited by the great Hellenist Henri Estienne. Gradually the text—which swarmed with difficult and unusual words—swam into clarity, like a field of amoebas seen through a microscope as it is focused.

Machiavelli, in his life of Castruccio Castracani, appropriated some of the sayings of the Socratic philosopher Aristippus, recorded by Diogenes. He noted that a flatterer let Castracani spit on him “to catch a whale” (to win his favor). Aristippus, in the Latin text Machiavelli read, said fishermen let the sea drench them to catch a gudgeon, while he himself let Dionysius of Syracuse spit on him to gain a blenny (a small, colorful fish). Traversari, not knowing the word *blennos*, simply transliterated it as *blenus*. The printers’ correctors, equally puzzled, corrupted the text further, inserting the meaningless *balenus*. Machiavelli finally transformed this into the real Italian word for whale, *balena*. As Estienne—the compiler of the greatest Greek dictionary of the Renaissance—and other scholars worked on the text, errors like this slowly disappeared.

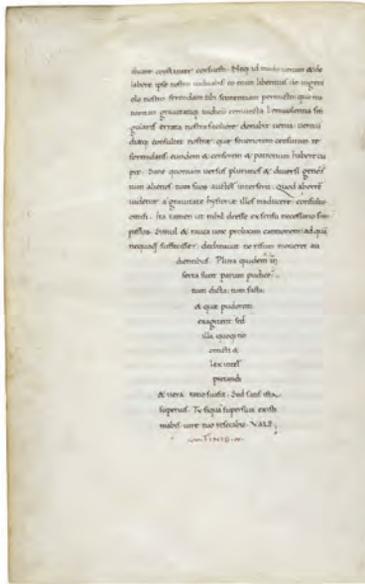
Not all learned readers, moreover, worried about the dangers posed by the content of the *Lives*. In the early sixteenth century, more and more scholars turned their attention, and their philological skills, to purifying the texts and traditions of the Christian Church. The Spanish philologist Juan Luis Vives lamented that “a license for lying” had established itself “where holy things are concerned.” He listed apocryphal stories and texts, starting with the legendary case of leprosy from which a pope had supposedly cured the emperor Constantine, and denounced them: “we shriek and bark at lesser errors and wink at these—which, if they fall into the hands of the impious, will make our most holy and profound religion look absurd to them.” The lives of saints, he argued, were full of obvious fantasies, more likely to arouse derision than devotion. Melchior Cano, an influential Dominican theologian who worried about the humanists’ criticisms of Church traditions, agreed with Vives in this case. Christian writers would do better to emulate Diogenes, who had cited his sources and quoted long extracts from the writings of his subjects: “I say in sorrow, rather than in slander, that Diogenes Laertius did a much more serious job of writing the lives of the philosophers than the Christians did of writing the lives of saints.”

By the later sixteenth century, Diogenes was well established as a standard author. Like Plutarch, another Greek writer of the Imperial period whose vast *Moralia* offered a rich source of information about the lives and works of ancient philosophers, his work was on the bookshelves not only of scholars, but of all highly educated men. Montaigne expressed his fascination with the ancient thinkers—and his desire to know more about them—eloquently in his *Apology for Raymond Sebond*:

How much do I wish that, whilst I live, either some other or Justus Lipsius, the most learned man now living, of a most polite and judicious understanding . . . had both the will and health, and leisure sufficient, carefully and conscientiously to collect into a register, according to their divisions and classes, as many as are to be found, of the opinions of the ancient philosophers, about the subject of our being and manners, their controversies, the succession and reputation of sects; with the application of the lives of the authors and their disciples to their own precepts, in memorable accidents, and upon exemplary occasions. What a beautiful and useful work that would be!

Since no such modern reference work existed, he happily stuffed his innovative, informal French *Essays* on philosophy and many other topics with anecdotes and quotations from Diogenes. The *Lives*, he made clear, dissatisfied him only because they were not comprehensive enough: “I am very sorry we have not a dozen Laertii—or that he was not further extended; for I am equally curious to know the

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Opening pages (“Prologue”) of Ambrogio Traversari’s early-fifteenth-century Latin translation of Diogenes Laertius, *Vitae philosophorum*.

lives and fortunes of these great instructors of the world, as to know the diversities of their doctrines and opinions.”

Even while Montaigne and others still found riches in Diogenes Laertius, his fortunes began to take their long, slow turn for the worse. In the middle and later years of the sixteenth century, French humanists began to approach many classical texts from a new standpoint. Reading the *Lives* and comparing them with compendia made by Greek scholars after Diogenes, such as the anthologies made by Stobaeus in the fifth century, they realized that the *Lives* were not just model accounts of noble men’s careers. The teachings and sayings that Diogenes ascribed to the ancient sages were, in many cases, the fullest information available about them. They could be systematically collected, and juxtaposed with other versions of the same thinkers’ views. At the same time, Diogenes’ habit of citing the authors and titles of the works he had drawn on suggested that modern humanists might be able to reconstruct the earlier scholarship he had used—or at least to find out much about it.

The problem was that the more systematically one read Diogenes, the more holes appeared in the fabric of his work. Henri Estienne—son of Robert Estienne, a great scholar-printer who had published the first collection of the fragments of archaic Latin poetry in 1554—set to work in the 1560s, collecting from Diogenes and other sources the fragments of what are now called the Pre-Socratic philosophers. A younger colleague, Joseph Scaliger, who lived in Geneva, where the Estiennes had

their printing house, from 1572 to 1574, and Estienne’s son-in-law, Isaac Casaubon, collaborated with him at times. The results were in part traditional: Estienne printed his own edition of Diogenes Laertius, but he also published collections, first of *Apophthegms of Kings, Leaders and Philosophers* (1566), in which he stripped out the sayings of the ancient sages from Plutarch and Diogenes, and then of *Philosophical Poetry* (1573), in which he published all the texts by Empedocles and other early philosophers in verse, and raised—for the first time—the question of whether their writings could be considered to be philosophical. Often, as these men collected their fragments, they realized that Diogenes had less to offer than other sources. Except in special cases, like that of Lucretius, he quoted secondhand accounts rather than original sources—an error for which his undeniable entertainment value could not compensate.

Casaubon—the hardest working of philologists, who flagellated himself with guilt when he rose at the late hour of five in the morning and railed at the “*amici inimici*” (“enemy friends”) who interrupted his hours of study—unveiled the new approach to Diogenes Laertius vividly in his commentary on the text, which first appeared in 1583, when he was only twenty-four. Casaubon would go on to become—by the testimony of Scaliger, himself a great Greek scholar and known for his arrogance—“the greatest Hellenist we have,” famous both for his great edition and translation of the Greek historian of Rome, Polybius, and

for his unmasking of Hermes Trismegistus, the supposed Egyptian sage whose writings he showed to be late works composed in Greek. In 1583 Casaubon was unknown. But he set about Diogenes with energy and independence. Previous scholars had made relatively little systematic effort to establish exactly who Diogenes was and when he lived. Casaubon, by contrast, started out by underlining the vast zone of uncertainty that hedged about this ancient writer: "It is easier to tell when he didn't live, than when he did." Meticulous collecting of parallels from relevant texts helped to establish a general context. He noted, for example, that the Roman writer Lucius Apuleius (c. AD 125–170) offered a treatment of Plato's philosophy so close to that of Diogenes that the reader "must confess, either that the one translated from the other, although they seem to have been contemporaries, or—as I would tend to believe instead—that both drew from the same source." But uncertainty remained on every point. In his own copy of the first edition of the commentary, Casaubon later added the word "almost" before "contemporaries."

For the most part, though, Diogenes stimulated Casaubon—as he would later stimulate the German philologists—to read critically. Diogenes' arguments provoked his sarcasm. When Diogenes argued that philosophy must have been a Greek creation, since the word itself was Greek, Casaubon became snarky: "Here's a dagger made of lead. . . . The Romans might just as well claim that they invented medicine, since medicine is a Roman term, not a barbarian one." Sharply aware that Diogenes had drawn much of his material "word for word" from earlier sources, most of them otherwise unknown, he identified as many of them as he could. Yet even as Casaubon reduced the text to rubble, it provoked him to some amazing feats of scholarly imagination.

Diogenes tells a story. The poet and Homeric critic Aratus, he says, asked Timon of Phlius how he could get hold of a sound text of Homer. Timon told him to find an old one—one that no one (that is, no one like Aratus) had tampered with. This uninspired anecdote inspired Casaubon. He reconsidered everything he knew about the origin, transmission, and state of preservation of the Homeric epics. His conclusions were as revolutionary as they were concise:

If what Josephus says is true, that Homer did not leave his poems in written form, but they were preserved by memorization and written down much later, then I do not see how we can ever have them in a correct form, even if we have the oldest MSS. For it is likely that they were written down in a form quite different from that in which they were first composed.

Casaubon had reduced Diogenes to the low status of a compiler—but he still found in him the clue that enabled him to frame the hypothesis, later developed by

Richard Bentley and Friedrich August Wolf, that Homer was an oral poet.

The erudite compilers of the seventeenth century—men like Joachim Jonsius, who wrote a pioneering book on ancient writers on the history of philosophy—followed Casaubon into the mines and worked at the same coal face, recovering the names of forgotten authorities and the titles of lost books. The philologist Gilles Ménage equipped his massive edition of the *Lives* with a commentary that analyzed every lost source and possible fragment as deeply and fully as sound philological method allowed. But it was the learned creators of the New Philosophy for whom Diogenes mattered most. Liberated by Francis Bacon and René Descartes, who insisted that modern thinkers knew more than their ancient counterparts, they felt free to criticize and depart from Diogenes on vital points; yet he remained indispensable to them.

The English scholar Thomas Stanley published the first distinctively modern *History of Philosophy* between 1655 and 1662. He set out—or so it seems—to write the history of philosophy in a new way. Francis Bacon had criticized traditional treatments of the history of philosophy for failing to reconstruct the full systems of past thinkers. Stanley quoted Bacon at length at the start of his third volume. And he frankly stated the failings of his ancient predecessor, drawing on Casaubon and the other philologists as he did so: "that which Diogenes Laertius gives us is so far short of what he might have done, that there is much more to be found of the same persons dispersed among other authors, which I have here collected and digested."

Like Casaubon and others, Stanley argued that Diogenes had been wrong to seek the origins of the pursuit of knowledge and wisdom in ancient Greece, rather than in the older civilizations of Egypt and Persia. Yet when he came to trace the history of actual philosophical systems, he began, as Diogenes had, in Ionia, with Thales, and like Diogenes he saw Socrates as a figure in the same long tradition. On points of detail, Stanley innovated. Where Diogenes had characterized the views of each sect or tradition by describing the ideas of its founder, Stanley emphasized the independence of later philosophers. Anaximander, the second member of the Ionian sect, emerged from his treatment as an independent who had rationally disagreed with his teacher Thales. But though Stanley preferred detailed, philologically precise biographies of philosophers to Diogenes' more unified presentations of sects, he still kept the sects as an organizing principle. His work—which was supplemented, rewritten, and translated into Latin—kept Diogenes alive as a model for the history of philosophy even as he departed from him on crucial points.

So did the work of Stanley's older contemporary Pierre Gassendi. At once a philologist and a philosopher, he was an atomist, convinced that everything from the creation and form of the universe to the nature of perception and thought could best be explained by assuming that everything consisted of minute, indivisible particles. Gassendi

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kept up with the experimental philosophy of his time. But he also regarded the ancient texts of Epicurus, preserved by Diogenes, as vital sources on which the modern philosopher could still draw. Impressed by Diogenes' defense of Epicurus and the rich materials on Epicurean logic that he preserved, he devoted much of his life to explicating these texts. Yet Gassendi rebelled against being the sort of scholar who spent all of his time worrying about whether ancient texts were correct and reliable. Gradually he emancipated himself from Diogenes and composed his own vast account of Epicurean philosophy. Gassendi felt free, as Stanley had, to disagree sharply with Diogenes and Epicurus himself on vital points—starting with the idea that the gods were not concerned with events in the universe. Still, Diogenes remained vital: again and again the marginal notes—recording the sources from which Gassendi took not only biographical details, but also philosophical points about the nature of individual atoms—read simply “Laert.”

Encyclopedists and historians of philosophy continued to trace the histories of the ancient sects and to draw on Diogenes for their material. But their attitude to him became increasingly distant and critical. Following Diogenes—who himself followed Antigonos of Carystus, an Athenian writer of the third century BC—scholars long believed that Pyrrho, who had maintained a position of absolute skepticism about all forms of human knowledge, rejected all preferences and decisions—including the resolve to move in order to avoid being run over by a chariot or falling off a cliff, fates from which his obliging friends saved him.

The seventeenth-century writer La Mothe de Vayer already pointed out that another Greek philosopher—Aenesidemus, a Skeptic in his own right—had offered a much more reasonable account of Pyrrho's thought and conduct in a massive and scholarly work. By the end of the century, Pierre Bayle not only took care to ascribe the ridiculous stories about Pyrrho to their ultimate source, Antigonos, but also dismissed them as “bad jokes”—a position in which the eighteenth century's greatest historian of philosophy, Johann Brucker, followed him. More important still, Brucker now articulated, more explicitly than anyone before him, the central weakness of Diogenes' work, as seen from the standpoint of an Enlightenment thinker: it was anecdotal, not analytical.

Well before the nineteenth century began, Diogenes had been revealed to be a compiler from older sources, and neither fully trustworthy nor reliably critical. But his downfall had only begun.

In the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the universities of Germany saw the rise of another avant-garde form of humanistic scholarship—one pursued by men bent on pushing historical and philological criticism as far as they could go. They did to the classics what Wordsworth held that philosophers did to nature: they murdered to dissect. In order to correct the texts of the ancients rigorously, German scholars scoured their manuscripts for errors, which they could use to reconstruct the

transmission of each text. In order to judge the narratives of ancient historians, these scholars broke them down into the remains of their lost constituent sources. And in order to re-create the lives and teachings of ancient philosophers, they broke down the compendia of Diogenes Laertius and Stobaeus and others, paying far more attention to the lost texts that had provided their fragments and stories than to the compilations that actually survived.

Gradually the new philologists devised rules about the ways in which ancient writers like Diogenes used their sources, which they could wield in order to re-create them. By the end of the nineteenth century, those interested in the oldest Greek thinkers read about them not in Diogenes Laertius but in a standard collection of the fragments of the Pre-Socratics; those interested in the Stoics could use another collection, first published in 1903–1905. Study after study appeared, meanwhile, not on Diogenes Laertius but on the lost scholarly collections and compilations he quoted.

As for poor Diogenes, he was dismissed as ignorant, inaccurate, and unoriginal. Hermann Usener, the great historian of philosophy and religion who was one of the leading explorers of these new areas, only quoted, and did not make his own, the verdict of another scholar: that Diogenes was a “complete ass.” Going far beyond the evidence available to him, however, he did insist that Diogenes had basically written nothing. Rather, he had compiled materials from the works of earlier writers and given them to the scribes to copy.

Friedrich Nietzsche, as everyone knows, was no conventional classicist. But he took a special interest, in his student years, in the *Lives*, and his approach was typical in many ways of the philologists and philosophers who tore Diogenes Laertius limb from limb. Nietzsche did not take the time, in his articles on Diogenes, to lay out and justify his approach. Instead he took for granted—quite rightly—that those able to read his Latin essays would share his general views.

He treated Diogenes as a compiler, and assumed he could reconstruct his practices on the basis of a few rules, which he stated casually and in passing. When he argued that Diogenes derived his account of Stoic moral and natural philosophy from the earlier writer Diocles of Magnesia, for example, he had no firm textual evidence to go on, beyond Diogenes' occasional mentions of Diocles' name and works. He thought he had proved that Diogenes drew on Diocles for his treatment of the divisions of Stoic philosophy and of logic. It seemed implausible, he argued, that Diogenes would have failed to take over the other parts of Diocles' material. Why would Diogenes “have deserted a source which he had just drawn on for no reason?”

Nietzsche was certain that Diogenes simply copied from his sources when he felt he could not improve on them. After all, he pointed out, Diogenes copied the works by Epicurus that he inserted in Book 10—though in that case Diogenes actually made clear that he was re-

producing others' work, a fact Nietzsche did not mention. At times he fetched his arguments from very far indeed—as when he argued that Diogenes must have ascribed some special meaning to the number of books and chapters in his work, since women often did the same to the number of dishes in their collections of china. In the hands of Nietzsche—as in the hands of many more conventional writers—Diogenes Laertius served as little more than an object of abuse and a quarry for materials, the latter supposedly all derived from others.

In the world outside classical scholarship, however, Diogenes experienced a paradoxical revival—thanks in part, ironically, to Nietzsche, who dramatically changed his judgment about the value of Diogenes in his later philosophical works. One of the few older Basel professors who felt real sympathy for Nietzsche was Jacob Burckhardt—whose cultural history of Greece, created as a series of lectures at the end of his career, would be dismissed by the professional classicists because he refused to use or discuss their methods of source criticism. Burckhardt's heroic cultural history of the Italian Renaissance appeared far earlier, in 1860, when its author was in his early forties. Alberti's autobiography—then known as the “Anonymous Life”—had appeared in print not long before Burckhardt wrote. Its account of Alberti's personality and sayings became the core of the unforgettable early section of Burckhardt's book in which he sketched the “universal human being” of the Renaissance. Burckhardt did not know—and, as one who despised the “*virī eruditissimi*” of the classical seminars and their source criticism, did not care—that this account of Alberti, and to that extent his own account of the Renaissance, rested on the frail foundation provided by Diogenes. Yet it was

in Burckhardt's work and that of his dozens of imitators that Diogenes' vision of the active urban sage, athlete, and neurotic had its last lease on dramatic life—and helped to inspire Nietzsche's theories about the heroic individual.

In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, classical scholars have lost some of their faith in the value of reducing Diogenes' house to splinters. They have treated him as an author in his own right—one who set out to show that the philosophers of an older Greece had been men of high birth and good character, who had led exemplary lives as well as creating innovative systems of ideas. Taking a cue from Renaissance scholars like Sambucus, who compared *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers* with the near contemporary *Lives of the Sophists* by Eunapius, they have noted that Diogenes' effort to connect the dots and show how students followed teachers and sects rivaled sects had more than one partial parallel in his own time—not only in the lives of orators and Christians drawn up by others contemporary with or only a little later than he, but also in the Jewish text *Avot*, part of the Mishnah, a Hebrew text compiled around AD 200, which collected the sayings of the rabbis of the two centuries before it was composed.

Diogenes has emerged neither as a totally isolated figure nor as a totally derivative writer. In the third-century crisis of the Roman world, when the existence of the Empire itself was repeatedly threatened, pagan and Christian intellectuals set out to gather and put in order their intellectual traditions, often in innovative and lastingly influential ways. Even if we no longer believe in Diogenes' Thales, we can now appreciate the coherence and meaning of his project—and the multiple ways in which it has mattered, over the centuries, to other readers.

## RAPHAEL'S EMINENT PHILOSOPHERS: THE SCHOOL OF ATHENS AND THE CLASSIC WORK ALMOST NO ONE READ

Ingrid D. Rowland

The world's most famous image of philosophers at work was painted on a wall of the private apartment of Pope Julius II in the Vatican between 1509 and 1511. Raphael's *School of Athens* shows the great philosophers of antiquity and some of their medieval commentators gathered together beneath a single magnificent masonry vault, bent in earnest discussion over books, globes, scrolls, and drawings as Plato and Aristotle stand stately watch over their proceedings.<sup>1</sup> This painted “Triumph of Philosophy”

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Marcell Restle, and Herbert Weiermann, eds., *Festschrift Luitpold Dussler* (Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1972), 237–54, and Heinrich Pfeiffer, *Zur Ikonographie von Raffaels Disputa* (Rome: Edizioni di Storia e Letteratura, 1975), which first proposed Egidio da Viterbo as an influence; Matthias Winner, “Disputa und Schule von Athen,” in *Raffaello a Roma: Il Convegno del 1983* (Rome: Edizioni dell'Elefante, 1986), 29–46; Matthias Winner, “Stufen zur Erkenntnis in Raffaels Schule von Athen,” *Jahrbuch der Akademie der Wissenschaften in Göttingen* (1993): 50–60; Marcia L. Hall, ed., *Raphael's “School of Athens,”* Masterpieces of Western Painting (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Marcia L. Hall, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Raphael* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005). In the present context, the most important discussion of *The School of Athens* is that of Christiane L. Joost-Gaugier, *Raphael's Stanza della Segnatura: Meaning and Invention* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

<sup>1</sup> The bibliography on *The School of Athens* is vast. See, for instance, Heinrich Pfeiffer, “Die Predigt des Egidio da Viterbo über das goldene Zeitalter und die Stanza della Segnatura,” in J. A. Schmoll gen. Eisenwerth,

(which may have been the painting's real title) announces Rome's claim to status as an intellectual as well as a spiritual capital, the living heir to ancient wisdom joined with Christian revelation.<sup>2</sup> Not surprisingly, the Vatican Library, originally housed two floors below this painted chamber, is still filled with manuscript translations and printed editions of Diogenes Laertius, the best-known biographer of the ancient Greek philosophers. One might easily imagine that these books would rank among the most heavily used in Raphael's time, at least in the charmed circle of the Vatican and the humanists who had created the same atmosphere of intellectual excitement that pervades *The School of Athens*.<sup>3</sup>

And yet Diogenes Laertius seems to be an author whose work everyone in Renaissance Rome felt the need to own, but not to read. Among seven manuscripts of Ambrogio Traversari's popular Latin translation of the Greek, six are so perfectly preserved that they might have been written yesterday rather than half a millennium ago—virtually no one has touched them for five hundred years. It is downright depressing to think how few readers have ever seen the gorgeously illuminated capital P in MS Vaticanus Latinus 1891, with its pale pink dragonfly perched on a tendril of white filigree. The only sign of activity on MS Vaticanus Latinus 1895, produced in Belgium in 1476, is a terra-cotta-colored stain from a spill on page 165 recto some five centuries ago. Cardinals wanted to have copies of Diogenes Laertius, and illuminators inserted their coats of arms on the first page of the volumes they decorated with care, but once acquired, these beautiful books apparently ceased to be of interest. MS Vaticanus Latinus 1894 is riddled with blank spaces neither scribe nor readers ever bothered to supply with the missing blocks of text.

The printed editions of Traversari have been consulted more often than the manuscripts, but what most readers seem to have been devouring in Renaissance Rome are various vernacular *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*, preserved in manuscript or printed in small octavo format on cheap paper. These books all show signs of heavy use, and not only because the paper on which they are printed is cheaper than the stock used for printed quarto versions of Diogenes. Their texts are designed for easy reading and maximum amusement.

The earliest of these popular digests is a thirteenth-century compendium of short biographies and adages known as the *Fiori e vita di filosafi e d'altri savi e d'imperadori*, once attributed to Dante's teacher Brunetto Latini. The book certainly dates from his time: it is a translation of Adam of Clermont's popular Latin booklet *Flores historiarum*, executed between 1271, when Adam

completed his *Flores*, and 1276, the date of the earliest surviving manuscript of the *Fiori*.<sup>4</sup> A slightly later work known as *Vite dei filosofi* translated a *Liber de vita et moribus philosophorum* that was formerly attributed to the English Scholastic philosopher Walter Burley (1276–1345).<sup>5</sup> This *Vite* is now thought to have been taken directly from a twelfth-century Latin translation of Diogenes that was drafted by the (probably) Sicilian scholar Enrico Aristippos between 1154 and 1162, but is now lost.<sup>6</sup> Both these works, in vernacular Italian, provide short biographies of the philosophers together with pungent aphorisms, and the stories they tell are a far cry from Raphael's dignified conclave: Diogenes Laertius speaks of Diogenes the Cynic trampling the carpets in Plato's house as a rebuke to his arrogance; in the digests, he jumps up and down on Plato's couch with muddy feet. Diogenes Laertius tells several stories about Socrates' wife, Xanthippe, but in the two later versions of the *Lives* Socrates has become a bigamist, whose wives pull each other's hair when they meet, and all over "such a dirty man, who had slack, hollow nostrils, a bald forehead, hairy shoulders and crooked legs."<sup>7</sup> Raphael has smoothed out his satyrlike features and provided the deliberately rude Diogenes with the body and reclining pose of a river-god. The painting's mood overall is genteel and exalted, emphasizing the energy of the philosophers, rather than their contentiousness.

At least one of the readers of the Vatican Library's early printed editions of Diogenes Laertius was Angelo Colocci, the Curial humanist known to have worked closely with Raphael.<sup>8</sup> Inc.III.83 is a copy of the Latin translation of Diogenes made by Elio Francesco Marchese, published in Rome by Giorgio Lauer in 1472 and dedicated to the Neapolitan cardinal Oliviero Carafa.<sup>9</sup> Originally owned by another cardinal, it passed into the hands of Colocci, who peppered the margins, especially

4 Alfonso D'Agostino, *Fiori e vita di filosafi e d'altri savi e d'imperadori*, Edizione critica, Pubblicazioni dell'Facoltà di Lettere dell'Università degli Studi di Milano 87 (Florence: La Nuova Italia, 1979), 28–54.

5 M. C. Sommers, "Burley, Walter," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/4037, accessed March 27, 2014; M. Grignaschi, "Lo pseudo Walter Burley e il *Liber de vita et moribus philosophorum*," *Medioevo* 16 (1990): 131–90; J. Prelog, "De Pictagora phylosopho": Die Biographie des Pythagoras in dem Walter Burley zugeschriebenen *Liber de vita et moribus philosophorum*," *Medioevo* 16 (1990): 191–252; O. E. Stigall, "The Manuscript Tradition of the *De vita et moribus philosophorum* of Walter Burley," *Mediaevalia et Humanistica* 11 (1957): 44–57.

6 Tiziano Dorandi, *Laertiana: Capitoli sulla tradizione manoscritta e sulla storia del testo delle "Vite dei filosofi" di Diogene Laerzio* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009), 203–14.

7 D'Agostino, *Fiori e vita*, 64, citing the original's "cosi sozzo omo . . . che aveva sceme le narici e cavate, la fronte calva, pilosi le omere delle spalle e le gambe stravolte"; but the description in *Vite dei filosofi* is nearly identical.

8 Ingrid D. Rowland, "Raphael, Angelo Colocci, and the Genesis of the Architectural Orders," *Art Bulletin* 76 (1994): 81–108.

9 Giovanni Santinello and Francesco Iottin, *Models of the History of Philosophy*, vol. 1, *From its Origins in the Renaissance to the "Historia Philosophica"*, *Archives Internationales d'Histoire des Idées* 135 (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1993), 155.

2 The identification of the painting as the "Liceo d'Atene" goes back to Gaspard Celio in 1638; Konrad Oberhuber, *Polarität und Synthese in Raffaels "Schule von Athen"* (Stuttgart: Urachhaus, 1983), 54.

3 Christiane L. Joost-Gaugier, *Measuring Heaven: Pythagoras and His Influence on Thought and Art in Antiquity and the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 2006), 273n6–74n7.



*The School of Athens*, by Raphael, 1509–1510.

of the *Life of Plato*, with notes and the word lists he called “tabulation.”<sup>10</sup> There are also significant annotations in Inc.III.172, the Venice edition of Traversari’s translation published by Nicholas Jenson in 1480; some of these appear to be Colocci’s as well.

Colocci and Raphael studied the architectural treatises of Vitruvius together, and from this collaboration we know the painter may not have had a scholar’s command of Latin but could make out enough to warrant owning his own Latin books (as did his similarly “unlettered” associates Donato Bramante and the brothers Antonio and Giovanni Battista da Sangallo, all of whom owned Latin copies of Vitruvius).<sup>11</sup> Even an artist who claimed no knowledge of Latin, Leonardo da Vinci, owned his own copy of Traversari’s translation.<sup>12</sup> A double portrait

of Leonardo playing a scowling, lantern-jawed Heraclitus to Bramante’s jolly, balding Democritus; both hold books, as the earth hangs suspended between them. This phenomenally intelligent and influential pair were great readers despite their shared lack of expertise as classicists.<sup>13</sup>

But Greek manuscripts of Diogenes were also available in Rome (though those in the Vatican Library did not arrive until after Raphael’s time). The Biblioteca Angelica preserves a sixteenth-century text on paper (MS gr. 97), part of a significant collection of Greek philosophical works assembled in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries by the Augustinian friar Egidio da Viterbo, the thinker whose ideas almost certainly govern the basic design and many details of *The School of Athens*, including the very presence of a conclave of Greek philosophers on the wall of the pontifical suite.<sup>14</sup>

10 For tabulation, see Ingrid D. Rowland, *The Culture of the High Renaissance: Ancients and Moderns in Sixteenth-Century Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 109–40.

11 Rowland, “Raphael, Angelo Colocci.”

12 Julián Martín Abab, “L’(in)olvidable historia bibliotecaria de los manuscritos vincianos de la Biblioteca Nacional de España,” in connection with the show “El imaginario de Leonardo,” Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid, 2010; [www.bne.es/es/Micrositios/Exposiciones/Leonardo/Estudios/seccion2/](http://www.bne.es/es/Micrositios/Exposiciones/Leonardo/Estudios/seccion2/), accessed April 1, 2014. My thanks to Noah Charney for this reference.

13 The painting, a detached fresco now in Milan’s Pinacoteca di Brera, has been attributed both to Bramante himself and to Bramantino; see Richard Schofield, “Bramante dopo Malaguzzi Vieri,” *Arte Lombarda* 167 (2013), [www.vitaepensiero.it/scheda-articolo\\_digital/Richard-schofield/bramante-dopo-malaguzzi-valeri-666112\\_2013\\_0001\\_0005-155511.html](http://www.vitaepensiero.it/scheda-articolo_digital/Richard-schofield/bramante-dopo-malaguzzi-valeri-666112_2013_0001_0005-155511.html), accessed April 1, 2014.

14 Dorandi, *Laerziana*, 28.

Two years before assigning Raphael to work on *The School of Athens*, in 1506, Pope Julius II had appointed Egidio, a famous preacher and vicar-general of his order, as vicar-general of the Augustinian Hermits, the largest religious order in the early-sixteenth-century Christian world.<sup>15</sup> In 1507, the order itself elected him prior-general. Through sermons, pastoral letters, and a large unfinished theological treatise, and with the Pope's full encouragement, Egidio took a preeminent role in shaping the intellectual climate of Julian Rome, including a special emphasis on the study of Greek and Hebrew, the two other "theological languages" along with Latin.<sup>16</sup> Giovanni Pico della Mirandola's Christian Kabbalah shaped Egidio's Hebrew studies, Marsilio Ficino his understanding of the Greeks.<sup>17</sup> For the most part, Egidio wrote notes in the margins of his books in the same language as the text itself, whether vernacular Italian, Latin, Greek, or Hebrew. This is the case for his copy of Diogenes Laertius, commissioned from the Florentine scribe Niccolò Puccini.<sup>18</sup>

Diogenes Laertius, by presenting ancient philosophy as a group of competitive schools, portrayed a world of learning that had much in common with sixteenth-century Rome. Initially trained in the Averroist Aristotelian tradition at the University of Padua (where he met Pico in the early 1490s), Egidio had become increasingly entranced by Ficino's version of Platonic philosophy after meeting the philosopher-physician in Florence. In effect, therefore, the struggles among Platonist, Stoic, Cynic, Pythagorean, and Epicurean in antiquity mirrored the struggles of his time, and *The School of Athens* responds precisely as Egidio tried to do in his own ministry: reconciling the disputants by appealing to their common beliefs, finding the harmonies between Plato and Aristotle, and among all their eccentric, opinionated fellow seekers after truth.

In addition to sermons and pastoral letters, Egidio hoped to effect this reconciliation among contemporary philosophical schools in a more trenchant, quiet way, by producing an ambitious work of scholarship. Between 1506 and 1512, in the very years that Raphael created *The School of Athens*, he began to draft a commentary on his era's standard theological textbook, the *Quattuor libri sententiarum* (*Four Books of*

*Sentences*), drafted between 1148 and 1151 by the Dominican friar (and future bishop of Paris) Peter Lombard. Commenting on the *Sentences*, basic Church doctrine rendered in question-and-answer form with Scholastic precision, quickly became a standard thesis topic for university students from Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas in the fourteenth century to Giordano Bruno in the sixteenth. Egidio da Viterbo's work differed from these exercises by abandoning the Scholastic question-and-answer format. In his authoritative position he had unusual freedom, and so he wrote about this most Aristotelian of texts "according to the mind of Plato," responding to Lombard's questions and distinctions with classical myths and transcendent Ideas, using Ficino's commentaries on Plato and the example of his order's legendary founder, Saint Augustine.<sup>19</sup> This mixture of pagan and Christian was perfectly admissible, Egidio says at various points in his *Commentary*, because the ancient gods were nothing other than guardian angels, and the stories the ancients told about the gods and heroes were ultimately rooted in sound Christian theology.<sup>20</sup>

Egidio's marginal notes to the manuscript of Diogenes Laertius show he examined the lives of the ancient philosophers in the same accepting, open-minded spirit, seeking out parallels between their beliefs and the tenets of Christianity. His foremost example, naturally, is Plato, whose life he sets off by drawing delicate flourishes before and after the chapter, with red tendrils and leaves; he also decorates the capital *pi* of Plato's name with minute red hatching.<sup>21</sup>

Egidio's thinking about antiquity and theology captivated Pope Julius, who repeatedly made use of the preacher's eloquence to justify his own actions as pope to the public, in Rome and elsewhere in Italy; Julius himself was famously laconic.<sup>22</sup> But he also drew on an idea Egidio distilled in a sermon of 1507: that Rome, here and now, was at last fulfilling a long-standing destiny, conceived by God at the beginning of time, to become the capital of a spiritual as well as a temporal state.<sup>23</sup>

In 1508, Pope Julius called on Raphael and Michelangelo to commit this supernal vision to frescoes that would enshrine and describe in detail the luminous inspiration behind his notoriously vigorous papacy. Michelangelo was assigned to replace the starry blue ceiling

15 Pfeiffer, "Die Predigt des Egidio da Viterbo"; Pfeiffer, *Zur Ikonographie von Raffaels Disputa*; Ingrid D. Rowland, "The Intellectual Background of *The School of Athens*: Tracking Divine Wisdom in the Rome of Julius II," in Hall, *Raphael's "School of Athens"*, 131–70; Daniela Gionta, "Augustinus Dux meus: La teologia poetica 'ad mentem Platonis' di Egidio da Viterbo OSA," *Atti del Congresso internazionale su S. Agostino nel XVI centenario della conversione, Roma, 15–20 settembre 1986* 3 (Rome: Istituto Storico Agostiniano, 1987): 187–201; Rowland, *The Culture of the High Renaissance*, 141–92.

16 John O'Malley, *Giles of Viterbo on Church and Reform* (Leiden: Brill, 1967); John O'Malley, *Rome and the Renaissance* (London: Variorum, 1981).

17 See Brian Copenhaver and Daniel Stein Kokin, "Egidio da Viterbo's Book on Hebrew Letters: Christian Kabbalah in Papal Rome," *Renaissance Quarterly* 67 (2014): 1–42, with bibliography.

18 Rome, Biblioteca Angelica, MS gr. 97, 203r.

19 The *Commentary* has now been transcribed in a critical edition by Daniel J. Nodes, *Giles of Viterbo: The Commentary on the Sentences of Petrus Lombardus* (Leiden: Brill, 2010).

20 *Commentary*, MS Vaticanus Latinus 6325, 37v.

21 Biblioteca Angelica, MS gr. 97, 58r.

22 Ingrid D. Rowland, "A Summer Outing in 1510: Religion and Economics in the Papal War with Ferrara," *Viator* 18 (1987): 347–59.

23 John O'Malley, "Man's Dignity, God's Love, and the Destiny of Rome: A Text of Giles of Viterbo," *Viator* 3 (1972): 389–416; and John O'Malley, "Fulfillment of the Christian Golden Age under Pope Julius II: Test of a Discourse of Giles of Viterbo, 1507," *Traditio* 25 (1969): 265–338.

of the Sistine Chapel in 1508; he protested that he was a sculptor, not a painter, but Julius insisted. In the same year, Raphael began work on his first fresco in the papal suite, the *Triumph of Theology*, usually known as the *Disputa del Sacramento*.<sup>24</sup>

The choice of Michelangelo to proclaim the face of the Church in public and Raphael in private is telling. Both painters express the grandeur of the Pope's ambitions and Egidio da Viterbo's theological vision, but Raphael takes a more intimate view of these subjects, and the cunning of his composition rewards close scrutiny.

*The School of Athens* presents the Greek philosophers through the eyes of a strong-willed, far-seeing pope steeped in contemporary humanist scholarship and theology—the work of Egidio da Viterbo above all, but also Marsilio Ficino and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola, as well as Giovanni Gioviano Pontano in Naples.<sup>25</sup> For all these figures, Hebrew wisdom and Greek philosophy marked essential steps of a universal human progress toward a Christian enlightenment in which the various ancient philosophical schools would amend their differences to create a systematic, effectively Neoplatonic theology. Egidio was not the only contemporary to assert that under Julius II a new stage of fulfillment had been reached. In an oration in the Sistine Chapel on January 1, 1508, Giovanni Battista Casali, a professor at the University of Rome, called Rome itself a “new Athens,” come to rescue Greece from the Ottoman Turks through its cultivation of Greek learning on Italian soil; no more powerful weapon against the infidel existed, he declared, than the Vatican Library.<sup>26</sup> In many ways, therefore, Raphael's *School of Athens* is also a School of Rome, beginning with the grand structure that houses the philosophers under a dome that looks so much like Donato Bramante's new plans for St. Peter's Basilica, another of the epochal projects that began in the pontificate of Julius II.<sup>27</sup>

Contemporary descriptions of *The School of Athens* do not survive; the first detailed discussions of its meaning are those of Giorgio Vasari in 1550 and 1568, and, more than a century later (1672), of Giovanni Pietro Bellori.<sup>28</sup> Some of the figures in the fresco are clearly recog-

nizable and have been confidently accepted for centuries; others are harder to identify and have stimulated learned debate since the late sixteenth century. Among these, however, some general outlines may be discerned.

To Egidio da Viterbo, Greek philosophy's greatest contribution to Christian theology was to lay the foundations for the doctrine of the Holy Trinity.<sup>29</sup> Plato's *Timaeus* expressed the idea most concisely, but Egidio also detected glimmerings of trinitarian thought in ancient myths, whether in triads like the Three Graces, or the Three Fates, or in stories of love bridging the gap between mortal and immortal, like Diana's romance with Endymion, or Anchises' with Venus, or the endless loves of Jupiter, or in tales of heroic suffering and redemption—those of Hercules, Orpheus, or Philoctetes.<sup>30</sup> Indeed, triplets and triangles pervade Raphael's composition, from the three large apertures in the great building in which the philosophers gather, to the tripartite window in its dome, to the three fictive relief plaques that decorate its walls.<sup>31</sup>

Within this great three-in-one structure, Plato and Aristotle dominate the composition, Plato carrying a copy of his *Timaeus* and Aristotle a copy of the *Ethics*, both labeled in vernacular Italian so there can be no mistake about who is who. Raphael shows Plato as an old, bearded man, Aristotle as a handsome, athletic figure in the prime of life.<sup>32</sup> Egidio's *Commentary* on Peter Lombard says repeatedly that “these two great princes [of philosophy] can be reconciled,” and here their compatible, harmonious postures bear out this belief. The *Commentary* cites Aristotle's statement, preserved in Diogenes, that friends are one soul in two bodies, and something of that fellow feeling is also portrayed.

As for the books they carry, Egidio writes:

These great Princes can be reconciled, if we postulate that things have a dual nature, one that is free from matter and one that is embedded in matter. . . . Plato follows the former and Aristotle the latter, and because of this these great leaders of Philosophy hardly dissent from one another. If we seem to be making this up, listen to the Philosophers themselves. For if we are speaking about humanity, which is, after

24 For the *Disputa*, see especially Pfeiffer, *Zur Ikonographie von Raffaels Disputa*.

25 The participation of Cristoforo Marcello has been suggested by Winner, “Disputa und Schule von Athen,” 29–46; Winner, “Stufen zur Erkenntnis in Raffaels Schule von Athen,” 50–60. The participation of Pontano has not been discussed.

26 John O'Malley, “The Vatican Library and *The School of Athens*: A Text of Battista Casali, 1508,” *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies* 7 (1977): 271–87.

27 Sylvia Ferino Pagden and Maria Antonietta Zancan, *Raffaello: Catalogo completo dei dipinti* (Florence: Cantini, 1989), 83; Matthias Winner, “Projects and Execution in the Stanza della Segnatura,” in Guido Cornini and Christine Denker Nesselrath, eds., *Raphael in the Apartments of Julius II and Leo X: Papal Monuments, Museums, Galleries* (Milan: Electa, 1993), 256.

28 Giorgio Vasari, *Vita di Raffaello d'Urbino* (1550; revised 1568); Giovanni Pietro Bellori, *Descrizione delle immagini dipinte da Raffaello*

*d'Urbino nel Palazzo Vaticano, e nella Farnesina alla Lungara: Con alcuni ragionamenti in onore delle sue opere, e della pittura, e scultura* (Rome: Boëmo, 1695).

29 Ingrid D. Rowland, “Giordano Bruno and Neapolitan Neoplatonism,” in Hilary Gatti, ed., *Giordano Bruno, Philosopher of the Renaissance* (Aldershot, Eng.: Ashgate, 2002), 97–120.

30 Rowland, “The Intellectual Background of *The School of Athens*,” 131–70.

31 *Ibid.*

32 The Plato is often identified as Leonardo da Vinci, whom Raphael might have met in Florence, but the identification depends on taking Leonardo's Torino drawing of an old man as a self-portrait. Joost-Gaugier takes the drawing itself as a bust of Plato: *Raphael's Stanza della Segnatura*, 92–93.

all, the subject under discussion, Plato says the same thing; he says that humankind is Soul in the *Alcibiades*, and in the *Timaeus*, that humankind has two natures, and we know one of these [natures] by means of the sense, the other by means of reason. Also, in the same book he teaches that each part of us does not occur in isolation; rather, each nature cares for the other nature. Aristotle, in the tenth book of the *Ethics*, calls humankind Understanding. Thus you may know that each Philosopher feels the same way, however much it seems to you that they are not saying the same thing.<sup>33</sup>

Plato's upraised finger indicates God's celestial location and his oneness; Aristotle gestures toward the philosophers gathered on the steps below them as well as to the viewer, implying with the sweep of his hand that ethical conduct conveys the spirit of divine unity to the troubled multiplicity of human affairs.

The Princes of Philosophy divide Raphael's fresco in two. The left-hand side belongs to Plato and the statue of Apollo, the right to Aristotle and the statue of Minerva. Both deities, according to Egidio's *Commentary*, are prefigurations of Christ, Apollo for his association with light and Minerva for her supernatural birth from the head of Jupiter:

In the sixth book of the *Republic*, Plato introduces the begetter, the father, and finally the son, whom at one point he calls the Sun shining outward, and at another Minerva—broadly, inwardly wise; in the *Symposium* he amply praises the third Person, calling it now Venus, now Love. He was in the habit of calling the twin gifts of the divine Child now Minerva, or wisdom, and now the Sun, or light. The one child shines brilliant in himself; the other makes plain the way to the Highest Good by means of reason.<sup>34</sup>

By carrying his lyre, Apollo reminds us that he is the god of music, and on the wall next to him Raphael has painted Mount Parnassus; the two themes of philosophy and poetry thus merge beautifully. Minerva, who stands above a relief plaque with an image of Reason, flanks the wall on which Raphael has painted scenes of civil and canon law beneath images of three cardinal virtues; the fourth, Justice, is implicit, as Plato's *Republic* says, where Fortitude, Temperance, and Prudence are found.<sup>35</sup>

On the level beneath these two "princes," snub-nosed Socrates (miraculously younger than his student Plato)

<sup>33</sup> *Commentary*, MS Vaticanus Latinus 6325, 55r–v, cited, with slight revisions, from Rowland, "The Intellectual Background of *The School of Athens*," 148–49.

<sup>34</sup> *Commentary*, MS Vaticanus Latinus 6325, 22v, cited from Rowland, "The Intellectual Background of *The School of Athens*," 151.

<sup>35</sup> Joost-Gaugier, *Raphael's Stanza della Segnatura*, 136–46.

holds forth to a small crowd; the handsome soldier in dress armor is most likely Xenophon, whom Diogenes describes as "modest and extraordinarily handsome" (2.48), rather than the equally handsome but dissolute and decidedly unphilosophical Alcibiades. Xenophon appears much younger than Socrates (as was true in life), just as Aristotle is shown above them as much younger than his mentor Plato. There is no way to maintain a pattern of relative ages when the philosophers in *The School of Athens* span so many centuries, so instead Raphael seems to concentrate on consistency within the smaller groupings.

On a level below Socrates we can recognize Pythagoras by his relation to the tablet with a musical diagram of the diapason, held up by an angelic youth as the philosopher writes.<sup>36</sup> His presence beneath Apollo fits well with the description Diogenes gives of him (8.11), where his bearing "is said to have been highly dignified, and his students held the opinion about him that he was Apollo come down from the Hyperboreans."

Pinning down an identity for most of the other philosophers on this side of the fresco is difficult, because there are so many contenders for so few prominent positions. Is the elderly man peering over the shoulder of Pythagoras one of his close followers, or Empedocles, clad in Raphael's version of the "purple robe and golden slash" that Diogenes ascribes to him (8.73)? Or is he simply a scholar in rapt concentration, the embodiment of all these philosophers at once? Which of the Arab commentators on Pythagoras is the turbaned figure who puts his hand on his heart, or is he all of them?

Who is the gaunt, middle-aged man who gestures so emphatically to his own book? Egidio's marginal notes in his copy of Diogenes reveal a particular interest in Zeno of Citium and Stoic philosophy; some of the ancient Greek's statements about divinity come so close to Egidio's own beliefs that he marks them off with a tiny drawing of the Cross on Mount Golgotha.<sup>37</sup> This philosopher's frowning expression fits well with Diogenes' description of Zeno as "sullen and curt and of a shriveled countenance" (7.16).

One other identification is reasonably secure, and it is a double portrait: the philosopher Epicurus bears the unmistakable features of Raphael's friend, the papal librarian Tommaso Inghirami, nicknamed Fedra after his memorable student performance, circa 1486, as the lovelorn queen of Seneca's tragedy. Inghirami preferred to style himself "Phaedrus," in good Platonic form, but the feminine version of his ancient name is the one that stuck, among his contemporaries, and in the Inghirami family, which has produced generations of women named Fedra and men named Tommaso Fedra. Here the fat, brilliant bon vivant is cast, appropriately, as the most hedonistic of ancient philosophers, with whom he shared a passion for lovers of the same sex. As Diogenes writes (10.6):

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 82–83.

<sup>37</sup> Biblioteca Angelica, MS gr. 97, 120v ff.

[Epicurus] is also said to have written to many other courtesans, but particularly to Leontion, with whom Metrodorus was also smitten. And in his work *On the Goal* he writes thus: "For I, at any rate, do not know what I would consider good apart from the pleasures derived from taste, sex, sound, and beautiful form." And in his letter to Pythocles, he writes, "Hoist every sail, my dear boy, and flee from all culture." Epictetus calls Epicurus a writer of obscenities and utterly reviles him.

It is quite possible that Inghirami advised Raphael on the choice of philosophers for *The School of Athens*; he served as the Pope's private librarian before his appointment as Vatican librarian. In that case his portrait is particularly appropriate.

On the right side of *The School of Athens*, beneath Aristotle's benevolently gesturing hand and the statue of gray-eyed Minerva, a group of geometers and cosmologists gathers around a balding man who appears to be measuring a geometric figure with a pair of dividers. He is usually identified as another double portrait: the papal architect (and Raphael's relative) Bramante, posing as Euclid of Alexandria. Diogenes does not write about the so-called father of geometry, but only about the Socratic philosopher Euclides of Megara. However, scholars often confused the two in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, and Diogenes' description of the Megarian Euclid's beliefs about divine goodness and unity (2.106) perfectly expressed Egidio da Viterbo's conviction that the Greek philosophers already understood the essential truths of Christian revelation: "He declared that the good is one, though it is called by many names: sometimes wisdom, sometimes god, sometimes mind, and so forth. He rejected what is opposed to the good, claiming that it does not exist."

Two dignified men stand close by Euclid-Bramante, one wearing a crown and holding a sphere with the fixed stars. This man is normally identified as the astronomer Claudius Ptolemy, presented (wrongly, as we now know) as if he were one of the Ptolemaic kings of Egypt. Egidio's *Commentary* notes that two senses of the five first led humankind to think about divinity: hearing, through music, and sight, by inducing us to look up to the heavens. Thus the astronomers, like the Pythagoreans with their musical harmonies, guided the ancients toward theological speculation: "In the [*Phaedrus*] it is written that there are two divine senses: vision and hearing, because each has its own kind of knowledge, one speculative knowledge, the other music, as we may read in the second book of the *Laws*."<sup>38</sup>

The identity of Ptolemy's elegant companion is debated, and most of the candidates in recent scholarship

(Zoroaster, Strabo) are barely mentioned in Diogenes.<sup>39</sup> The figure's features may well be those of Raphael's close friend Baldassare Castiglione, who was certainly the most elegant of men; in fact, he wrote the book for his time on courtly elegance, *Il Cortegiano*.<sup>40</sup>

Raphael himself appears, appropriately enough, on this "visual" or "speculative" side of the fresco, together with another artist, perhaps one of his predecessors in this suite of rooms, either Timoteo Viti from his native Urbino or Giovanni Bazzi, the eccentric Sienese who answered to the nickname Sodoma.<sup>41</sup>

Egidio da Viterbo's *Commentary* on Peter Lombard also helps us interpret the three relief plaques that appear beneath the statues of Apollo and Minerva. Three human impulses, he writes, when properly channeled, become divine: anger becomes Fortitude in the service of God, lust becomes Love of God, and reason becomes transcendent Justice. The plaques, their designs inspired by the scenes on ancient Roman sarcophagi, show one figure striking another (wrath), a Triton fondling a Nereid (lust), and Minerva enthroned above the Zodiac (reason). As Egidio puts it: "All things that exist under Heaven are, as it were, sunk beneath the waves of matter, and only the human soul emerges like a crag or an island, and lifts its head out of the sea: and as the fourth book of the *Republic* tells us, it has three parts: lust, anger, and reason."<sup>42</sup>

Two figures attract particular attention in the center of Raphael's composition: a flamboyantly reclining Diogenes the Cynic, his haphazardly arranged blue wrap suggesting something of his outrageous defiance of convention, and a brooding, bearded man who leans his elbow on a block of marble and sports a conspicuous pair of golden suede boots. The melancholic mood is appropriate to Heraclitus, at least according to Diogenes (9.1).<sup>43</sup>

He was exceptionally haughty and disdainful, as is clear from his book, in which he says, "Much learning does not teach understanding; otherwise it would have taught Hesiod and Pythagoras, or, in turn, Xenophanes and Hecataeus." For "the wise is one thing: to understand thought, which steers all things through all."

39 Joost-Gaugier rejects the identification as Zoroaster and proposes Strabo because of the figure's close association with Ptolemy; Vasari thought that the figure now recognized as Ptolemy was Zoroaster, and the transferral of identity to his neighbor has no more substantial justification than this physical proximity; Christiane L. Joost-Gaugier, "Ptolemy and Strabo and Their Conversation with Apelles and Protogenes: Cosmography and Painting in Raphael's *School of Athens*," *Renaissance Quarterly* 51, no. 3 (1998): 761–87; cf. Joost-Gaugier, *Raphael's Stanza della Segnatura*, 104–12.

40 See Joost-Gaugier, "Ptolemy and Strabo and Their Conversation," 763, 778–79.

41 *Ibid.*, 764, 780–83.

42 *Commentary*, MS Vaticanus Latinus 6325, 75v, cited from Rowland, "The Intellectual Background of *The School of Athens*," 152.

43 Joost-Gaugier identifies this figure as Anaximander in *Raphael's Stanza della Segnatura*, 96–99.

38 *Commentary*, MS Vaticanus Latinus 6325, 76v, cited from Rowland, "The Intellectual Background of *The School of Athens*," 153.

The odd insertion of this block of marble, the rapt expression, and the distinctive way Raphael paints this figure all confirm Vasari's statement that it is a portrait of Michelangelo.<sup>44</sup> In 1510, two years before the Sistine Chapel officially reopened to the public, Bramante and Raphael had sneaked in to see the ceiling frescoes, and Raphael has produced a perfect imitation of his Florentine rival's muscular style, strikingly novel pastel colors, and the dogskin boots to which Michelangelo was so devoted that he almost never took them off (when he did, his skin came off too).<sup>45</sup>

Repeatedly, then, Raphael has used the personal information about the ancient Greek philosophers in Diogenes

44 For the story of this modern identification, first made in 1941 by Deoclecio Redig de Campos, superintendent of the Vatican Museums, see Maria H. Loh, "Renaissance Faciality," *Oxford Art Journal* 32 (2009): 350–53.

45 Giorgio Vasari, *Vita di Michelangelo* (1550; revised 1568).

Laertius to draw strongly individualized portraits, often comparing these ancient figures directly to his own contemporaries in affectionate but uncompromising double images. As for the text of Diogenes itself, it provided deep inspiration for only a handful of readers in the Renaissance Rome of Pope Julius II, but that handful included Egidio da Viterbo, the head of the Augustinian order; Angelo Colucci, one of the most influential intellectuals (and generous hosts) in Rome; Tommaso Inghirami, Vatican librarian; and perhaps the Pope himself and his close friend the architect Bramante. Although ancient Greece was still the fascination of only a few, the world enshrined in *The School of Athens* helped to create a widespread passion for the careful study of Greek in Italy; within a generation, Greek had become an indispensable part of any classical education, and Diogenes Laertius, at last, an author known to many readers rather than a choice few.

## DIOGENES' EPIGRAMS

Kathryn Gutzwiller

Diogenes Laertius peppered his *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers* with short poems known as epigrams, the majority of them self-composed but a good number written by earlier poets.<sup>1</sup> These epigrams typically comment on some aspect of the death of a philosopher whose biography has just been related from an earlier source.<sup>2</sup>

The poetic quality of Diogenes' epigrams has been judged harshly, although his playful wit has appealed to some.<sup>3</sup> His poetry has been valued, almost universally, only as a window into his "own interests and views."<sup>4</sup> Although Diogenes often adapted the very words of his prose source, his epigrams provided the opportunity to express, in poetic form, his own opinion

on the philosopher's character. By turning poet, Diogenes acquired a personalized voice that would otherwise not suit his role as an objective collector of information about the lives and beliefs of those who perished centuries before. When we read *Lives* through the lens of Diogenes' epigrams, we uncover the nature of judgments he typically renders, how he connects philosophers of similar character types through linguistic play, and how he draws upon and situates himself within the tradition of Greek epigram.

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Diogenes begins his *Lives* by arguing that philosophy had its origin with the Greeks. As evidence he cites the achievements of two legendary poets of the misty past—Musaeus, an Athenian who died at Attic Phalerum, and the Theban Linus, a son of Hermes and Urania. To legitimize the brief information he gives about these two, primarily their lineage and place of birth, he quotes the inscriptions he claims were placed upon their graves. Here is the first, on Musaeus (1.3):

Here the Phalerean soil holds Musaeus,  
The beloved son of Eumolpus.

Here is the second, on Linus (1.4):

Here the earth has received the Theban Linus  
The son of the fair-crowned Muse Urania.

Having established these two, both Greeks, as the first philosophers, Diogenes then turns to refuting the claim of some that Orpheus, a barbarian from Thrace, was the inventor of philosophy. Orpheus' criticism of the gods for

1 The *Lives* contains fifty-two epigrams by Diogenes on forty-six philosophers and twenty-nine epigrams by other poets, both named and anonymous, on twenty-three philosophers.

2 For the importance of death scenes in Diogenes' biographies, see Sergi Grau, "How to Kill a Philosopher: The Narrating of Ancient Greek Philosophers' Deaths in Relation to Their Way of Living," *Ancient Philosophy* 30 (2010): 347–81.

3 Note, for example, the harsh remarks of Herbert S. Long in his preface to Robert D. Hicks, trans., *Diogenes Laertius: Lives of Eminent Philosophers* (1925; repr., Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972), 1:xvi: "The extant poems are so wretched as fully to justify van Gutschmid's thanks to Apollo and the Muses for allowing the collection as a whole to vanish"; and of W. R. Paton, trans., *The Greek Anthology* (London: William Heinemann, 1917), 2:50n1: "perhaps the worse verses ever published." Marcello Gigante, "Biografia e dossografia in Diogene Laertio," *Elenchos* 7 (1986): 41–44, however, defends Diogenes against the charge of being a "silly poetaster." On the epigrams generally, see Richard Hope, *The Book of Diogenes Laertius: Its Spirit and Its Method* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1930), 164–67.

4 Jørgen Mejer, *Diogenes Laertius and His Hellenistic Background* (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner, 1978), 46.

inflicting suffering on humans disqualifies him as a philosopher, in Diogenes' view, and he offers as proof of Orpheus' impiety an epitaph in which the Thracian poet is said to have been killed by Zeus in Macedonian Dium (1.5):

Here the Muses laid the Thracian, Orpheus of  
the Golden Lyre,  
Whom high-ruling Zeus slew with a smoking  
shaft.

After a prologue, the rest of Diogenes' first book is devoted to those semilegendary wise men of the archaic age known as the Seven Sages, about whom he quotes both other anonymous pseudo-inscriptions and some epigrams of his own.<sup>5</sup>

By citing at the outset these early epitaphs, Diogenes places his *Lives* within a long tradition of prose texts with quoted epigrams, which functioned to authenticate the information provided. The metrical form used for almost all the short epitaphs is the single elegiac couplet, a combination of an epic-type hexameter followed by a shorter pentameter, which became the dominant form for inscribed verse (and later for literary epigrams) from the sixth century BC onward. One-couplet epitaphs for heroes were circulating as early as the fifth century, and epitaphs often close the short biographies attached to the manuscripts of various authors.

The best literary parallel for Diogenes' couplets is a work called the *Peplos*, attributed to Aristotle, which provided prose accounts of mythical heroes, mostly of the Trojan War, supplemented by simple epitaphs of the same type found in Diogenes. Though the work itself is lost, there survive at least forty-eight poems extracted from it by much later sources, including one on Orpheus that bears some similarity to the epitaph Diogenes gives for that heroic poet.<sup>6</sup> "*Peplos*-writing," as Cicero calls it,<sup>7</sup> was later taken up by other compilers, most prominently the Roman polymath Varro, who preserved epigrams from statues and tombs for seven hundred prominent persons. In citing these *Peplos*-type couplets, Diogenes acknowledges at the outset of his work that epigrammatic commemoration of this type occupied an essential place in Greek biographical remembrance from its inception in the classical age.

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5 The alleged inscriptions, supposedly on tombstones or statues, are as follows: Thales (1.34 and 39), Solon (1.62), Chilon (1.73), Pittacus (1.79), Bias (1.85), Cleobulus (1.93), Periander (1.97), and Pherecydes (1.120). The lists of the Seven Sages varied, and Diogenes discusses eleven possible sages.

6 On the *Peplos* and the antiquity of its epigrams, see Kathryn Gutzwiller, "Heroic Epitaphs of the Classical Age: The Aristotelian *Peplos* and Beyond," in *Archaic and Classical Greek Epigram*, ed. Manuel Baumbach, Andrej Petrovic, and Ivana Petrovic (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 219–49.

7 In his *Letters to Atticus* 16.11.3.

Just before the first of his own epigrams, Diogenes quotes an anonymous epitaphic couplet for Thales, one of the Seven Sages (1.39):

The tomb is small, but the man's renown soars  
to the skies;  
Behold the grave of Thales, the most  
thoughtful of mortals.

Diogenes' own epigram reflects his character as poet and biographer (1.39):

One day as Thales watched the games,  
You snatched the sage from the stadium.  
I commend you, Zeus, Lord of the Sun, for  
drawing him toward you;  
For he could no longer see the stars from  
earth.

His epigram is markedly different in style and content from the alleged inscription, and through its unusually complex relationship to other nearby material, it serves as a showpiece for the various ways in which Diogenes provides a personal take on his biographies through verse.

While Diogenes is always careful to acknowledge his authorship of a poem, he introduces his first-occurring composition by saying more: "And here is my own epigram on [Thales] from the first book of my *Epigrams*, also entitled *Pammetros*" (1.39). From this the reader learns that Diogenes had previously published a collection of *Epigrams* in more than one papyrus book-roll and that the first book-roll bore the title "In Various Meters."<sup>8</sup>

He again cites the *Pammetros* in quoting his second epigram, on Solon, adding that there he had "discourse[d] about all the illustrious dead in all meters and rhythms, in the form of epigrams and lyrics" (1.63). This fits with the combination of metrical types found in Diogenes' epigrams throughout the *Lives*, and it seems reasonable to assume that he intends the reader to understand that the earlier poetry book, mentioned three times elsewhere (7.31, 8.74, 9.43), was the source for all his quoted epigrams.<sup>9</sup> We should note, however, that citation of the *Pammetros* is also a way for Diogenes to legitimate the inclusion of his own compositions, since he thereby turns his epigram collection into one of his sources. We begin to see the playful side of Diogenes.

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8 Nietzsche "Analecta Laertiana," 2, reprinted in Nietzsche *Werke: Philologische Schriften*, ed. Fritz Bornmann and Mario Carpitella (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1982), 17:172, pointed out that the Greek indicates that only the first book of the *Epigrams* was called *Pammetros*. I understand *Pammetrōi* in 1.39 to be an adjective agreeing with "first [book-roll = Greek *tomōi*] of the *Epigrammata*," while in 1.63 it agrees with an understood feminine noun, *bubliōi*, which can mean a complete book or, as apparently here, a division of a complete work such as would fit on one papyrus roll.

9 Gigante, "Biografia e dossografia," 35, argues that Diogenes' epigram collection included the epigrams by earlier poets he cites in the *Lives*. This may be right, though the evidence is inconclusive.

Diogenes' first epigram differs from the anonymous epitaphs most basically because it is not an epitaph at all, but rather an elaborate conceit in which a first-person speaker compliments Zeus on the appropriateness of Thales' manner of death ("I commend you"). It is typical of Diogenes' approach that the voice heard is not that of an objective, anonymous composer (as usually in genuine inscriptions) and only occasionally the fictitious voice of the tomb or the dead or the passerby (as in many literary epigrams); predominantly it is the voice of "Diogenes" as the author's persona—that is, someone who knows of a philosopher's life from anecdotal accounts found in earlier biographies and epitomes of biographies.<sup>10</sup>

In fact, as we have seen, the introductory citation of the *Pammetros* sets the reader up to identify the "I" speaker as Diogenes, a writer of epigrams on the famous dead. In contrast to the *Peplos*-type epigrams, the technique in his own poems descends from the more sophisticated tradition of Greek epigrams that were composed by the early third century BC for inclusion in single-authored poetry books, generally entitled simply *Epigrams* (like Diogenes' complete collection). By the later Hellenistic period, these literary epigrams were anthologized in multi-authored anthologies with more metaphorical titles, the two most important being the *Garland of Meleager* (c. 100 BC) and the *Garland of Philip* (Julio-Claudian). These and other epigram anthologies were themselves later anthologized in a great Byzantine compilation (now called the Greek Anthology), which also included epigrams excerpted from Diogenes, forty-nine in a single sequence (*Anthologia Palatina* 7.83–133, by Diogenes and other poets) and several placed elsewhere.<sup>11</sup>

Predecessors of Diogenes' epigrams on philosophers can be found in the remnants of these collections. For instance, in the so-called Milan Papyrus, which preserves a large section of an epigram book by Posidippus of Pella (third century BC), there is an epigram lamenting the loss at sea of Lysicles, who is called the "first voice of the Academy."<sup>12</sup> Diogenes knows this Lysicles as a follower of the Academy who provided a home for Polemon and Crates, successive heads of that school in the late fourth and third centuries (4.22).

10 The study of Diogenes' sources has long been a preoccupation of scholars. For a good summary of how Diogenes may have gathered notes from early biographies and later compilations made from them, see Mejer, *Diogenes Laertius and His Hellenistic Background*, 16–29. Diogenes sometimes slyly acknowledges his use of sources in gathering the material for his epigrams, as in his epigram for Menedemus, which begins, "I heard of your fate, Menedemus" (2.144, imitating a famous epigram by Callimachus on a fellow poet's death, *Anthologia Palatina* 7.80, quoted by Diogenes in 9.17), and the one on Protagoras that begins, "I heard a rumor, Protagoras, that you died" (9.56).

11 Two anonymous poems near the end of the sequence, *Anthologia Palatina* 131–32, do not appear in the *Lives*. Other epigrams likely excerpted from Diogenes are *Anthologia Palatina* 7.57, 60–62, 615–20, 706, 744; 9.496 and 540; and 16.334.

12 No. 89 in Colin Austin and Giovanni Bastianini, eds., *Posidippi Pellaei quae supersunt omnia* (Milan: LED, 2002).

Other examples by third-century BC poets, preserved in Meleager's anthology, mock failed philosophical adherents. These include Callimachus' epigram on the Socratic follower Cleombrotus, who leaped from a wall into Hades after reading, and apparently misunderstanding, Plato's *Phaedo* (*Anthologia Palatina* 7.471), and one by Leonidas of Tarentum on an otherwise unknown Cynic who lost his self-control in succumbing to passion for a boy (*Anthologia Palatina* 6.293). As most of Diogenes' prose sources are Hellenistic, so too does epigrammatic response to biographical accounts have its origins in that age.

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To return to Diogenes' own epigram on Thales, we can observe how cleverly it is constructed through a variety of allusions—to the poetic and prose sources Diogenes has just cited, as well as to well-known cultural commonplaces. The elderly Thales had an ordinary death, succumbing to heat, thirst, and general weakness while watching an athletic contest, and Diogenes rearranges the exact wording in the prose report of this death (*sophos . . . agōna theōmenos gumnikon*, "a sage watching an athletic contest") to fit the metrical pattern of his first couplet (*gumnikon . . . agōna theōmenon . . . sophon*). Despite the flatness of the initial paraphrase, Diogenes honors this father of Greek philosophical thought, an astronomer who predicted eclipses and sought to explain the physical nature of our world, by constructing from an adjective in the preceding anonymous epitaph—*ouranomakes*, "soars to the skies"—a fanciful conversion of Thales' sunstroke to a kind of apotheosis performed by Zeus in order to grant the old astronomer continuing observance of the stars despite his failing eyesight. This combination of the mundane with the elevated is part of Diogenes' epigrammatic style. We may also note Zeus' action of "snatching" Thales to heaven, recalling the myth of his "snatching" Ganymede to be his cupbearer and boy-lover on Olympus. The incongruity of using the handsome youth Ganymede as the mythical model for the old, semiblind astronomer is surely designed to amuse the aware reader.

The Thales epigram has been explored in some detail because it foreshadows in its unusual complexity many of the standard features of Diogenes' other epigrams. In the succeeding poems in Book 1, there repeat the themes of the immortality of the soul and the role of the gods in the wise man's death, as well as puns and allusions to other poems and anecdotes. For instance, in his second epigram, on Solon, Diogenes poeticizes the rather dull story that the Athenian sage died on Cyprus, where his body was burned before the bones were returned to the island of Salamis for burial (1.63):

Distant Cyprian fire consumed the body of  
Solon.  
Salamis harbors his bones, their dust has  
nourished grain.

Revolving wooden tablets brought his soul to  
the heavens  
For the laws he framed sit lightly on his  
fellow citizens.

By saying that in Salamis the dust of Solon's bones became grain, Diogenes may be playing on the similarity between the sage's role as a *thesmothetes*, "maker of laws," and the epithet *thesmophoros*, "bearer of laws," given to Demeter, the goddess of grain. The image of the beneficial conversion of Solon's body into human nourishment then leads directly to the continuing survival of his soul in heaven. The "wooden tablets" revolving on axles on which Solon's laws were displayed in Athens, which are said to have "brought his soul to the heavens," are called *axones* in Greek, a word that can also mean the "axis of the celestial sphere." This double reference, a kind of pun, accounts for the ability of the *axones* to lift Solon's soul to heaven. It is thus the lightness of the burdens imposed by his laws, both for citizens and for the tablets, that allows his soul's ascension. Despite its frequent lameness, Diogenes' punning serves as a primary method of asserting his judgment of the philosophers' lives, exemplified in their deaths.

In the next of Diogenes' epigrams (1.73), the first-person speaker thanks the god Pollux, the patron of boxing, for the death awarded the sage Chilon, who collapsed from excess joy at seeing his son crowned an Olympic victor in boxing. In closing, the speaker forbids carping about this happy death and prays for a similar end for himself.

The conclusion introduces the theme of judging the quality of philosophers' deaths, many of which will be found wanting. The story of Chilon's demise is attributed by Diogenes to Hermippus (fl. late third century BC), a follower of Callimachus and a prolific biographer whose *Lives* included sages and many philosophers. Hermippus' death stories, which seem contrived and are apparently apocryphal, are mentioned by Diogenes more often than other accounts as the basis for his epigrams,<sup>13</sup> and it seems likely he was in the process of collecting notes for the *Lives* from biographical accounts that included Hermippus when he composed the epigrams for his *Pammetros*.

Diogenes' own epigrams, when extracted in order from the prose accounts in his *Lives*, do at times show thematic continuity or other linking devices that are typical of carefully arranged epigram collections, such as Meleager's *Garland*.<sup>14</sup> For instance, three of the first four of Diogenes' epigrams in the *Lives* concern either the transportation of the soul to heaven or divine guidance to the underworld. In the fourth epigram, Hermes gently leads Bias of Priene to

Hades, after the elderly sage has died, having just delivered a successful speech for a friend (1.85). Here Hermes is doubly appropriate as both the conductor of souls to the underworld and the patron god of rhetoric. The presence of the gods in these epigrams resembles a practice known from earlier poetry books, that of beginning with a sequence of hymns to the gods, such as in the collection of the sixth-century BC elegist Theognis (1–18), and the presence of Zeus in Diogenes' first epigram on Thales follows the old *topos* of "beginning with Zeus," found in Hesiod's *Works and Days* and the *Phaenomena* by the Hellenistic poet Aratus. This thematizing of the gods in Diogenes' initial epigrams gives a possible clue to the structure of the lost *Pammetros*.

Later epigrams in Book 1, on the sages Periander and Pherecydes, illustrate Diogenes' use of the death story to offer the reader moral instruction on how to die. The first couplet of the Periander epigram (1.97) is a warning to the reader not to be grieved by failure to obtain every desire but to enjoy whatever the gods provide. The second couplet presents the death of Periander as an example of what not to do: the wise man perished in despair (*athumēsas*) over not obtaining something he coveted. Although in the preceding account it is not clear what failed desire led to Periander's suicide, which cruelly involved the deaths of several others, Diogenes' epigram introduces a recurring theme of suicide from depression in old age, of which he clearly disapproves.<sup>15</sup>

His epigram for the sage Pherecydes (1.120–21), his first in a lyric meter,<sup>16</sup> offers a contrasting story of enduring suffering to its natural end and an arranged burial as a benefit for the living. The poem combines an account in which Pherecydes died slowly and dreadfully from an infestation of lice with a story from Hermippus to the effect that the philosopher left instructions for his dying body to be dragged to the land of the Magnesians; his reason was to aid the Ephesians in their war with the Magnesians, since he knew of a prophecy that the Ephesians would gain victory if they found and buried his body in Magnesia. Diogenes concludes with this moral: if anyone is truly wise, he confers benefits both when living and when no more.<sup>17</sup> What is explicit in these contrasting accounts of Periander and Pherecydes is often only implicit in later books of the *Lives*, namely, that the philosophers who came after them demonstrate the validity of their

13 On Hermippus, see Mejer, *Diogenes Laertius and His Hellenistic Background*, 32–34; and Jan Bollansée, *Hermippus of Smyrna and His Biographical Writings: A Reappraisal* (Leuven: Peeters, 1999), esp. 114, 230–32 on the death stories.

14 See Kathryn Gutzwiller, *Poetic Garlands: Hellenistic Epigrams in Context* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), esp. 276–322.

15 On the shaping of the biographical traditions by means of formulaic themes, see Maarit Kivilo, *Early Greek Poets' Lives: The Shaping of the Tradition* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), esp. 208–24. Bollansée, *Hermippus of Smyrna*, 143–44, identifies recurring themes in fragments of Hermippus that closely map those in Diogenes.

16 Lyric meters were in origin highly adaptable metrical patterns used in song, but by the imperial period they were often used in unsung verse, as in the *Odes* of Horace. The meter that Diogenes uses in this epigram he identifies as Pherecratean, a simple seven-syllable pattern of the Aeolic type.

17 Two of the Seven Sages, Solon and Pherecydes, bestow benefits not only through their teachings but also from the mere presence of their bodies, like the heroes who were worshipped in local cults.

teachings not only by their conduct but above all by the choices they make at the time of their deaths.

According to Diogenes (and his sources), Greek philosophy consisted of two main lines of succession, the Ionian and the Italian. Book 2 introduces the Ionian succession, which begins with natural philosophers from Anaximander to Anaxagoras and continues, through Book 7, with Socrates and the various branches of his followers.

If we focus on Diogenes' epigrams, however, Book 2 opens with an important thematic contrast between the despondent suicide of Anaxagoras and Socrates' calm acceptance of poisoning, both deaths resulting from accusations of impiety. According to various sources, Anaxagoras was brought up on charges in Athens because of his belief that the sun was a huge red-hot mass of metal. Diogenes follows Hermippus' version (2.13), in which the philosopher, though successfully defended by his pupil Pericles, was unable to bear the indignity (*hubris*) of arrest and so took his own life because of the failure of his wisdom (2.15). Diogenes subtly suggests that Anaxagoras's rationalization of natural phenomena correlates with a lack of moral fortitude, since he chose death in the face of popular rejection of his beliefs.<sup>18</sup> The next epigram by Diogenes, on Socrates, forms a clear contrast (2.46):

Drink, Socrates, now that you are in the house  
of Zeus.  
For truly did the god call you wise, and  
wisdom is a god.  
You merely accepted the hemlock from the  
Athenians,  
But it is they who, through your mouth, have  
drained the cup.

The epigram is constructed around the motif of drinking, set out in the first word (*pine*, "drink") and taken up in the final line (*exepion*, "drain the cup"). The point of the wordplay is to convey the judgment that by accepting the hemlock Socrates has earned a place in heaven since his wisdom is divine, whereas the Athenians by condemning him poisoned themselves through *his* mouth, *his* drinking of the poison.

Despite the separation of the two poems in the prose text of the *Lives*, they clearly were composed to draw a contrast between the deaths of these two philosophers, who were not incidentally connected, since Socrates is said to have studied with Anaxagoras in his youth and, according to Plato's *Apology* (26d), felt the need to defend himself by explaining away that early relationship. The contrast in choice of death and so in degree of wisdom forms a model for the majority of Diogenes' epigrams to follow, and we might wonder if the two poems did not once reside side by side in the *Pammetros*.

18 For other examples of suicide from loss of honor among the Greeks and Romans, see Anton van Hooff, *From Autothanasia to Suicide: Self-Killing in Classical Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 1990), 107–20.

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Many of Diogenes' epigrams reflect the themes just discussed. A select few philosophers are praised for following the Socratic model of facing death with equanimity and trusting in the soul's immortality. His student Xenophon, for example, "went up" (*anebē*) into Persia (as told in his *Anabasis*) not only because of Cyrus' invitation but also to seek "a path that would lead up" (*anodon*) to the house of Zeus (2.58), and Plato is celebrated in double epigrams (3.45) as a healer of human souls, who now dwells in his own city in Zeus' realm—a reference to his *Republic*. By contrast, Diogenes follows a version of Aristotle's death (5.8) in which the philosopher, when about to be indicted for impiety, drank a poison called *akoniton* and so prevailed over his accusers "without effort" (*akoniti*). While the language of this epigram is mostly a rearrangement of the prose text, the slightly snarky pun is Diogenes' contribution, intimating that Aristotle, in contrast to Socrates, chose poison as the easy way out.

Throughout his *Lives* Diogenes is complimentary toward philosophers who faced death with fortitude, whether under torture (like Zeno of Elea [9.28] and Anaxarchus [9.59], who were pounded to death in a mortar) or from accident, decrepitude, or old age. For example, the elderly Academic Xenocrates, called a man of admirable character, tripped over a vessel that struck him in the face but merely cried "oh," and so died (4.15; cf. the similar fate of Zeno the Stoic, 7.31).

On the other hand, Diogenes is critical, directly or indirectly, toward those who abandoned their principles at death (like the atheist Bion of Borysthenes, who earns Diogenes' scorn—"I have taken him to task"—for turning to magic and sacrifice, 4.55–57) or who died from overindulgence in a failure of philosophical self-control or who committed suicide, either as a form of display (like Empedocles' leap into the volcano, 8.75) or more often from depression (like Periander) or as an escape from disease or hardship (like Aristotle). A foundational source for his critical view of suicide was seemingly Plato's *Phaedo*, where Socrates on the day of his death argues for the immortality of the soul and labels suicide wrong because only the gods have the right to release us from the prison of bodily life. Suicide, or the proper reasons for it, continued to be a subject of debate in the Hellenistic philosophical schools, and the subject was both culturally important and controversial in Diogenes' own day, in the aftermath of the many politically motivated suicides during the terrors of the early Roman Empire.<sup>19</sup>

The judgments that Diogenes makes of philosophers reflect to some degree the earlier biographical accounts he privileges as the basis for his epigrams, such as Hermippus, but as we have seen, he adds poetic flourishes to his

19 On suicide in Greek and Roman culture, see *ibid.*; Timothy Hill and Ambrosia Mors, *Suicide and Self in Roman Thought and Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2004); and Hartwin Brandt, *Am Ende des Lebens: Alter, Tod und Suizid in der Antike* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2010), esp. ch. 4.

epigrams to produce a certain tone and to project a certain attitude, at least ostensibly his own. He also conveys the recurring principles behind his opinions of philosophers by thematically repeating motifs and key words.

One important theme, rooted in Socrates' death by hemlock, involves consumption of food or drink as a means of death. For instance, Stilpo, the last head of the Megarian school, killed himself by drinking wine to excess; Diogenes creatively says that he "found in wine a charioteer more powerful than that evil team" of old age and disease, since by abundant drinking he drove the chariot of death (2.120). Contrariwise, Stilpo's student Menedemus, the eristic philosopher, starved himself to death, an act that Diogenes calls "unworthy of a man" because driven by despondency (2.144). Wine drinking reappears in the epigrams of Book 4 on Plato's followers, the Academics, where it becomes linked with paralysis and bodily "loosening." The earliest of these is Speusippus, Plato's nephew and successor, who Diogenes claims could not be "related by blood to Plato" (4.3) because he committed suicide in a state of depression over his paralysis. After discussing Xenocrates, Polemon, and Crantor, who all died well and receive complimentary epigrams (4.15, 20, and 27), Diogenes offers his pity to Arcesilaus, Crantor's lover and a poet, who died from drinking too much unmixed wine and so destroying his rational capacity: "I pity you not so much for your death but because you insulted the Muses with an overflowing goblet" (4.45). In his epigram on Lacydes (4.61), who died from "paralysis brought on by heavy drinking," Diogenes puns on the verbal root *lu-*, "loosen" (found in the Greek *paralysis*), by speaking of the wine god Dionysus as the one who "loosens (*luse*) [Lacydes'] limbs" and is rightly called by the epithet "Loosener" (*Luaios*). Finally, Carneades avoids Diogenes' censure, since though afflicted by a wasting disease he refused a "loosening" (*luisis*) of his body by means of poison and chose instead to drink only honeyed wine, explaining "nature which holds me together will dissolve (*dialusetai*) me" (4.65–66).

The first epigram by Diogenes in Book 5 on the Peripatetics is that on Aristotle's suicide by poison, discussed above. His first three successors, however, all die of old age from bodily ills. Theophrastus, who was "sound"—that is, "not disabled" (*apēros*)—"of body" (*demās*) before his retirement at eighty-five, died shortly thereafter "disabled in his limbs" (*pēromelēs*) (5.40). Strato was so thin "of body" that in "wrestling with diseases" he failed to notice or have any sensation of his own death (5.60).<sup>20</sup> About the third successor, Lyco, who died of gout (*podalgēs*, literally "of foot pain"), Diogenes makes the weak joke that he miraculously ran during one night

the long road to Hades though before he walked only by means of "the feet of others" (5.68). Our biographer does not criticize these deaths of old philosophers from natural causes, but he does aim for a lighthearted tone, supported by his fondness for wordplay. We should note too that the epigrams display verbal linkage such as found in the sequences in Meleager's *Garland*. The phrase *en demas* or *demās en* ("he was in body") appears in the last line of the Theophrastus poem and the first line of the Strato poem, a linking repetition easily overlooked in the prose context of the *Lives* but likely more noticeable in the *Pammetros* if the epigrams stood side by side. It is interesting too that Diogenes calls attention to the possibility of the reader's boredom in the Strato epigram ("if you are not paying attention to me")<sup>21</sup> and comments in the next epigram on the inclusion of Lyco, saying, "Nay, I will not even neglect Lyco, who died of gout" (5.68). In its current context, Diogenes' unwillingness to omit "even" Lyco seems a meaningless statement since it occurs at the end of the prose account of the philosopher. It would, however, be relevant in a sequence of epigrams on philosophers in a poetry book, to explain the inclusion of this Peripatetic who set the school on its decline.<sup>22</sup>

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The last two Diogenes epigrams in Book 5 on the Peripatetics concern snakes, and a thematic use of animals continues in Book 6 on the Cynics. Demetrius of Phaleron, a student of Theophrastus, died in Egypt when imprisoned by Ptolemy Philadelphus through a suspicious bite of an asp (5.79). In regard to Heraclides of Pontus, who was associated both with the Academics and the Peripatetics, Diogenes follows a story in which the philosopher arranged for a snake to pop out of his shroud as he lay on his bier so that he might seem to have departed to the gods. Addressing Heraclides as a sophistic trickster, Diogenes turns the tables on him, claiming that he was the one deceived, since "the snake was indeed a beast, but you were detected as a beast, not a sage" (5.90).

The animal theme is a natural one for the book on the Cynics, since their name means "doglike" and earlier epigrams on the unconventional Cynics play on their shameful resemblance to dogs. In his poem on Antisthenes, a follower of Socrates who was often considered the forerunner of the Cynic sect, Diogenes compares the living Antisthenes, who bit with his words, with the dead Antisthenes, who would make a good "guide to Hades," being like Cerberus, the three-headed hound of hell (6.19). The founder of the Cynics,

20 Diogenes' joking epigram on Strato's thinness resembles a series of scopic, or satirical, epigrams on ridiculously thin or small people written by poets of the imperial age (*Anthologia Palatina* 11.88–95, 99–107, 110–11, by Lucilius and Nicarchus). On the genre of scopic epigrams, see Lucia Floridi, "Greek Skoptic Epigram and 'Popular' Literature: *Anth. Gr.* XI and the *Philogelos*," *Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies* 52 (2012): 632–60.

21 This phrase is omitted in the translation as if it were corrupt, but it also appears in *Anthologia Palatina* 7.111, where it makes sense as part of the sequence of Diogenes' epigrams on Theophrastus, Strato, and Lyco.

22 Likewise, if the Lacydes epigram (4.61) appeared just after the Arcesilaus epigram (4.45) in the *Pammetros*, as it does in the extract in the *Anthologia Palatina* (7.104–5), its opening—"and your story too, Lacydes, I have heard"—would make clear reference back to Arcesilaus' death, since both died from excess of wine.

Diogenes by name, speaks from the grave (in dialogue with a passerby) to explain that he died, ironically, from a dog bite (6.79), and Menippus, called “a Cretan dog,” is chastised for committing suicide after losing his property to thieves, an act that proves he did not understand “the character of a dog” (6.100)—that is, what it meant to be a Cynic, since Cynics rejected material possessions.

The epigrams on the Stoics in Book 7, the Italian succession from Pythagoras in Book 8, and miscellaneous philosophers in Book 9 often return to the theme of food and drink. Diogenes prefaces several of these poems with an acknowledgment of his playfulness (7.164 and 176; 8.45), as he does earlier for his epigrams on Lacydes (4.61) and Menippus (6.100). Zeno, the founder of Stoicism, and his first successor, Cleanthes, died of self-starvation (7.31 and 176); Chrysippus, the third in succession, died after drinking sweet wine at a banquet given by his students (7.184). Diogenes wrote a series of joking poems on Pythagoras’s refusal to eat beans because they were associated with the souls of the dead (8.44–45); in the last he follows Hermippus (8.40) in claiming that this reverence brought about the philosopher’s death when, running from pursuing Syracusans during a war with the Agrigentines, he refused to trample a beanfield and so was caught.

Diogenes labels “scoptic,” or jesting, his epigram on Empedocles, who when he leaped into Mt. Etna “drank fire from everlasting craters,” a crater being both a wine bowl and the center of a volcano (8.75). More admirable, it seems, was Democritus, who delayed his death for three days by inhaling the vapors from hot bread so his

sister could celebrate the festival of the Thesmophoria for Demeter (9.43).<sup>23</sup> The wine theme reappears in the final epigram of the *Lives*, concerning Epicurus, whose philosophy Diogenes apparently admires (10.16):

“Farewell and remember my doctrines.”  
Such were Epicurus’ dying words to his  
friends.  
He sat in a warm bath, downed unmixed wine,  
And forthwith quaffed chill Hades.

Following Hermippus’ account one last time, Diogenes makes his now familiar wordplays, on “warm/chill” and the drawing in of death with the wine (*espasen . . . epepasato*).

No criticism here for the suicide of Epicurus, who appears to have followed his own dogma to leave life without fear of death when the possibility of continuing to live with pleasure has passed (he suffered from a kidney stone). Cicero cites the Epicurean principle that we should depart from life only “when it no longer brings pleasure, just as we exit the theater.”<sup>24</sup> We should note as well that this last epigram, though buried in the prose of Book 10 on the Epicureans, would serve well as the concluding poem of an epigram book, where Epicurus’ farewell to his philosophical friends (*xairete*) would double as the poet’s farewell to his readers.

23 To explain the anecdote’s origin, Bollansée, *Hermippus of Smyrna*, 148–49 suggests that it combines the atomists’ claim that life depends on breathing in and out with a folk belief that the smell of fresh bread could prolong life.

24 Cicero, *De finibus bonorum* 1.49.

## CORPOREAL HUMOR IN DIOGENES LAERTIUS

James Romm

Sense of humor is a topic not often addressed in discussions of Diogenes Laertius; in long stretches of his work, especially the doxographies or summaries of philosophic doctrines, he may seem not to have had one. His prose is generally uniform and even in tone, revealing little of his own response. Yet in the quoted verses with which Diogenes leavens this prose, many of which derive from the comic poets or from the *Lampoons* of Timon of Phlius, a different persona is revealed, and an undercurrent of mischievous irony is established. These verses often make light of their subjects, or openly deride them, and Diogenes seems not to be quoting them only for the stray bits of biographical data they offer, but to be enjoying or sharing their satirical stance. This impression is confirmed by Diogenes’ importations, usually at the end of a biography, of verses from his own poetry collection, *Pammetros*, a book that, to judge by these excerpts, used satire to undercut the sobriety of the philosophers it targeted. Then too, the

anecdotes and bons mots Diogenes collects in many of his lives, some of which he professes to find particularly pleasing, share in the spirit of mockery and bitter laughter that was so pervasive in his era (as seen in the satirical dialogues of Lucian, the jibes at great thinkers preserved in the collection of late Greek epigrams known as the *Greek Anthology*, and the joke book *Philogelos*, or “Laughter-Lover,” all of which belong to the second and third centuries AD; Diogenes himself probably lived in the third).

In what follows, I will focus on one strain of humor found in many of these verses and anecdotes, in order to show how Diogenes ironizes his philosophic subjects by focusing attention on the physical frailties that limit, or distract from, their mental and spiritual pursuits. Time and again, he shows us how the body, the vessel that experiences pain and pleasure, sexual desire, illness, and death, challenges the higher aspirations of the mind. The thinkers profiled in *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers* were flesh and

blood, like the philosophers who, in Shakespeare's mocking lines, could not withstand the pain of a toothache; and Diogenes calls attention, sometimes seemingly gleefully, to their physical vulnerability and ultimate mortality.

Before he set out to write the *Lives*, Diogenes had already written *Pammetros*, and we can learn much about his tastes and methods by considering that earlier composition. As nearly as can be judged by the quotations he uses in the *Lives*, *Pammetros* employed a wide variety of meters to address a single topic, the deaths of great thinkers. Its tone was sometimes solemn; several of the quoted poems are traditionally elegies, mourning the departure of a great soul or asserting its translation to the sky or the company of the gods. Two of the poems quoted in the *Lives* make a traditional, idealized distinction between the philosopher's body, *sōma*, and his true self: "It was your body that he beat, and not you," Diogenes says of Zeno of Elea (9.28; see also 4.20). Other poems, however, identify the sage with his body and make sport of his vulnerability to injury or deterioration. Take Diogenes' smirking lines on the death of sickly, rail-thin Strato of Lampsacus:

A man spare in body [. . .],  
I assure you, was this Strato,  
To whom Lampsacus gave birth; forever  
wrestling with diseases,  
He died without anyone knowing it, even  
himself. (5.60)

The joke here is that Strato not only slipped away while unconscious, but had grown so emaciated that he seemed, to observers, already dead. Similarly parodic are Diogenes' verses on the death of Xenocrates—

Stumbling over a bronze basin and  
breaking his head,  
He cried "Oh" and breathed his last;  
Xenocrates, that matchless ideal, a man in  
full. (4.15)

—where the satiric point lies in the contrast between the heroic last line and the banal household object, probably a chamber pot, that caused the fatal injury.

That we are right to hear a parodic or mocking tone in some of the *Pammetros* poems is signaled by the language with which Diogenes introduces them. He several times refers to his verses as "playful," *paignion* (7.184), or a "satirical" thing (*skōptikon*, literally "done in jest"; 8.75), or else uses forms of the verb *paizō*, "play," to characterize his composition of them (6.100; 7.164 and 176; 8.44). *Paizō* is derived from *pais*, the Greek word for "child," but, in a literary or intellectual context, the kind of activity it describes is hardly childlike or innocent; it carries a note of mischief or even malice that cannot be brought out in translation. Those in the *Lives* of whom the word is used, other than Diogenes himself, include mockers like Bion of Borysthenes, who

"made fun" of music and geometry (4.53), and the suspected forgers Dionysius and Zopyrus of Colophon, thought to have created satires "in jest" and then foisted them off on Menippus (6.100). Diogenes seems to assimilate himself to such jesters with his *paiz*-language; indeed, it is significant that he first uses the verb to describe his own verse composition in the very same chapter in which it also denotes the supposed impostures of Dionysius and Zopyrus.

The longest and most ambitious of Diogenes' poems in the *Lives* concerns Bion of Borysthenes, a man who himself composed parodic verses (4.52). Diogenes characterizes his poem about Bion not as a form of play but rather as a reproach, introducing it by saying "I have taken him to task" (*ēitiasametha*). The tone is indeed severe, but the theme is of a piece with Diogenes' larger interest in the tension between the exigencies of the body and the aspirations of the mind: Bion had given up his rationalism and atheism in the face of illness and approaching death. The same theme is echoed by the case of Dionysius of Heraclea, nicknamed "the Turncoat," to whom Diogenes devoted a brief but intriguing biography. Uniquely in this life, Diogenes holds off his usual opening formula, identifying his subject by place of origin and parentage, so as to give emphasis to a different first line: "Dionysius the Turncoat declared, as a result of an eye disease, that pleasure was the goal; for his suffering was so severe that he was reluctant to say that pain was an indifferent" (7.166). Having first attached himself to Zeno and the Stoics, Dionysius abandoned his school under the pressure of eye pain and went over to the pleasure-loving Cyrenaics, thereafter becoming a lifelong denizen of Athenian brothels.

Whether or not he uses verses borrowed from *Pammetros* to discuss the deaths of his philosophers, Diogenes catalogues the corporeal details of those deaths with a kind of wry amusement. Indeed, his book is Homeric in the inventiveness with which it portrays how people die. Several commit suicide by fasting, cutting off their own breathing passages, holding their breath, or (in the uniquely mundane case of Empedocles) self-hanging; others perish from lice, accidents, sunstroke, alcohol poisoning, and the wasting disease the Greeks called *phthisis*. Pythagoras was caught and killed by opponents because he refused to cross a beanfield and tread on sacred beans; Zeno of Elea clamped his teeth onto the ear of a hated tyrant and kept biting until he was stabbed to death. Chrysippus literally died laughing, after joking that a donkey who had eaten some figs ought to be given wine to wash them down. Most bizarre of all is the account of Heraclitus' battle with dropsy, a disease that causes painful swelling of the limbs. Heraclitus tried to draw out the water that caused the swelling by coating himself with cow manure; then, according to one account at least, he was torn apart by dogs, who could no longer recognize his human form (9.4). The famous Cynic Diogenes of Sinope was also killed by a dog's bite—to his foot—in the version of his death endorsed by Diogenes (6.77 and 79).

Grotesque or bizarre deaths are hardly meant to raise a laugh (with the possible exception of death from laugh-

ter). However, in the context of a compendium of the lives of great thinkers, there is something comic about them. Diogenes' emphasis on the fragility of the body poses a counterweight to the admiration for greatness of spirit and mind that undergirds his entire project. In the end, not even the sage can escape corporeality; the physical world stakes its claim on us all. With his graphic depictions of symptoms and sufferings, Diogenes evokes a very different response to the deaths of his sages than, say, Plato does with his portrayal of the death of Socrates in the *Phaedo*. There, Plato carefully suppressed the effects of hemlock poisoning, which include retching and vomiting, to make Socrates' death a spiritual liberation, a curing of the "disease" of mortal existence (as signaled by Socrates' final request for a thanks-offering to Asclepius, god of healing). By contrast, in the deaths of Diogenes' many subjects, the body—the great leveler, the site of disintegration, indignity, and embarrassment—is kept vividly before our eyes.

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It is not only the body's experience of pain and disintegration that interests Diogenes, but also its impulse toward pleasures, in particular those of sexual love. Dionysius the Turncoat is only an extreme case of a more widespread aspect of his work: sages are here given sex lives and sexual thoughts and desires, sometimes in contrast to their own professed beliefs or to how they are depicted elsewhere by more reverent writers. To garner such "information," Diogenes has often relied on an extremely irreverent source, Pseudo-Aristippus' *On the Luxuriousness of the Ancients*, a now lost treatise that seems to have been devoted, in a way that Diogenes evidently found congenial, to showing how the demands of the body, even for those devoted to the life of the mind, can exert irresistible power.

Diogenes took a strong interest in Pseudo-Aristippus' treatise (a work barely heard of elsewhere). He cites it by name eight times, and undoubtedly used it more widely without explicit citation. In it he found a collection of tabloid gossip and racy anecdotes that portrayed great thinkers of the past as thralls of their passions; its content was nicely legitimized by the name of Aristippus, the revered founder of the Cyrenaic school, though it is in fact the work of an unknown Hellenistic writer who hoped to gain credibility by using this pseudonym. "The author's habit was to defame persons famed for their moral integrity and attribute *truphé* [luxuriousness or sensuality] and all kinds of love affairs to them," writes Walther Ludwig, who dates the work to the period between the late third and late first centuries BC.<sup>1</sup> To which might be added this qualification: The love affairs in question, to judge by Diogenes' citations, were mostly between philosophers and *meirakia* or *paidika*, the younger males, often beardless youths, who, for many postclassical Greeks (and for non-Greek observers), embodied the moral problem of sensuality.

One of Pseudo-Aristippus' principal targets, significantly, was Plato. In the *Symposium* and again in *Phaedo*, Plato distinguished the sexual passion experienced by the *erastēs*, the older member of such a couple, from the spiritual desire for Beauty in its pure and divine form, itself an erotic phenomenon but not, in Plato's formulation, concerned to achieve consummation with the *erōmenos*, the younger "beloved." Socrates was cast in the *Symposium* as the model of what came to be called "Platonic love," in a speech by Alcibiades, a much younger man who was both his pupil and his would-be *erōmenos*. That speech describes how Alcibiades' efforts to seduce Socrates came to naught, since the philosopher remained focused on objects of mental contemplation and felt indifferent to his pupil's famously alluring physical charms.

"Platonic love" might easily be thought of as the path followed by Plato himself, who never married and was not identified, in accounts other than Diogenes and his source, as the *erastēs* of any particular *erōmenos*. But Diogenes, citing Pseudo-Aristippus, made him out a positive Don Juan (3.29–32), quoting amatory epigrams directed at four men—Aster, Alexis, Phaedrus, and Agathon—and three women—Archeanassa, Xanthippe, and an unnamed young girl who was enjoined to give up her virginity. A funerary elegy to Dion of Syracuse, quoted among these amatory poems, appears to imply an eighth sexual relationship, especially given the poem's last line, "You drove my spirit mad with love, O Dion," though the *erōs* here referred to might have been taken, in another context, to refer only to the passion for absolute Beauty that drives the inquiries of philosophers, as described in the *Symposium*.

Although these poems were long accepted as genuine, Ludwig has convincingly shown that, apart from Dion's elegy, they were cribbed from Hellenistic verse collections and assigned to Plato by Pseudo-Aristippus; clearly the purpose was to give a rampaging libido to a philosopher whose works dramatized the virtues of sexual restraint. Cleverly, this scandalmonger lifted poems addressed to a Phaedrus, an Agathon, and a Xanthippe, since Plato knew people by these names and the imposture would thus be more convincing. He counted on his readers not thinking through the issue of chronology and realizing that Plato, considerably younger than the Phaedrus and Agathon portrayed in his dialogues, could never have been wooing them with love poems, or that Xanthippe, the wife of Socrates, would have lost her maidenhead long before Plato was born. What mattered to Pseudo-Aristippus was that a familiar name might help the poems adhere to Plato and portray him as an ardent, even importunate, seeker of sexual love. He then added the presumably genuine elegy for Dion into the mix, in Ludwig's view, in a sequence designed to give maximal weight to the ambiguous use of the word *erōs* in its final line.

Diogenes has chosen to quote Pseudo-Aristippus on these matters, at length and without any hint of skepticism, just as he has chosen to cite him elsewhere on the randiness of the ancient philosophers. Even Socrates'

<sup>1</sup> Walther Ludwig, "Plato's Love Epigrams," *Greek Roman and Byzantine Studies* 4 (1963): 62.

famous rejection of the advances of Alcibiades, instanced by Plato in the *Symposium* as proof of the power of philosophic *erōs*, is turned on its head: again citing “Aristippus,” Diogenes declares that Socrates was the pursuer, not the pursued (2.23). On the same authority, Diogenes asserts that Polemon was the beloved of Xenocrates (4.19), that Theophrastus wooed Aristotle’s son even while tutoring him (5.39), and that Aristotle himself was so infatuated with a courtesan as to offer her sacrifice, as though to the goddess Demeter (5.4). And these (along with 8.60) are only the passages in which Diogenes cites “Aristippus” by name; possibly other snatches of gossip he retails, revealing that *X* was really sleeping with *Y* (or trying to), are also derived from *On the Luxuriousness of the Ancients*. Occasionally a model of “Platonic” chastity emerges from his pages, such as Xenocrates, who resisted the seductions of one or perhaps two famous courtesans. Tellingly, however, Xenocrates needed the aid of genital surgery, not mere philosophic conviction, to achieve such restraint (4.7–8); and in any case, as mentioned above, he is later described as the *erastēs* of Polemon, his successor as head of the Academy.

Diogenes not only retails rumors of the sexual attractions or activities of his subjects, he also credits them with quips and bons mots of a decidedly earthy nature. Twice in his work, he quotes sages making loaded references to opening or closing “doors” or “barring the way” where the context suggests a sodomitic pun (2.138 and 4.41). Zeno of Citium, founder of the Stoic school, jokingly refers to his growing erection as a “tumid inflammation” that needs “rest” for treatment, when moving away from a youth to whom he was passionately attracted (7.17). Arcesilaus asks of a man who was accustomed to being anally penetrated, and who argued that the relative size of two objects was inconsequential, whether he regarded a six-incher as the equal of a ten-incher (4.34). Crates of Thebes, after causing irritation to the head of a gymnasium by taking hold of

his hips—presumably an aggressive sexual advance—asks, “What, aren’t these as much yours as your knees?” (6.89), referring to the more acceptable custom of grasping a person by the knees in supplication. Diogenes finds this last remark an especially “charming” one.

Oddly, such obscene jokes, puns, and gestures intrude abruptly into passages not otherwise concerned with sexual matters. The effect is something like that of the comedies of Aristophanes, where the concerns of the body—sex, food, wine, and (unlike in Diogenes’ text) excretion—are always percolating just below the surface of the play and can erupt into the open, without warning, at any moment. A particularly Aristophanic moment occurs in the life of Hipparchia, a highborn noblewoman who gave up her wealth to pursue Cynic philosophy. At a banquet, Hipparchia bests another philosopher, Theodorus, in debate, whereupon Theodorus tries to remove the woman’s cloak and leave her exposed in only an undergarment. The sudden reversion to pure, sexualized aggression fails to discomfort Hipparchia, but the episode is nonetheless paradigmatic of the mind-body tensions configured in Diogenes’ text.

Diogenes’ purpose in writing *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers* is far from clear; no one who had read only the irreverent poems of the *Pammetros* would have predicted he would write such a work. That earlier verse collection often assumed an ironic and even parodic stance toward the great thinkers of antiquity, “playing” with their august reputations in irreverent ways. Its tone, to judge by selections preserved in the *Lives*, harmonizes well with the sources Diogenes later turned to when composing his magnum opus: Timon’s *Lampoons*, the plays of Old and Middle Comedy, and scandal collections like Pseudo-Aristippus’ *On the Luxuriousness of the Ancients*. In all these texts, and therefore in the thematic pattern Diogenes creates by including them in the *Lives*, the needs and desires of the body are foregrounded in ways that comically undermine the aspirations of the mind.

## PHILOSOPHERS AND POLITICS IN DIOGENES LAERTIUS

Malcolm Schofield

Diogenes Laertius portrays many of the thinkers he presents to the reader without reference to any engagement in politics on their part. For all that he tells us, they may or may not have had political involvements—although our default assumption might be that if he does not mention any significant participation in politics, then there was none to report. If that assumption were broadly correct, we would have to conclude that many Pre-Socratics, most philosophers who belonged to the Academy in whatever phase, and most Peripatetics were

as apolitical in practice as Epicurus was on philosophical principle. Such an assumption would, however, be too hasty. One example will suffice to establish the point.

One of the best documented of all interventions in politics by ancient Greek philosophers is the visit to Rome in 155 BC made by the heads of the three major philosophical schools in Athens, as the city’s designated ambassadors, sent to appeal a fine imposed by the Romans upon the Athenians for attempting to seize the small town of Oropus, a long-disputed Boeotian border

settlement. The philosophers in question were Critolaus the Peripatetic, the Stoic Diogenes of Babylon, and the Skeptic Carneades for the Academy, who made the occasion famous by his delivery of public lectures for and against justice as a true value.

What does Diogenes Laertius tell us about this incident? Nothing. Lyco (third century BC) is the last head of the Lyceum he deals with in the book dedicated to Aristotle and thinkers associated with his school. The final part of his book on the Stoics—where a treatment of Diogenes of Babylon was provided—is lost. His account of Carneades does survive (4.62–66). Not a word is said there about the famous embassy to Rome.

Apart from reminding us of the sad loss of the final sections of Book 7, this glum report on the nonappearance of the embassy of 155 BC in the pages of Diogenes illustrates how selective he may have been in using the sources available to him (did accessible information on Peripatetic scholars really run out with Lyco?). So when we tackle the involvement of philosophers in politics as he presents it, our overview is inevitably uncertain. What is not there may be as important as what is; what is there may be invention or exaggeration as well as plain truth. Still, this does not make the study of Diogenes Laertius all that different from a great deal else in research on the classical world, particularly research on Greek philosophy. We just have to make the best of a not wholly satisfactory job.

The work is entitled—according to the manuscript tradition—*Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*. But Diogenes in fact launches it with an account occupying the whole of Book 1 (after the general prologue) of thinkers he calls not philosophers (*philosophoi*, lovers of wisdom) but sages (*sophoi*, wise men). He nominates seven as those commonly recognized as such and adds a few more (whom he will discuss in the later sections of the book) (1.13). Thales heads the list, with the consequence that when Diogenes goes on to introduce the two original traditions of philosophy itself that he identifies—the Ionian and the Italian—it is Thales' pupil Anaximander who is made the first of the Ionians (1.14), even though the subsequent life of Thales will represent him too as committed to the same study of nature as was typical of the early Ionian thinkers (1.23–25 and 27).

The difficulty is somewhat obscured by Diogenes' presentation of philosophical activity as a phase of Thales' life subsequent to "politics" (1.23), and by his remarking after a sketch of Thales' theoretical discoveries that he had the reputation of having given excellent advice in the political sphere (1.25). The one example cited is the way he frustrated the hopes of Croesus of Lydia for an alliance with his native city of Miletus—which proved to be its salvation when Cyrus' Persia subsequently defeated Croesus. But Diogenes then gives evidence from Heraclides Lembus that Thales himself claimed to be someone who lived an entirely apolitical and indeed solitary existence. There fol-

lows a reference to his reported shrewdness in business (his renting all the olive presses in the vicinity ahead of an olive glut, a story retailed at length by Aristotle in the *Politics*), to prove how easy it is to get rich (1.26).

Thales, then, turns out to be a thoroughly ambiguous figure. When Diogenes comes to reflect briefly on the sages as a group, one comment he cites is Dicaearchus' deflationary verdict that they were neither wise nor lovers of wisdom, but just men who were canny and involved in legislative activity (1.40). What we can certainly say is that politics is a theme prominent in Diogenes' lives of the Seven Sages. For example, the next figure he presents after Thales is the great Athenian legislator Solon. Virtually the whole section is devoted to his political and legislative achievements, which provide the general context for the ample listing Diogenes supplies of the wise sayings—pithy practical maxims—attributed to him (as he offers for all the Seven Sages) (1.58–61). The ending consists of a sequence of letters of political advice allegedly sent by him to other statesmen or sages (1.64–67). Diogenes is clearly proud of his ability to reproduce such documents—all nowadays regarded as forgeries by various hands—as evidence of the authority with which he writes. Similar letters, mostly political in content, punctuate his treatments of later thinkers.

As for the rest of the Seven Sages, specification of their political activity is emphatic in the cases of Chilon, Pittacus, and Periander, who is described as the first to transform the ruling position he held into tyranny, complete with personal bodyguard (1.98). The book ends with Pherecydes, one of the extra sages Diogenes has identified, and with a letter written by him to Thales on his deathbed (1.122), matching the first of all the letters in the sequence, from Thales to him, which comments on Pherecydes' reluctance to leave his native island of Syros (1.43–44). It is preceded by an epigram of Diogenes' own, which unlike Pherecydes' letter is invested with a specifically political dimension: Pherecydes alone knew of an oracle to the effect that if he died in Magnesia on the Ionian coast, he would bring victory for the noble citizens of Ephesus in battle against the Magnesians. A truly wise man, Diogenes adds, is a blessing both in life and in death (1.121).

Periander's invention of tyranny introduces a distinctive preoccupation of Diogenes. Thus Pythagoras leaves his native Samos for Croton in Italy when on returning from travel he finds that his city has fallen under the tyrannical rule of Polycrates (8.3). In due course there are allegations that he is plotting tyranny himself (8.39), but Diogenes reproduces a list of persons called Pythagoras that serves to distinguish the philosopher from someone from Croton of the same name "who aspired to a tyranny" (8.46). Diogenes' account of Zeno of Elea initially presents Zeno as a master dialectician (9.25), but relegates his work in philosophy to the end of his life, in a single brief paragraph of mostly dubious doxography (9.29). The nobility

of his activity in politics is the main focus, in particular the different accounts of his attempt to overthrow the tyrant Nearchus, which ended in Zeno's heroic death. Diogenes offers an epigram of his own on the subject, a sure sign his interest in the topic is aroused (9.26–28).

Other instances could readily be cited: the claim Diogenes retails from Demetrius of Magnesia that Heracles Ponticus freed his native country from tyranny by assassinating the monarch (5.89); and the story that occupies most of the life of Anaxarchus of Abdera, who made an enemy of the tyrant Nicocreon of Cyprus and in consequence died a gruesomely heroic death similar to Zeno's—celebrated by Diogenes in another of his own epigrams (9.58–59). But a star example is the very first, in the elaborate narrative that Diogenes makes the crowning section of Book 2. The portrait of Menedemus of Eretria, derived in the main (whether or not through intermediary sources) from the third-century BC biographer Antigonus of Carystus, makes his resistance to tyranny key. His persistent Socratic frankness of speech at the court of the same Nicocreon puts his life at risk (2.129–30). The section ends with rival accounts (2.140–44) of Menedemus' dealings with Antigonus Gonatas, king of Macedon. The version Diogenes clearly prefers makes Menedemus someone who has several times liberated his city from tyrants. That he ended up at Antigonus' court is something that must therefore be seen as one more attempt to do so, contrary to the slanderous accusations to which he was subject—an attempt whose failure made him so despair that he refused food and died after a week. Diogenes again signals his investment in the incident with an epigram on Menedemus' suicide (2.144), one more critical than the verses that celebrate the deaths of Zeno and Anaxarchus.

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The early Hellenistic monarchs Antigonus Gonatas, his father Demetrius, and various Ptolemies appear not infrequently in Diogenes' biographical material. Probably the most famous incident involves the Stoic Sphaerus. Ptolemy II Philopator had allegedly written to Cleanthes, by then the distinctly elderly head of the Stoa, requesting his presence or that of some other Stoic at court in Alexandria. Chrysippus, who is criticized by Diogenes for his arrogance in dedicating none of his writings to a king, refused to go, but Sphaerus obliged (7.185). In the course of a subsequent philosophical discussion on whether a wise person would hold a mere opinion (Sphaerus said he would not), the king produced some wax pomegranates. Sphaerus was taken in. The king roared with delight that he had assented to a false impression: to which Sphaerus replied that what he had assented to was not the proposition that they were pomegranates, but that it was reasonable to think that they were—not at all the same thing as claiming to have a cognitive impression (7.177).

Hellenistic kings liked to have in their company cultivated people—including philosophers—with whom

they could enjoy such intellectual sparring. To judge from Diogenes' narrative, that was true from the beginning of the era. The first of the Ptolemies, Ptolemy Soter, is portrayed as having the philosophers Stilpo and Diodorus Cronus engage in dialectical argument in his presence. Stilpo, described by Diogenes as “exceedingly well versed in politics” (2.114), had from the start of their mutual acquaintance been a great favorite of Ptolemy (2.115). Diodorus was not quick enough on his feet to supply an instant solution to the puzzles Stilpo set him, and so acquired the nickname Cronus—i.e., antediluvian. He is said to have ended his life in despair upon leaving the symposium at which the exchange occurred—and he earned himself (like Menedemus in similar circumstances) a cruel epigram from Diogenes (2.112).

There is something of a pattern in these narratives. When Demetrius of Phalerum (5.75–79), a pupil of Theophrastus who was the leading political figure in Athens for a decade, fled to Egypt on the death of Cassander, ruler of Macedonia, Diogenes tells us he spent quite a while at Ptolemy's court, advising him on various matters, including the Egyptian dynastic succession. The advice was ignored (different versions of the story are given), and on Ptolemy's death Demetrius fell out of favor, succumbed to despair, and died of a mysterious asp bite—inevitably collecting one of Diogenes' funerary epigrams. The Cyrenaic Theodorus fared rather better at court. Although his candor did not endear him as an ambassador on the one occasion Ptolemy employed him in the role, he eventually retired honorably to Cyrene (2.102–3).

Antigonus II Gonatas of Macedon is portrayed as intensely interested in philosophy, something on which Antigonus of Carystus seems to have laid particular emphasis. Diogenes reports that the king had received instruction in philosophy from the dialectician Euphantus of Olynthus, who dedicated to him a well-regarded treatise *On Kingship* (2.110). According to one of the traditions Diogenes reports (apparently as the standard account), King Antigonus was a friend of Menedemus, and is said to have declared himself a pupil (2.141–42). His attachment to Bion of Borysthenes was such that he sent servants to look after him in his final illness, and according to Favorinus attended the funeral in Chalcis in person (4.54). Diogenes thoroughly disapproved of Bion, and includes extended hostile verses of his own composition on Bion's manner of death (4.55–57). Whenever Antigonus came to Athens, he would listen to the aged Zeno of Citium discoursing, and often invited him to Macedonia, without success: Zeno sent his favorite pupil and compatriot Persaeus instead. Diogenes is clearly pleased to be able to reproduce correspondence between Zeno and Antigonus on the subject (7.6–9). He reports that Antigonus listened also to Cleanthes lecturing, and made him a gift of three thousand minas, perhaps because he thought Cleanthes' day job—drawing water—unworthy of a philosopher (7.169). The Academic Arcesilaus, however, had no desire

to have anything to do with Antigonus on the king's visits to Athens, although according to Diogenes he once undertook a diplomatic mission—without success—to the Macedonian court at the Thessalian stronghold of Demetrias. He otherwise spent his entire time in the Academy, regarding the political sphere as alien territory (*ektopizōn*, 4.39).

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Interestingly, all the philosophers Diogenes represents as playing major roles in the politics of their native cities—apart from Demetrius—belong to what he counts as the Italian school, in one or other of his listings of its members (1.15; the Pythagorean succession of Book 8). Thus Pythagoras acted as lawgiver for the Italian Greeks, and his pupils managed the political affairs of Croton so well that the constitution was effectively a true aristocracy—i.e., a regime of the virtuous (8.3). Parmenides, likewise, is said on Speusippus' authority to have acted as lawgiver for the citizens of his native Elea (9.23). His pupil Melissus was elected admiral of the Samian fleet, out of the regard the citizens had for his political abilities (9.24). Diogenes' admiration for the political courage of Zeno of Elea has already been touched upon (9.26–28).

Among the Italian philosophers there was no figure more controversial than Empedocles. Diogenes is at pains to present him as a committed democrat, effective and courageous in preempting a tyrannical coup (his debut as a political actor), opposing erection of a grandiose honorific monument, and bringing an end to the prevailing oligarchy (8.63–66; cf. 8.72). At the same time he concedes that Empedocles was in the end to become unpopular, demanding excessive deference and behaving like royalty (8.66–67; cf. 8.70 and 73). When Diogenes turns to Archytas of Tarentum, we learn that he was admired even among the populace for the excellence of his qualities, and served as a highly successful general for his city for seven (probably successive) years (8.79). His pupil Eudoxus of Cnidus is described as “an astronomer, a geometer, a doctor, and a legislator” (8.86); in the role of legislator for his own city, he is said on Hermippus' authority to have become famous among the Greeks at large (8.88).

By contrast, philosophers in the Ionian tradition (1.13–15), if they have any political involvement at all in the cities where their life is lived, find themselves at odds with the prevailing regime. Heraclitus, who strictly speaking is treated as standing apart from either tradition, criticizes the Ephesians and refuses to act as their lawgiver when requested to do so—because the city is already in the grip of a depraved set of political arrangements. He will have nothing to do with their political life, and eventually withdraws and lives like sheep or goats in the mountains (9.2–3). Diogenes takes satisfaction in reproducing letters between him and Darius,

king of the Persians, in which the philosopher rebuffs the monarch's invitation to come to his court, instruct him, and enjoy elevated conversation on a daily basis and a way of life in conformity with Heraclitus' own prescriptions (9.12–14). Anaxagoras, who is squarely placed in the Ionian school, is put on trial by the Athenians, probably for impiety. Diogenes cites no fewer than four different accounts of the trial and its outcome: from Sotion, Satyrus, Hermippus, and Hieronymus (2.12–14). Socrates, similarly placed in the Ionian school, is portrayed as a strong-minded democrat; he resists the oligarchic regime of Critias and his associates in refusing to produce Leon of Salamis for execution, and he is the only one to vote for the acquittal of the ten generals after the naval battle of Arginusae (2.24). Diogenes reports various accounts of the trial that ended in his death sentence, and stresses the subsequent remorse of the Athenians (2.38–42).

As for Socrates' pupils, Xenophon was banished by the Athenians for his pro-Spartan activities (2.51); and Diogenes apparently knows only of unfavorable accounts of Aeschines, who is said (by Polycritus of Mende) to have lived a good while with the tyrant Dionysius II of Syracuse in Sicily (2.61–63). Plato's Sicilian adventures (3.18–23) are reviewed sympathetically. The elder Dionysius is portrayed as a typically intolerant autocrat, whose tyrannical bearing is denounced by Plato to his face. Plato is rescued from the clutches of the younger Dionysius by a letter from Archytas to the tyrant, reproduced by Diogenes. On his return to Athens he stays out of politics, despite the political wisdom evident in his writings, for the same basic reason as Heraclitus: the people are inured to political arrangements other than those he would advocate (he turns down a request to legislate for the newly founded city of Megalópolis on similar grounds). Diogenes does tell a story that represents Plato as the only citizen prepared to support the general Chabrias when on trial for his life, despite a threat of hemlock made by an informer (3.23–24).

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Philosophical contempt for autocracy is nowhere more memorably celebrated in Diogenes than in the many variations on the theme played by the Cynic Diogenes of Sinope, to whom the last words may accordingly be given. Three examples will suffice. When someone remarked on how fortunate Callisthenes was to share in Alexander's expensive lifestyle, Diogenes bewailed his *misfortune*: he can eat breakfast or dinner only when Alexander decides (6.45). When a tyrant asked him what was the best bronze for a statue, he replied: the one they used for Harmodius and Aristogeiton (the Athenian liberators) (6.50). Finally—and most famously—when Alexander himself stood over him and told him to request anything he liked, he said, “Stand out of my light” (6.38).

# DIOGENES LAERTIUS AND PHILOSOPHICAL LIVES IN ANTIQUITY

Giuseppe Cambiano

In the ancient world, philosophy was conceived of and practiced not only as a specific intellectual activity, characterized by a set of doctrines, but first and foremost as a particular way of life, different from and considered superior to the kinds of lives lived by most other men. The written account of a new type of man, the philosopher, was an achievement of the followers of Socrates, in particular Plato and Xenophon. In these accounts, the practice of philosophy was deemed inseparable from the practitioner.

The work of Diogenes Laertius is one of the most remarkable documents that attests to this way of perceiving the philosophical life. This might seem obvious, since the work presents biographical data about different philosophers. It recounts picturesque and sometimes comical events in their lives, perhaps with the intention of entertaining readers. But it also documents the complex relationship of philosophers with the *polis* or with an empire, with the *demoi* or with tyrants of the Hellenistic age from Alexander on, in dramatic episodes such as trials, exiles, and death sentences.

None of these biographies, however, is characterized by a continuous narrative of salient life events in chronological order; instead they are formed by a selection of events considered decisive. The central preoccupation is to describe a type of life, assuming that the narrated events are an expression of this life. Such events take the form of anecdotes, stripped of precise chronological references, recounted in order to show the peculiarities of character, way of life, and way of thinking of a philosopher. Woven into the anecdote we find the apothegms, sayings, or maxims of the philosopher or a response to someone else's interrogation, or an exhortation to embrace philosophy as a way of life. In the lives of the Cynic philosophers, these maxims may be pointed, ironic, joking, or polemical. Sometimes they take the form of reprimands or criticisms meant to provoke bystanders into embracing the philosophical life.

The conversion to philosophy is a theme in Diogenes Laertius. One encounters a philosopher—listening to his words or lessons, reading or listening to him read his work, as in the case of the Stoic Zeno—and adopts a radically new way of life, accepting and sharing certain doctrines. Those converted are sometimes poor individuals or slaves, like Aeschines or Phaedo, both followers of Socrates, or Cleanthes, a disciple of Zeno. But the converts also include well-to-do individuals who choose to renounce their wealth in order to be able to dedicate themselves exclusively to philosophy, as in the case of Democritus (9.35–36) or Anaxagoras (2.6–7).

A number of the philosophers Diogenes describes also leave their native city and move to Athens, where foreigners had no political rights. Their willingness to abjure such rights suggests the superiority of philosophy even to citizenship, or the prerequisites of participating in politics.

Stilpo addressed the larger issue with a saying that would later become famous. Demetrius I, known as Poliorcetes, had conquered his city, Megara, and asked Stilpo to draw up a list of things he had lost as a result. He had not lost anything that really belonged to him, Stilpo responded, because he still possessed *logos* and *episteme*, namely, reason and knowledge (2.115).

Diogenes Laertius presents a varied picture of the relationship of the philosophical life to sex. Throughout the Hellenistic age, the different schools debated whether or not philosophers should marry, take wives, and have children. Though some did—Socrates, Xenophon, Aristotle—many others remained bachelors: one thinks of Plato, but also Epicurus. Homoerotic relationships between master and students seem to have been common in the Academy, as witness the lives of Crates, Crantor, and Arcesilaus (4.21–22, 24, and 29). Still other philosophers, such as Stilpo and Aristippus, preferred the company of educated courtesans, or *hetaerae*. Aristippus was especially fond of them, particularly Lais of Corinth, one of the most famous of the ancient Greek courtesans—a fact in keeping with his philosophical claim that pleasure is the aim of life (2.75). But it is interesting in this case that Aristippus' self-control is emphasized as well; he is never at the mercy of the courtesans (2.67 and 75). Xenocrates' ability to resist the sexual attractiveness of the courtesan Phryne, spread out on his bed (4.7), recalls Socrates' ability to resist the charms of Alcibiades in Plato's *Symposium*.

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The biographical information in Diogenes Laertius, though he frequently cites his sources by name, is not always reliable. At times he refers to contradictory accounts of the same events. Biography could also be a polemical tool, used to credit or discredit a philosopher and his way of life. A disciple of Aristotle, Aristoxenus of Tarentum, had already moved in this direction, accusing Socrates, Plato, and Theophrastus of unseemly sexual behavior of a homosexual nature in order to discredit them (as Diogenes reveals at 3.29 and 5.39). Stoic sources accused Arcesilaus of being a corruptor of youth and the author of obscene stories (4.40); Epicurus was taxed with licentiousness (10.4 and 6).

Diogenes' biographies extensively document the competitive relationships between rival philosophers and their followers. Many types of philosophical lives were practiced in antiquity, and no single type predominated. The idea that

## DIOGENES LAERTIUS AND PHILOSOPHICAL LIVES IN ANTIQUITY

philosophers, despite having different aims, would work together toward a common goal was completely foreign.

What they did share was a distance, whether greater or smaller, from ordinary ways of life. In this sense the ancient philosophers tended to emphasize the superiority of their way of life, and not its ability to be universalized. The Cynics showed the most radical indifference to conventional social and sexual customs, defying the judgments of others. They did not hesitate to masturbate or copulate in public, or to eat raw meat or vegetable remains at the markets.

Outsiders often perceived philosophy as an aberrant way of life. Even the simple fact of a small group gathering in a school to study, or to live a common life, could appear strange. The comic playwrights took pride in using philosophers as an object of laughter, and Diogenes Laertius did not shy away from quoting them.

But even more important are the accounts he quoted of the character and curriculum of the various schools. He sheds light not only on the economic basis of the respective schools but also on the types of collective life each one fostered among all the members of a school, including women and slaves. Though they operated largely inside their own schools, philosophers were public figures. Diogenes Laertius frequently attests to the public success of the teachings of various philosophers, such as Plato, Stilpo, Theophrastus, Zeno of Citium, and the Academics Arcesilaus and Carneades. Especially after the start of the Hellenistic age, philosophy grew increasingly central to the educational life of Athens and other cities. The rival schools became instruments for the formation of future citizens, not just of Athens but of Rome.

Even the Cynics were integrated into the urban fabric. The figure of the desert saint or the solitary philosopher is alien to the ways in which ancient philosophy was lived. The life was not conceived of as an exercise in introspection and isolation from others, unless for brief moments, as was the case with Democritus (9.38), the Academic Xenocrates (4.11), and Pyrrho (9.63). It was instead characterized by an interpersonal dimension, with interlocutors and auditors who were sometimes outside the school and not focused exclusively on adhering to its tenets. Diogenes Laertius documents the public aspect of the Socratic discussions, and the saying attributed to Socrates' student Aristippus is particularly meaningful: interrogated as to what advantage can come from philosophy, he responded that it was the ability "to be able to consort confidently with everyone" (2.68). Freedom of speech (*parrhesia*), even in the face of powerful people, was a trait that the Cynics especially prized.

Of course, the philosophical way of life in antiquity was rarely devoid of an argumentative and doctrinal dimension. The ancient philosopher was a recognizable character not only for his way of life but also for his doctrines and the ways of reasoning he professed—not that theory and practice necessarily cohered. On the contrary, Diogenes Laertius often quotes critics who note

contradictions—a damaging claim, since any philosopher trying to follow in the footsteps of Socrates was expected to be a model of consistency.

Within his biographies, Diogenes Laertius emphasizes the deaths of philosophers, which he comments on and judges with his own verses. Certainly at times the narration can be explained by a simple taste for the extraordinary, the banal, or the entertaining; this is the case for deaths resulting from accidents, as with Alexinus (2.109), Xenocrates, who tripped and broke his head (4.14–15), Demetrius of Phalerum who died of a snake bite (5.78–79), or Protagoras who drowned (9.55–56); or for deaths resulting from diseases, as with Polemon (4.20), Crantor (4.27), and Lyco (5.68); or for deaths resulting from an excessive consumption of wine, as with Arcesilaus (4.44) or Lacydes (4.61). Suicides abound, as with Speusippus (4.3–4), Dionysus (7.167), and Cleanthes (7.176). It is hard to say if suicide was understood as an act of courage, especially in painful conditions, or a sign of cowardice. The behavior of Socrates seems noble, as does that of Zeno of Elea, who either bit off his tongue and spat it in the face of a tyrant, or was beaten to death in a mortar (9.26–27), as also happened to Anaxarchus (9.58–59).

Most of these accounts imply that the cause of death is an implicit judgment affixed on a certain way of life, whether positive or negative. The majority of philosophers cited lived to a ripe age, and this itself was considered evidence of the advantage of their way of life. At least two versions of the death of the Cynic Diogenes, stating that he died of a dog bite or from eating a live octopus, present a clear reference to his "canine" way of life—from which the moniker Cynic derives—as if death represented a sort of rebuke to it. In some cases it is possible to find a connection between the type of death and specific doctrines of a philosopher or a philosophic tendency he followed. Thales perished from a lack of water, which he considered the base of all things (1.39). For Heraclitus that principle was fire; he died from a lack of heat (9.3–4). Likewise the death of Zeno the Stoic is attributable to lack of breath (8.28–29), or *pneuma*—for the Stoics, the essential element of everything. Chrysippus also died in a manner appropriate to a Stoic, though more ridiculously—suffocating from laughter (7.185). And in one version, Pythagoras's death is attributed to his refusal to cross a field of beans, which prevented him from escaping his pursuers, who killed him (8.39–40)—a reference to the Pythagorean taboo against eating certain kinds of beans.

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Diogenes Laertius informs us of the existence of a debate over how to classify Cynicism and Skepticism: should they be considered *haireses*—philosophical orientations? It depends. If a *hairesis* is used to mean a way of conducting life that followed a certain line of reasoning (*logos*), then Skepticism could reasonably be called a philosophical orientation. If instead a *hairesis* implies the upholding of a true doctrine, then we can no longer call Skepticism a *hairesis*, since it refused assent to all doctrines (1.20).

Cynicism presented a different sort of problem, since it was unclear if its adherents, with their outrageous behavior, followed any line of reasoning at all. Diogenes Laertius claims that the Cynics refuted sophisms (6.38–39) and often based their theories on deductions (6.72). Can we then say their way of life flowed from a certain line of reasoning (*logos*) expressed in a certain number of key doctrines? Diogenes Laertius thinks the answer is yes; and to confirm it, after having elaborated on the lives of various Cynics, he gives a summary of their key doctrines (6.103).

Diogenes thus considers the exposition of the content of the doctrines and the modes of philosophical reflection to be integral to the biographies. In the life of Plato, Diogenes directly addresses a lady “rightly fond of Plato,” and then offers a typology of the Platonic dialogues, along with a summary of key ideas, so that the biography “may not be found to omit his doctrines” (3.47). Similar summaries of doctrines occur in many other lives as well, both of philosophers who were not linked to specific schools—as with Thales, Anaxagoras, Heraclitus, Leucippus, and Democritus—and of philosophers who were founders of schools. In such cases, a doxography is sometimes presented in connection to the life of the school’s founder, as in the case of Zeno the Stoic. The idea is that the doctrines introduced and argued by the founder constitute the patrimony at the heart of an orientation and way of philosophic life, and this patrimony is followed in large part by the disciples and successive members.

But Zeno’s successors, like those of Plato, introduced variations and modifications to the doctrines of the founder, and thus an orthodox line can be distinguished from positions that progressively distance themselves from it. Diogenes Laertius justifies limiting himself to general doxographies of the different schools in order to protect the proportions of the different parts of his writing (7.160).

It is not an accident that he includes lists of the writings of single philosophers, at times even taking care to distinguish between authentic and inauthentic works. Diogenes Laertius states the connection between the catalogue and the incompleteness of the doxography with regard to Aristotle: “it would take too long to enumerate” Aristotle’s many other doctrines, he says, as is clear from the catalogue of his writings (5.34). The catalogues not only were a more or less genuine display of scholarship—a typical practice in the second and third centuries AD—but may have proved useful for those who wanted to read certain philosophical texts. Diogenes’ quoting of the first lines of certain philosophical writings, especially of the Pre-Socratic authors, perhaps served the same function; the technique was one used in libraries to enable books to be identified.

The need to connect the biography, doxography, and writings of philosophers culminates in Book 10, about Epicurus. Letters by Epicurus and his students are quoted that demonstrate the tone of his way of life and of facing dif-

ficulties such as disease or economic hardships; they defend Epicurus against his detractors. We discover more about his excellent qualities, Diogenes Laertius says, in his doctrines and sayings (10.12). This is the only case in the *Lives* in which three letters are reproduced in their entirety, and the objective is clear: to show what kind of man Epicurus was (10.28–29). The writings are thus an essential way to understand the man and his way of life. In particular the *Chief Maxims* of Epicurus crown not only his biography but Diogenes’ own work, in that they contain an ethical conclusion regarding how to reach happiness.

In antiquity, the philosopher was not only characterized by his fidelity to doctrines but by the appropriateness of the arguments in support of these doctrines. Cleanthes the Stoic would have told master Zeno that the teaching of the doctrines was sufficient because he would find the proof himself (7.179). Although Diogenes Laertius does not generally include such supporting arguments, he does specifically mention the arguments of some philosophers—for example, the construction of paradoxical arguments in Chrysippus (7.186–87).

Confirmation of this interest in forms of argument as a sign of the philosophic life and practice seems to me to come from the ample use Diogenes Laertius makes of the theme of the “first inventor.” Many times this theme is introduced in order to attribute the invention of objects useful to philosophers, like the gnomon to Anaximander (2.1). Sometimes the inventions deal with practices like doubling a cloak and using a staff and knapsack—external signs of Cynic life, first introduced by Antisthenes (6.13) or by Diogenes the Cynic, depending on the source (6.22–23). Still other inventions involve philosophic terms or the application of common terms in a new philosophical way, as in the cases of Pythagoras, Plato, and the Stoic Zeno (8.48, 3.24, and 7.25, respectively). Sometimes the inventions deal with doctrines such as the transmigration of souls in Pythagoras (8.14) or the roundness of the earth, attributed variously to Pythagoras or Parmenides (9.21).

Aristotle had attributed the discovery of rhetoric to Empedocles and dialectic to Zeno (8.57). But Diogenes Laertius credits the Sophist Protagoras with more innovations than anyone else (9.51–53): the assertion of the existence of two opposing discourses for everything, the impossibility of contradiction, the division of tenses, and the distinction of the four parts of discourse: wish, question, answer, and command. Diogenes claims that Arcesilaus was the first to practice the suspension of judgment because of the existence of opposing arguments, and the first to argue for and against something (4.28). All of this is a sign that inventions and the use of argumentative techniques were an important aspect of the life of most philosophers. Diogenes Laertius in effect shows us how in antiquity philosophical doctrines, arguments, and a distinctive way of life all intertwined in one unitary fabric.

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Tensions would remain, however, between the modes of ancient philosophic life and other areas of knowledge that were not exclusively under the jurisdiction of the philosophers, such as medicine, mathematics, and astronomy. Different philosophical schools cultivated to varying degrees an interest in logic, physics, and ethics. Though Diogenes Laertius recognized that Socrates’ discussions were largely based around ethical questions, he reports that Socrates was interested in natural philosophy as well (2.45)—an interest some of his students did not share. Aristippus compared those who dedicated themselves to the scientific disciplines, rather than to philosophy, to the suitors who courted Penelope’s handmaids instead of their mistress (2.79). The Stoic Ariston of Chios affirmed something similar, as he intentionally eliminated physical and logical inquiry from the realm of his philosophic activity; physics, he said, was beyond human capacities, and logic was as useless as spiderwebs (7.160–61). Ariston at times came close to the Cynics, who, from Antisthenes to Diogenes, had neglected mathematical studies, music, geometry, and astronomy, which they considered useless for philosophic life (6.73 and 103). Antisthenes affirmed that virtue was sufficient for happiness; and virtue, being typical of actions, does not need many lines of reasoning or scientific knowledge (6.11).

Ethics is the only thing of interest to all ancient philosophers, and it is no accident that ethics is the area most directly implicated in modes of conduct.

Still, most of the ancient philosophers, including the Pythagoreans, Plato, and Aristotle, maintained that it was necessary to inquire into logic and physics, as well as ethics. In *Protagoras*, Plato showed that, just as there was a diet for the body based on the ingestion of food, there also existed a diet for the soul, and its food was appropriate studies. In the *Republic*, he stressed the need for future philosophers to undertake a long preliminary study of the mathematical disciplines. Diogenes Laertius attributes the invention of inquiry based on analysis to Plato (3.24), and to Aristotle he attributes the thesis that scientific disciplines are useful for achieving virtue (5.31).

But even for the philosophers who maintain that philosophic life is constituted in part by the mathematical disciplines, these do not represent the apex. For the ancient philosopher the ultimate goal was searching for types of knowledge capable not only of guiding, but of constructing and permeating a superior form of life—the life of the philosopher.

—Translated from the Italian  
by Julia Hein

## ‘A LA RECHERCHE DU TEXTE PERDU’: THE MANUSCRIPT TRADITION OF DIOGENES LAERTIUS’ *LIVES OF THE EMINENT PHILOSOPHERS*

Tiziano Dorandi

The Greek text of the *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers* by Diogenes Laertius has been transmitted (in its entirety or, most often, in the form of extracts) in some one hundred different manuscripts. The oldest examples of this tradition are three continuous manuscripts (**B**, **P**, and **F**) datable between the end of the eleventh century and the thirteenth century, and three collections of extracts: two (**Φ**, **Φh**) preserved in a Vatican manuscript from the twelfth century, and the third (**Vi**)—the oldest of all—written and dated 925, and preserved in Vienna. All the other manuscripts are more recent and are dated between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries (though some manuscripts with extracts appear as late as the eighteenth century).

**B** Naples, Biblioteca Nazionale, III B 29, twelfth century

**P** Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, gr. 1759, eleventh/twelfth centuries

**F** Florence, Biblioteca Medicea Laurenziana, plut. 69.13, thirteenth century

**Φ, Φh** Vatican, Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, Vaticanus gr. 96, twelfth century. This manuscript contains two summarized texts from *Lives*: the so-called *Magnum Excerptum* (ff. 29v-88r = **Φ**) and the opuscle falsely attributed to Hesychius of Miletus (ff. 19r-29v = **Φh**).

**Vi** Vienna, Österreichische National-Bibliothek, phil. gr. 314, dated July 28, 925: only brief extracts from Book 3

These are the oldest Greek manuscripts and represent what is usually referred to as the “direct tradition.”

There is an “indirect tradition,” which consists of numerous Greek passages from the *Lives* that are quoted in works compiled in Byzantium (most notably, the *Greek Anthology* and the *Suda*).

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Before recounting the efforts of modern scholars to establish a reliable Greek text, it will be useful to start with a few words on the principal manuscripts, their characteristics, and their apparent relationship to a common textual ancestor.

There is a large amount of material missing from the end of Book 7. The missing material included not only the end of the catalogue of writings by Chrysippus (cut off at 7.202), but also biographies of twenty or so Stoic philosophers following Chrysippus—from Zeno of Tarsus to Cornutus (they are listed in the so-called *index locupletior* copied in f. 1r–v of **P**). The missing material is confirmed by the presence of a (rather large) space left white at the end of Book 7—a white space common to the oldest manuscripts (**B**, **P**, and **F**). The fact that **B**, **P**, and **F** are all missing the material from Book 7 proves decisively that they derive from a common textual source,  $\Omega$ , now lost, which also was missing that material.

Manuscript **B** (twelfth century) was copied directly from  $\Omega$  by a scribe with little knowledge of Greek. Given the quality of the transcription, it is clear he had difficulty, and limited himself to reproducing it in a mechanical way, exactly as it appeared to him.

There are many mistakes in **B**: groups of letters that make no sense, words without breathing marks or accents, and, above all, numerous omissions indicated by a blank space that more or less correspond to a part of the text the scribe was unable to decipher. Some lacunae have been filled in by a second copyist (**B**<sup>2</sup>), who corrected many mistakes or readings he considered erroneous by writing above the lines, in the margins, or by erasing. **B**<sup>2</sup> can be dated paleographically to the first half of the twelfth century, shortly after **B**. As for the text consulted by **B**<sup>2</sup>, an overall examination of its contents leads to the conclusion that it was  $\Omega$ , the same one used for **B**. We can presume the anonymous corrector had accurately collated **B** with  $\Omega$ , and had been able to read and understand much more than his predecessor. Evidence supporting this hypothesis can be found in the cases in which **B**<sup>2</sup> was unable to decipher the text completely and where he leaves the same blank spaces to indicate that a word or phrase was obscure or incomprehensible to him. The anonymous **B**<sup>2</sup> was a person with a good knowledge of the Greek language and philosophy and was, at the same time, a meticulous reader of Diogenes' *Lives*.

Manuscript **P** (eleventh/twelfth centuries) was also directly copied from  $\Omega$ . The occasional omission of a phrase is the result of a *saut du même au même*<sup>1</sup> and is not sufficient

in itself to prove that **P** descended from  $\Omega$  through a lost intermediary text. **P**, even in its early phase (before it had been corrected), transmits the text of  $\Omega$  in a form that is less faithful than **B**, revising it frequently based on conjecture.

**P** was corrected on various occasions by several successive hands (perhaps six), indicated by the sigla **P**<sup>2</sup> to **P**<sup>7</sup>. The main job of correction was done by **P**<sup>4</sup>. This anonymous scholar (whose work can be placed, based on paleographic evidence, in the first decades of the fourteenth century) made many corrections, erasing previous readings and noting alternative readings in the margins.

**P** has been the most influential manuscript in the Laertian tradition. It is closely related to at least eight other codices, dating from the beginning of the fourteenth century to the first decades of the sixteenth. All of these manuscripts descend directly or indirectly from **P** and bear witness to the different stages of **P**'s transmission.

The position of **F** (thirteenth century) is more controversial. One peculiarity is its frequent omission of more or less extensive passages, often filled in by a later corrector (**F**<sup>2</sup>) thanks to a subsequent collation with another, identifiable version of the Greek text. Some omissions in **F** come undeniably from *sauts du même au même*. Elsewhere, beginning in Book 5, and particularly in Book 7, the names of the authors and titles of the works quoted by Diogenes are left out. I would not exclude the possibility that this last particularity mirrors a personal choice made by the anonymous copyist of **F**, a scribe who may have been indifferent to the expertise of scholars. Some omissions of words or phrases may also have occurred at the whim of **F**'s copyist. Another specific characteristic of **F** is the frequent alteration of the word order in an attempt to render the text more fluent by cleaning up real or perceived roughnesses or anomalies. The corrections and adjustments of vocabulary and style respond to similar promptings. We are dealing with conjectural readings done by a copyist. Yet **F** preserves many readings superior to those transmitted by **B** and **P** (and  $\Phi$ ). Not all of them can be explained as lucky conjectures; at times it is necessary to concede that **F** is the only codex to have preserved traces of the original text that were corrupted in **B** and **P** (and  $\Phi$ ).

I conclude that **F** was not copied directly from  $\Omega$ , but through an intermediary text ( $\gamma$ ) that was copied from  $\Omega$ . This source ( $\gamma$ ) was contaminated by readings from the vulgate tradition ( $\alpha$ ), which limits its importance for establishing a definitive Greek text of *Lives*.

The moment has come to say something about the process of formation of the vulgate tradition ( $\alpha$ ) and to present some thoughts on its initial diffusion. This tradition is partially represented today by codex **V** (the oldest descendant of  $\alpha$ , preserved up to 6.66). It was produced, perhaps as early as the mid-twelfth century, from a fusion of the **P** tradition and the lost model of **F** ( $\gamma$ ), a

1 Translator's note: A *saut du même au même* happens when the same phrase occurs more than once on a page, and the scribe, after copying

the first, brings his eyes back to the page at the second instance, and thus fails to copy what is in between.

manuscript (now lost) of hybrid character, the bearer of a vulgate text ( $\alpha$ ) that was extensively revised, interpolated, and corrected, but which can nevertheless be traced back to  $\Omega$ , the common ancestor of the oldest extant continuous manuscripts. We know that  $\mathbf{V}$ , at least, was modeled on  $\alpha$ ; but we cannot exclude that  $\alpha$  is the direct or indirect source for other lost manuscripts, or of manuscripts that have been preserved but insufficiently researched. In any case,  $\mathbf{V}$ 's contribution to the reconstruction of the original Greek text of *Lives* is extremely limited.

A handful of more recent manuscripts (fifteenth and sixteenth centuries), not yet systematically explored, transmits a version of the Greek *Lives* that is extremely contaminated and adulterated. Among these I will only point out the codex of Prague, Národní knihovna, Raudnitzianus Lobkovicensis VI Fc 38, late fifteenth century (siglum  $\mathbf{Z}$ ), as it served as the basis of the *editio princeps*, the first printed edition of the Greek text of *Lives*, edited by Hieronymus Frobenius and Nicolaus Episcopus, and published in Basel in 1533. This edition therefore disseminated a Greek text of *Lives* that is entirely unreliable, often corrupted and interpolated, and which subsequent editors (at least until Cobet) have tried to correct through more or less plausible personal conjectures, or by a non-systematic recourse to other manuscripts.<sup>2</sup>

I now move to the group of manuscripts that transmits one or both collections of the excerpts; these are usually known as *Excerpta Vaticana*, because their common ancestor is a manuscript now in the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (*Vaticanus gr.* 96 =  $\Phi$ ).

The presence of numerous errors common to  $\Omega$  and  $\Phi$  proves that they descend from a common ancestor ( $\mathbf{X}$ ). Their lineage was not direct, but rather passed through two lost links: a transliterated transcript of  $\mathbf{X}$ ,  $\chi$  (dated around the tenth century), and the *autographon excerptoris* (dated around the eleventh century). The indirect descent explains why the text of  $\Phi$  is often inferior to  $\Omega$  (at least in its first phase, reflected by  $\mathbf{B}$  and  $\mathbf{P}^1$ ). It is also probable that  $\Phi$  preserved inferior readings in  $\mathbf{X}$ , which were corrected in  $\Omega$ . Still, among  $\Phi$ 's variants there are many that offer a text superior to  $\Omega$ , a phenomenon that can be explained by presuming that  $\Phi$  conveyed  $\mathbf{X}$  more faithfully than  $\Omega$  did. Finally, we cannot exclude the possibility that some conjectures or revisions were made by the anonymous scholar who organized the two collections of the *Excerpta Vaticana* (one of which,  $\Phi\mathbf{h}$ , was put together using, in addition to the *Lives*, many passages from the *Suda*), or that some variant readings reflect contamination from external sources (parallel gnomological and lexicographic traditions, etc.).

Finally I come to the excerpts in the *Suda*, the *Greek Anthology* ( $\mathbf{Pal}$ ), and those preserved in codex  $\mathbf{Vi}$ .

Extensive anonymous extracts from the doxographic sections of Diogenes' *Lives* reached the *Suda* (c. 975–980) through a lost anonymous collection of *Philosophica* ( $\Sigma$ ) with an uncertain date. The biographic sections of *Lives* were transcribed by the editors of the *Suda* principally from a summary (made between 829 and 857) of a work of Hesychius of Miletus (sixth century) entitled *Biographical Dictionary of Learned Men*. The undeniable similarities between the biographic entries in the *Suda* and those in *Lives* could be explained by supposing that Diogenes and Hesychius had access to a common source. There are sporadic cases, however, in which the *Suda* (or its source) supplemented Hesychius' text with additional information taken from Diogenes Laertius.

Thanks to the use of Constantinos Cephalas's *Anthology* (c. 900) as an intermediary source, the *Greek Anthology* includes an ample selection of poetry composed by Diogenes Laertius himself or by other authors quoted in *Lives*. This anthology is preserved in the codex of Heidelberg, Palatinus gr. 23+Paris, Parisinus suppl. gr. 384 (mid-tenth century). Parts of these poems were used in the *Planudean Anthology*, put together by Maximus Planudes (c. 1260–1305). The original is preserved in the codex of Venice, Marcianus gr. 481 from 1299, as well as two authentic originals collected in 1300 or 1305 under Planudes' supervision: London, British Library Add. 16409, and Paris, Parisinus gr. 2744.

The numerous common errors between  $\Sigma$  and  $\Omega$  in this case also derive from a common original source, namely  $\mathbf{X}$ . We can also speculate that the same source was used for the poetic compositions extracted from *Lives* that reached  $\mathbf{Pal}$  by way of the codex of Constantinos Cephalas's *Anthology*.

*Suda* and  $\mathbf{Pal}$  can thus substantially contribute to the reconstruction of text  $\mathbf{X}$ , from which they derive by way of distinct intermediary manuscripts ( $\Sigma$  for *Suda*, and the *codex Cephalae* for  $\mathbf{Pal}$ ).

$\mathbf{Vi}$ , the most ancient (and brief) document of the Laertian tradition, transmits a text that does not present significant changes with respect to the variations we have seen in  $\Omega$  and  $\Phi$ .

I will conclude with a few words about the codices that transmit the *Vita Platonis*. The third book of *Lives* has enjoyed its own independent dissemination in four manuscripts that preserve it in its entirety, and in at least three others that preserve excerpts. The continuous manuscripts, copied in Constantinople in the middle of the first half of the fourteenth century, include the *corpus Platonicum* (more or less complete) accompanied not only by Diogenes' Book 3 (Plato's life), but also by other introductory texts to the Platonic *Dialogues*. All of these codices directly or indirectly derive from  $\mathbf{P}$ , and are thus not useful for reconstructing the Greek text of Book 3.

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Modern scholars have struggled for more than two hundred years to establish a reliable edition of the Greek

<sup>2</sup> Hieronymus Frobenius and Nicolaus Episcopus, *Diogenis Laertij: De vitis, decretis, et responsis celeberrimum philosophorum Libri decem, nunc primum excusui* (Basel, 1533).

text. This has proved difficult because there has been a sharp disagreement over the relative value of the many different manuscripts that have been preserved.

In his 1887 introduction to his *Epicurea*, the German classicist Hermann Usener attempted the first systematic investigation of the manuscript tradition of Diogenes' *Lives*. He concluded that the three oldest continuous manuscripts (**B**, **P**, and **F**) were by themselves sufficient to establish the text.

Edgar Martini disagreed with Usener's depreciation of the value of more recent manuscript sources. We can summarize Martini's conclusions as follows: two types of manuscripts are independently derived from a common archetype. The first class ( $\alpha$ ) includes more recent manuscript sources that must, in turn, be subdivided in two subclasses ( $\gamma$  and  $\delta$ ); the second class ( $\beta$ ) is made up of the oldest manuscripts. Since **P** and **F** contain common errors they share with **B** (the more genuine representative of class  $\beta$ ), or with the testimonies from class  $\alpha$ , the two manuscripts **P** and **F** are considered by Martini to be representatives of a "mixed" text. The contamination was explained by supposing that the (lost) progenitor of class  $\alpha$  was created at an ancient date (eleventh century), preceding all of the preserved manuscripts.

Despite severe criticism from the German scholar Alfred Gercke, who questioned the need to postulate the existence of a class  $\alpha$ , Martini defended his reconstruction, insisting that the entire textual tradition depends on two exemplars ( $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ ) that are descendants of a single ancestor. Gercke remained skeptical, and reiterated his objections against the existence of the two classes  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$ , maintaining, with new arguments, that only codices **B**, **P**, and **F** are necessary for establishing the Greek text of *Lives*.

The Italian scholar G. Donzelli shared Gercke's disparaging judgment of the later, vulgate manuscript sources for Diogenes. She showed that the contribution of these later manuscripts to establishing the text of *Lives* is negligible, and that the few good readings they contain are nothing more than the conjectures of Byzantine and Renaissance scholars.

Armand Delatte and Ingemar Düring have also declared themselves in favor of the oldest tradition. Delatte called attention to the excerpts presented by the *Suda* and the extracts preserved in  $\Phi$  that had been discovered in the meantime by Martini. According to Delatte,  $\Phi$  and the *Suda* were the only two witnesses to the oldest, archetypal text (what has come to be called X). Düring, on the other hand, minimizes the importance of the *Suda*, and maintains that  $\Phi$  comes from the same ancestor as **B**, **P**, and **F**, but that it constitutes an independent branch within the tradition.

After Martini, the study of the *excerpta Vaticana* was continued by Long, Biedl, and Tartaglia. Biedl, in particular, has proved that  $\Phi$  is the progenitor of all the other sources of the *excerpta Vaticana*, and that it represents a branch distinct from that of the continuous manuscripts **B**, **P**, and **F**.

In the preface to his edition of the Greek text (1964, 1966), Herbert Long acknowledges the superiority, when compared to the later vulgate, of the three oldest manuscripts, **B**, **P**, and **F**, but he places them all on the same plane, without investigating the reciprocal relationships among them and without considering the *excerpta Vaticana* ( $\Phi$ ). According to Long, the Laertian manuscript tradition derived from an archetype that contained variant readings and was irredeemably contaminated. This contamination made it impossible to ascertain the relationships between the manuscripts.

On the basis of new criteria, Denis Knoepfler reexamined the question and arrived at a different and more plausible conclusion.

It was he who first suggested that the three most ancient continuous manuscripts (**B**, **P**, and **F**) had a singular model ( $\Omega$ ).  $\Phi$ , though related to  $\Omega$ , is not one of its descendants;  $\Phi$  and  $\Omega$  do, however, refer back to a common model, X.  $\Omega$  thus assumes the role of subarchetype when compared with the actual archetype X. Certain divergences between  $\Phi$  and  $\Omega$  allow us to establish that while  $\Omega$  directly resembles X, for  $\Phi$  we must presume the existence of at least a lost intermediary model ( $\chi$ ). **B** occupies a significant position among the continuous manuscripts because it derives directly from  $\Omega$ . Despite its numerous minor errors, **B** transmits a text that is not yet contaminated (apart from the corrections of **B**<sup>2</sup>) by the revisions that **F** and **P** were subject to (through the two lost models  $\omega$  and  $\omega'$ ). **B** is superior not only to the so-called vulgate manuscripts ( $\alpha$ ), which are contaminated by the readings of  $\omega$  and  $\omega'$ , but also to the two other continuous manuscripts: **P** (to which it is closely related), and **F**, a manuscript with a text that is more problematic.

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Knoepfler for the first time also hypothesized that there were two different branches of the manuscript tradition: an Italo-Greek branch, represented by the manuscripts **B**, **P**, and **F** (and their descendants), and an Eastern branch, represented by codex  $\Phi$  copied in Constantinople before the dissemination of the vulgate.  $\Phi$  (like **B**, **P**, and **F**) descends from X, but through a lost continuous manuscript transliterated and corrected in numerous places ( $\chi$ ).  $\chi$  in turn indirectly becomes a basis of  $\Phi$  around 1100. The Eastern tradition would not have been entirely unknown in the West, where it had an indirect influence on the vulgate. The vulgate in turn would be disseminated in the East through **P**, after the codex was corrected based on  $\alpha$  (version **P**<sup>4</sup>). From the East, **P** was brought again to Italy by Guarino da Verona (c. 1370–1460) and produced (at Florence) **H**, one of the Greek texts used by Camaldolese Ambrose Traversari for his Latin translation.<sup>3</sup>

3 A. Biedl, *Zur Textgeschichte des Laertios Diogenes: Das grosse Exzerpt  $\Phi$*  (Vatican: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana, 1955); A. Delatte, *La Vie de Pythagore de Diogène Laërce* (Brussels, 1922); G. Basta Donzelli, "I codici P Q W Co H I E Y Jb nella tradizione di Diogene Laerzio," *Studi*

My own philological analysis, however, has proven that  $\Omega$  and  $\Phi$ , as well as **Vi**, *Suda*, and **P**, can all be traced (directly or indirectly) to a single textual source, **X**, preserved, it would seem, in the area of Constantinople. This idea finds confirmation in a study of the paleographic and codicologic characteristics of the older descendants of  $\Omega$ .

The oriental or Constantinopolitan origin of  $\Phi$ , **Vi**, **Pal**, and *Suda* is undeniable. The hypothesis that  $\Omega$  was an old codex preserved in a library in southern Italy depends on the assumption that **B**, **P**, **F**, and **V** were all written by Italo-Greek hands. New studies of the written items attributed to southern Italy prove that **B** alone is of Italian origin (or at least copied by a scribe trained in southern Italy). The paleographical and codicological peculiarities of **P**, **F**, and **V** lead to the conclusion that all three were written in Constantinople, or at least in the oriental area.

Since the text of **B** does not altogether differ from that of **P** and **F**, or from their common ancestor ( $\Omega$ ), we may further deduce that **B** does not transmit a distinctively Italo-Greek branch of the manuscript tradition. Two hypotheses could explain the presence of **B** in southern Italy (or Sicily). First, that **B** was produced by an Italian copyist in Constantinople and then brought to Sicily. Second, that after **P** and  $\gamma$  (**F**'s model) were copied,  $\Omega$  traveled from the East to the West and remained in Sicily at least for the time necessary for **B** to be transcribed and, a bit later, for  $\Omega$  to be used by the anonymous **B**<sup>2</sup> to carry out numerous corrections and supplements to the earlier **B**. If one considers, in particular, the material in **B**<sup>2</sup>, the second hypothesis seems more plausible. In both cases, however, the *terminus ante quem* for model **B**'s arrival in Italy is the date of **B**<sup>2</sup>, the first half of the twelfth century.

The dissemination of *Lives* is thus unitary and fundamentally oriental. From the same textual source (**X**) there derives, on the one hand, the ancestor of the continuous manuscripts ( $\Omega$ ) and, on the other, the ancestor of the manuscripts of excerpts, now by  $\Phi$ .

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For my new edition of the Greek text of Diogenes' *Lives*, I reexamined the transmission and provenance of the various manuscripts. I collected the principal ancient manuscripts

*italiani di filologia classica* n.s. 32 (1960): 156–99; G. Basta Donzelli, "Per un'edizione di Diogene Laertio: I codici V U D G S," *Bollettino del Comitato per la preparazione dell'Edizione Nazionale dei Classici Greci e Latini* 8 (1960) 93–132; I. Düring, *Aristotle in the Ancient Biographical Tradition* (Göteborg, 1957); A. Gercke, "Die Überlieferung des Diogenes Laertius," *Hermes* 37 (1902): 401–34; A. Gercke, *Deutsche Literaturzeitung* 11 (1900): 170–73; D. Knoepfler, *La Vie de Ménédème d'Éretrie de Diogene Laërce. Contribution à l'histoire et à la critique du texte des Vies des philosophes* (Basel, 1991); H. S. Long, "The Short Forms of the Text of Diogenes Laertius," *Classical Philology* 44 (1949): 230–35; E. Martini, "Analecta Laertiana," *Leipziger Studien z. clas. Philologie* 19 (1899): 73–177 (pt. 1) and 20 (1900): 145–66 (pt. 2); L. Tartaglia, "L'estratto vaticano delle Vite di Diogene Laertio," *Rendiconti Accademia Archeologia, Lettere e Belle Arti di Napoli* 49 (1974): 253–71; L. Tartaglia, "Probabile cognatio dei codici Neapolitanus (Barbolicus) III B 29 (= **B**) e Parisinus gr. 1759 (= **P**) di Diogene Laertio," *Vichiana* n.s. 3 (1974): 51–58; H. Usener, *Epicurea* (Leipzig, 1887), vi–xv; K. Wachsmuth, *Corpusculum poesis epicae Graecae ludibundae. II. Sillographorum Graecorum reliquiae* (Leipzig, 1885): 51–55.

(**B**, **P**, **F**,  $\Phi$ , and **Vi**) and the probable (partial) progenitor of the vulgate (Vaticanus gr. 1302, early fourteenth century: siglum **V**). I considered the readings in some recent manuscripts, and consulted previous studies and editions. Finally, I considered the evidence in the indirect tradition, in particular the *Suda* and the *Greek Anthology*.

I established my Greek text of Diogenes' *Lives* on the basis of the oldest continuous manuscripts (**B**, **P**, and **F**), the *excerpta Vaticana* ( $\Phi$ ), and the other Byzantine excerpts in the *Suda*, **Pal** and **Vi**.

**B** and **P** (before correction) are the two *codices integri antiquiores* most worthy of trust. **B** often provides us with a text closest to  $\Omega$  because its scribe had copied  $\Omega$  in a mechanical way. **P**, despite being contemporaneous with (or a bit earlier than) **B** and also directly derived from  $\Omega$ , transmits a less pure text because it had already been deliberately altered. **F** is a source that should be used with more caution because of its peculiarities and its contamination by the vulgate tradition. In its original state (**F**<sup>1</sup>), however, it can contribute, along with **B**<sup>1</sup> and **P**<sup>1</sup>, to the reconstruction of the archetype of the continuous manuscripts ( $\Omega$ ). I have taken into account the readings in the manuscripts derived from the vulgate ( $\alpha$ ) and from other more recent sources sporadically, when their text seemed to me superior (primarily on grounds of conjecture) to that transmitted by **B**, **P**, **F**,  $\Phi$ , and the other ancient sources (*Suda*, **Pal**, and **Vi**).

When **B**, **P**, and **F** agree, we may hope to reconstruct the text of  $\Omega$ . Because  $\Phi$  and the other Byzantine excerpts preserve smaller parts of the text, there are fewer cases in which we are able to go all the way back to **X**, the common ancestor of  $\Omega$ ,  $\Phi$ , and the excerpts in the *Suda*, **Pal**, and **Vi**.

The editor of the Greek text of *Lives* faces a further complication. By now it has been ascertained that Diogenes Laertius did not have the last word in preparing the text of *Lives*, which was put into circulation only after his death. Although he left some books in an almost definitive state, others were to some degree unfinished and in need of revision. There are many passages in which it is possible to show the presence of misplaced "file cards," repetitions, and marginal notes, as well as stylistic and syntactic uncertainties that Diogenes would undoubtedly have corrected had he been able to put the finishing touches on his complete work. It is possible, moreover, that the order of the books and of the biographies within them was not yet definitive.<sup>4</sup>

Still, not all of the omissions and inconsistencies can be explained by the theory of the *opus imperfectum*.

In the centuries from the first appearance of a Greek manuscript of *Lives* to the creation of **X**, various errors had doubtless been introduced into the text and serious

<sup>4</sup> See Peter Von der Mühlh, *Ausgewählte kleine Schriften* (Basel: Friedrich Reinhardt, 1976), 388–90; and Marcello Gigante, "Biografia e dossografia in Diogene Laertio," *Elenchos* 7 (1986): 7–102 (*passim*).

damage had occurred (the most obvious being the loss of the end of Book 7).

To some extent, it is possible to more closely approximate  $\Omega$ , thanks to the excerpts in  $\Phi$  and the other Byzantine sources.

But in any attempt to recapture X, the editor can rely only on his or her own judgment.

—Translated from the Italian  
by Julia Hein

## DIOGENES LAERTIUS IN BYZANTIUM

Tiziano Dorandi

Knowledge of Diogenes Laertius was extremely limited in late antiquity, but the first place we find evidence of interest in *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers* is in the Byzantine world.

In his *Bibliotheca*, a text that describes 279 books he had read, Photius (c. 810–893 AD), the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople, canonized in the Eastern Orthodox churches as St. Photios the Great, reported that Sopater of Apamea (fourth century AD), in his book *Various Extracts*, had reproduced a number of passages from the *Lives*. (By the sixth century, Stephanus of Byzantium, the author of *Ethnica*, a geographical dictionary, also seemed to know of at least the work's first three books.)

Despite the evidence that Photius knew of Diogenes through Sopater, *Lives* is otherwise absent from the *Bibliotheca*, and also from the patriarch's letters—he was not attracted to the genre (the almost complete absence of philosophy books in the *Bibliotheca* is well-known).

Shortly after the death of Photius, we find the first evidence that a manuscript of Diogenes' *Lives* was being studied in Constantinople, probably in cultural milieu more oriented toward philosophic study. In a manuscript dated July 28, 925, a certain Ioannes Grammatikos (John the Grammarian) copied passages from the doxographic section of Book 3 (the life of Plato), which are preserved in a Viennese codex.<sup>1</sup>

Two aspects of this codex merit comment.

The beginning section preserves a larger corpus of philosophical writings among which we find *Didaskalikos* by Alcinous, some passages from the *Commentary of Plato's Gorgias* by Olympiodorus, the anonymous *Prolegomena in Platonis philosophiam*, and *Carmen aureum*, attributed to Pythagoras, with *Commentary* by Hierocles. John the Grammarian was thus working within an intellectual environment focused on the study of Platonic philosophy.

Second, John's codex preserves scholia whose origin dates back to Arethas of Caesarea (c. 850–935), who later became archbishop of Caesarea and was one of the outstanding scholars of his time—he played a key role in resurrecting interest in the so-called *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius. The presence of Arethas' scholia in the Viennese

codex has led to speculation that John in all likelihood was copying a (now lost) older codex that had passed through the hands of Arethas, who had annotated it.

Did Arethas play a role in the rediscovery of Diogenes Laertius in Byzantium? If the Viennese codex is in fact copied from a manuscript put together by Arethas from different sources, and containing extracts of Diogenes, it is plausible to suppose that the bishop of Caesarea had had access to a manuscript of *Lives* from which he had taken the passages from the Platonic doxography. Arethas's interest in Diogenes seems, however, limited and occasional (the passages in question are reproduced together with other putatively Platonic texts); I have not yet found further traces of *Lives* in his writing.

The hypothesis that it was Arethas who resurrected *Lives* from oblivion at the start of the tenth century, as he had done with the *Meditations*, is alluring, but aside from the presence of the Laertian extracts in the Viennese codex there remains no other concrete evidence.

In any case, there is no need to bother with the great figures of the time to explain Diogenes' rediscovery. As Cavallo has noted, often the "literary types, philologists, copyist-philologists or minor philosophy enthusiasts, many of whom have remained anonymous . . . alone or united in groups" contributed noteworthy transliterations, transcriptions, and editions of classical texts in the Byzantine world.<sup>2</sup>

For a while now I have asked myself if the reappearance of *Lives* in Constantinople was related to the scholars who collected manuscripts of the so-called *collection philosophique*. This important collection of codices, eighteen of which still survive, included Platonic and Neoplatonic works (including some comments by Aristotle and authors of scientific texts) linked together by a codicological and paleographical affinity. All the manuscripts, produced by the same writerly and intellectual milieu, were copied by at least nine contemporaries in similar style dating to around the early second half of the ninth century. We can presume the collection was created in Constantinople because

2 Guglielmo Cavallo, "Da Alessandria a Costantinopoli? Qualche riflessione sulla 'collezione filosofica,'" *Segno e Testo* 3 (2005): 256–57.

1 Vindobonensis phil. Gr. 314.

of the interest of a circle of scholars attracted to Platonic philosophy.<sup>3</sup>

It was within this cultural milieu interested in philosophic-scientific study, some have speculated, that *Lives* reappeared from the depths of a library and had its contents disseminated. In any case, the real renaissance of Diogenes Laertius in Byzantium began late in the tenth century, when the ten books of *Lives* were systematically excerpted in Constantinople as part of two large classical compilations: the *Suda*, a kind of encyclopedia that was created between 975 and 980; and Constantinos Cephalas's *Anthology* of classical Greek poetry.

Scholars agree that only doxographic and not biographical excerpts were taken from *Lives* and used in the *Suda*. The latter excerpts were copied from another source, an updated edition (created between 829 and 857, now lost) of Hesychius of Miletus' sixth-century work, *Name-Finder or Register of Famous Men in Scholarship*. The indisputable similarities between the biographical sections of Diogenes' *Lives* and some passages in the *Suda* can be explained by presuming that Diogenes and Hesychius both had access to many of the same earlier sources. In some cases, however, the *Suda* augmented Hesychius' text with supplementary information that had been compiled by Diogenes Laertius.<sup>4</sup>

Did the editors of the *Suda* have direct access to his *Lives*? Picking up Ada Adler's suggestion,<sup>5</sup> I have shown that the editors of the *Suda* did not read *Lives* firsthand. They recovered the Laertian extracts from an intermediary source that Adler calls a "philosophische Hauptquelle," or a key philosophical source. This source was composed of passages taken from Diogenes Laertius' doxographies, from *Commentary on Aristotle's "Topics"* by Alexander of Aphrodisias, and from *Commentary on Aristotle's "On Soul"* by John Philoponos. Traces of Christian texts can sometimes also be found in the *Suda*, which derive from a work that shows points of contact with John of Damascus' *Fountain of Knowledge*, one of the earliest scholastic works in the Eastern tradition and one of the first Christian attempts to refute Islam.

On the margins of some philosophic articles, graphics were added that schematically summarized the content; they are an integral part of the article in question, from which it may be deduced that they derive from a common source that probably circulated in the philosophy schools of Alexandria of Egypt in the sixth century. The extracts were originally ordered alphabetically.

3 Marwan Rashed, "Nicolas d'Otrante, Guillaume de Moerbeke et la 'Collection philosophique,'" *Studi Medievali* s. 3, v. 43 (2002): 693–717; and Cavallo, "Da Alessandria a Costantinopoli?"

4 Guido Schepens, "L'incontournable *Suda*," and Virgilio Costa, "Esichio di Mileto, Johannes Flach e le fonti biografiche della *Suda*," both in *Il Lessico "Suda" e gli storici greci in frammenti* (Tivoli: Edizioni Tored, 2010), ed. Gabriella Vanotti, 1–42, 43–55. (I am not convinced of the results of Costa's study.)

5 Ada Adler, ed., *Suidae Lexicon*, 5 vols. (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1928–1938).

An important confirmation of Adler's hypothesis can come from an element that has, until now, been neglected. If one takes the structure of the philosophic articles into consideration, it seems evident that often several definitions of the same concept coming from two or more sources were mixed together: Alexander and Diogenes; Alexander and Philoponos; Alexander, Diogenes, and Philoponos. At times the definitions are intermeshed. As for the literary genre of this philosophic source, I hypothesize that it was structured as a collection of "definitions" of the principle philosophic concepts, using material found in the commentaries of Alexander and Philoponos for the Platonic-Aristotelian tradition, supplemented with material found in Diogenes Laertius for the Stoic, Platonic, Cyrenaic, and Pyrrhonian traditions.

Constantinos Cephalas had created his poetic *Anthology* around the year 900, putting together several thousand epigrams by Greek poets throughout the ages; this collection included numerous poems written or cited by Diogenes Laertius in his *Lives*. Cephalas had direct access to the same codex that is presumably at the origin of the entire Laertian manuscript tradition. His *Anthology* was used several decades later by the anonymous editor of the *Greek Anthology*. Some of its epigrams were later passed on to the *Planudean Anthology*, organized by the eponymous monk Maximum Planudes (c. 1260–1305).

In Byzantium, between the tenth and eleventh centuries, interest in *Lives* is evident in two collections of extracts that survive in a miscellaneous codex, handwritten in the first half of the twelfth century, and conserved in the Vatican Library (the codex Vaticanus gr. 96). The first collection of extracts in this codex, under the title *On Distinguished Men in Scholarship*, is falsely attributed to Hesychius of Miletus, known, as we have seen, for his *Name-Finder*, among other things. The second collection is known as *Magnum excerptum*.

Let me start with a few words about the content and structure of the two collections. *On Distinguished Men in Scholarship* consists of a series of biographies of illustrious characters in alphabetical order, put together as a pamphlet by an anonymous author who compiled extracts from Diogenes Laertius and from the *Suda*.

The *Magnum excerptum* is an ample collection of extracts organized by an anonymous editor who followed a precise schema. The extracts are put together in ten sections: the first incorporates a selection of *doxai* and the biographies of the philosophers of Book 1 of *Lives*; the remaining nine sections are dedicated to Books 2 through 10. The anonymous editor distinguishes between the doxographic and biographic excerpts, which are laid out in the following way: the doxographic passages are extrapolated following the order of the Laertian books, including sections from the introduction, doctrinal summaries from Cyrenaics of the Schools of Hegesias and Anniceris, passages from Plato, from the Stoics, from the Pyrrhonians, and, finally, from the Epicureans. More

space was reserved for the second, biographical section, perhaps because the *excerptor* wanted the anecdotes and jokes to render the whole collection more amusing.

The biographies follow the same succession that can be found in the continuous manuscripts; there are frequent textual transpositions or reorganizations of anecdotes. What seems to be disorganization comes from the editor's apparent desire to order what he may have believed was disorder in the Laertian text. He possesses an excellent knowledge of Diogenes' work and leaves nothing to chance. And in no case were the texts he transcribed the same as those included in the small work wrongly attributed to Hesychius.

These observations raise two questions: Was the author of the *Magnum excerptum* the same as the author of the opusculum attributed to the pseudo-Hesychius? When were the two collections compiled?

A parallel reading reinforces a one-editor hypothesis. Still, each of these two distinct collections is dictated by different aims. The excerpts attributed to the pseudo-Hesychius seem to be modeled on the *Register of Famous Men in Scholarship* compiled by Hesychius of Miletus. The "great extract," on the other hand, gives the impression of a history of philosophy organized in two blocks: one that is truly philosophic and one that takes the form of anecdotes and jokes that illuminate and make more accessible the thought and opinions of the single philosophers. Interpreted in this way, the two collections would correspond to a very defined and structured work plan.

As for the chronology of the two collections, we can arrange them based on two concrete elements: (1) the date of the codex Vaticanus gr. 96, copied in the first half of the twelfth century; (2) the presence of large extracts of the *Suda*. Since the writing of the *Suda* dates to the years 975–980, this date constitutes the *terminus post quem* for the composition of the pseudo-Hesychius, if one assumes it was compiled by the same editor who created the "great extract." We can thus establish that the model of the codex Vaticanus gr. 96 should be situated somewhere between the end of the eleventh century and the beginning of the twelfth.

In the centuries that preceded and followed the composition of the two collections of extracts of the Vatican codex, the Byzantine scholars do not seem to have paid much attention to *Lives*. I will just note a few cases of authors, known or anonymous, who had direct or indirect access to the work. We are dealing, at least in the most ancient phase, with secondhand knowledge from anthologies, collections of adages, or the codex excerpts.

Only later, from the fourteenth century, do we have more certain evidence of the more ample and direct use of *Lives*, read most likely in its entirety, even if sometimes the intention was to extract select passages, wisdom expressions (*gnomai*), and sayings (apophthegmata), or to use it for making bio-doxographic compilations.

To begin, let me address two collections of aphorisms, the first in codex 263 of the Monastery of St. John at Patmos, and the second in codex Vaticanus gr. 151.

The Patmos manuscript is particularly interesting because it contains two anthologies, the second entitled *Sayings and Sentences of Ancient Philosophers*. This collection is composed of a first section of *gnomai* and apophthegmata by Thales, Solon, Chilon, Pittacus, Bias, Cleobulus, Periander, Anacharsis, Anaxagoras, Aristippus, Plato, Bion, Demetrius of Phalerum, Antisthenes, Diogenes of Sinope, and Democritus; a second section follows with ninety-nine apophthegmata that are mostly anonymous. The editor of the two collections copied the extracts from a manuscript of *Lives*. They are often reproduced to the letter, occasionally with structural or linguistic changes, keeping the order of Diogenes Laertius' narration largely unchanged. The Vatican codex obviously draws on a reading of Diogenes' life of Xenocrates, in Book 4.

Even the anonymous compilers of several Byzantine collections of the aphorisms of the Seven Sages—notably, the *Recensio Parisina* and *Recensio Monacensis*, edited by Tziatzi-Papagianni—read and used Diogenes. The original sources for both compilations are two prior anthologies, one attributed to Demetrius of Phalerum and the other to a certain Sosiades, both included in the *Anthology* by John of Stobi (Stobaeus). Diogenes had access to the anthology attributed to Demetrius through an intermediary source, better than the one used by Stobaeus, which had been reworked in various areas and probably corrupted.

As for the so-called *Gnomologium Vaticanum* that, in Sternbach's edition, includes 577 aphorisms and sayings in alphabetical order, it has by now been established that *Lives* cannot be counted among its sources. Diogenes and the *Gnomologium Vaticanum* derive from a more ancient common source that has not yet been recovered. We must think of a text created in late antiquity or in the period of Byzantine encyclopedism, by fusing various Hellenistic aphorisms which were then reworked and reorganized in various ways through the centuries. The same collections were also used by Plutarch and Stobaeus.

Between the end of the eleventh and the beginning of the twelfth century, the two most important manuscripts that preserved *Lives* in its entirety were copied, probably from the same source: Parisinus gr. 1759 (eleventh/twelfth century), copied in Constantinople (siglum P), and the codex of Naples III B 29 (twelfth century), probably copied in the Norman court of Palermo from an example that derived from Constantinople (siglum B).

It is believed that the scholar John Tzetzes (c. 1110–1185) had read at least the life of Democritus, given his use of Diogenes' epigram about the philosopher's death.

The bishop of Thessaloniki, Eustathius (c. 1115–1195), a contemporary of Tzetzes, had at least a limited knowledge of *Lives*, judging by the presence of ten or so anonymous quotations, paraphrases, and allusions to it. The life of Diogenes the Cynic, in Book 6, is the more or less distant source of the majority of these quotations, present in anecdote or apophthegmata form. A study of these passages has led me to conclude that Eustathius did not have direct

access to a manuscript of the entire *Lives* but rather recovered these extracts from an anthology or a similar work.

A century later, the interest of Nicephorus Gregoras (c. 1295–1359) in *Lives* can be seen by the manuscript Palatinus gr. 129 by Heidelberg, and by Vaticanus gr. 1898. Both codices, handwritten by the same Gregoras, contain, among other things, Laertian extracts basically copied from the codex Vaticanus gr. 96 (or one of its descendants). The case of Vaticanus gr. 1898 is particularly interesting. There, a new life of Plato is created by combining excerpts from Diogenes Laertius and from the *Various History* by Claudius Aelianus.

Another anonymous *Life of Plato* was published later on and presented as a cohesive rewrite of Diogenes' Book 3 with numerous retouches and omissions (for example, the poetic quotations and scholarly references). It can be attributed to Georgios Scholarios (known as Gennadius II, c. 1400–1473), the first patriarch of the Church of Constantinople after the taking of the city by the Turks. He copied it in the codex Parisinus gr. 1417, which dates from the mid-fifteenth century.<sup>6</sup>

During more or less the same period, between 1454 and 1466, Michael Apostolius (c. 1422–after 1474 or 1486) had worked on, but not brought to completion, a collection of proverbs. Upon his death the collected materials were passed down to his son Aristobulus Apostolius (1468/69–1535), bishop (under the name Arsenius) of Monembasia starting in 1506. He had used his father's collection in the writings of the codex Angelicanus gr. 27 (signed by Apostolius), integrating it with a series of sayings, apophthegmata, stories, and new proverbs, and dividing all the material into four distinct sections (proverbs, sayings, apophthegmata, and stories, each one ordered alphabetically). Of this immense collection, which he called *Ionia*, Arsenius was able to publish only the apophthegmata—of greatest interest to scholars of Diogenes. These he had taken in particular from the works of Diodorus of Sicily, Plutarch, Clement of Alexandria, Diogenes Laertius, John of Stobi, pseudo-Maximus

<sup>6</sup> See Tiziano Dorandi, "Une *Vie de Plato* de George Scholarios?" *Byzantion* 80 (2010): 121–41.

the Confessor, and Anthony's *Melissa*. *Ionia* gives tangible evidence of material recovered and reused, out of context, from *Lives*, and represents an important moment for the dissemination of Diogenes' work among Renaissance scholars of the Greek language.

I will not give an account of the ample mythological, archeological, and biographical compilation, also entitled *Ionia*, attributed to the empress Eudokia Makrembolitissa (who died after 1078), the wife of Constantinos X Ducas and later of Romanos IV. This collection, which among other things also contains various extracts from *Lives*, is nothing more than a sixteenth-century compilation—one in fact that was compiled by the famous scribe and able falsifier Constantinos Paleocappa, around the year 1540. Paleocappa used well-known miscellaneous materials that had already appeared in print: the *Suda* (printed in 1514), Diogenes Laertius (printed in 1533), the dictionary by the humanist Varinus Phavorinus Camers (printed in 1538), and the compendia of Cornutus and Palaephatus (printed in 1543).

If one reflects on the data that come out of this investigation, one gets the impression that Byzantine scholars preferred to read excerpts rather than the whole of Diogenes Laertius' *Lives*, at least until the start of the Palaeologan dynasty in Byzantium in 1261.

Beginning in the first decade of the fourteenth century, *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers* was copied several times, in its entirety or in extensive excerpt form, and the interest in its content increased in both the East and the West. In 1533 in Basel, editor Johann Froben finally published the first printed Greek text of *Lives*. This edition, though based on an extremely corrupt and altered manuscript, contributed nonetheless to the knowledge that an ever-growing population had of Diogenes Laertius' work in Greek.

—Translated from the Italian  
by Julia Hein

## DIOGENES LAERTIUS IN LATIN

Tiziano Dorandi

Copies of the Greek text of Diogenes Laertius' *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers* appeared in the West in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, making the work available to scholars able to read classical Greek. But traces of a *Lives* had become accessible to educated readers in the West thanks to excerpts and eventually a complete text that had been translated into Latin.

Perhaps the earliest Latin translation of Diogenes Laertius may be found in *Liber de vita et moribus philosophorum*, attributed to Walter Burley (1274/75–after

1344) but edited by an anonymous source between 1272 and 1326 (Pseudo-Burley). Here Diogenes Laertius' name is explicitly cited several times ("*ut ait Laercius, ut narrat Laertius, ut ait Laercius in libro de vita philosophorum or ut ait Laercius in libro de vita et moribus philosophorum*"), but passages from the *Lives* in Latin translation are often quoted without reference to their author or source.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the pages that follow, I pick up from what I have written in *Laertiana: Capitoli sulla tradizione manoscritta e sulla storia del testo delle "Vite dei filosofi" di Diogene Laerzio* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009), 201–28. I also

The first substantial Latin translation of the *Lives* from the ancient Greek was the work of Henry Aristippus (deceased 1162), the archdeacon of Catania, tied to the Norman court of William I (1131–1166), in Palermo. In a passage of the prologue of his translation of Plato's *Meno* (prepared between the years 1154 and 1160), Aristippus informs us that he was getting ready to translate into Latin ("in *Yalicas transvertere sillabas parabam*") the *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers* of Diogenes Laertius ("*Laertium Diogenem de vita et conversatione dogmateque philosophorum*") at the request of Emir Maio of Bari and of Hugh, archbishop of Palermo.

Aristippus' translation (which will be referred to from here on as *versio Aristippi*) quickly disappeared from circulation. It survived mainly in a few fragments that were used by Pseudo-Burley and by Jeremiah of Montagnone (c. 1250–1321). Although Diogenes' name never appears in Jeremiah's *Compendium moralium notabilium* (1285), several passages of this text undoubtedly derive from the *Lives*. The presence of quotations deriving from the *versio Aristippi* is much more dominant in the *Liber de vita et moribus philosophorum* by Pseudo-Burley; in this regard, the chapter dedicated to the Pre-Socratic philosopher Thales of Miletus is of particular interest.

Most scholars assume that the *versio Aristippi* of Diogenes included a Latin translation of only the first five books of the *Lives*. The presence of aphorisms that Pseudo-Burley attributes to philosophers Diogenes Laertius had spoken of in Books 6–10 and which are similar to those in *Lives* has been explained by supposing that Pseudo-Burley used as a source other Greek anthologies based on Diogenes that had been previously translated into Latin. I, however, believe that the *versio Aristippi* was even more limited, and included a Latin translation of only the first two books of *Lives*, plus a Latin rendition of Diogenes' life of Aristotle in Book 5, with particular attention paid to biographic details and the apothegms. It is even possible that this translation was limited to a selection of excerpts, and omitted most of the scholarly details. But this is more difficult to prove: we do not possess a copy of the original translation but have only extracts, more or less altered, from two works a century and a half away from it. Between the probable date of *versio Aristippi*'s first appearance (in the years between 1154 and 1162), Jeremiah of Montagnone's fragments from it (1285), and the anonymous author's usage of it in *Liber de vita et moribus philosophorum* (created between 1272 and 1326), there is time enough for substantial parts of the

translation to have been lost, manipulated, mutilated, or adapted. While it seems that Jeremiah's text is closer to the translation, in Pseudo-Burley's work small edits are evident, and it is difficult to say if they come directly from him or point to an intermediary source through which the work may have been filtered.

The Greek model of Aristippus' translation is thought to be what is known as the codex of Naples III B 29 (a twelfth-century version currently known as **B**). This manuscript was copied in southern Italy and circulated in the Norman court of Palermo. The *versio Aristippi* is therefore not especially useful in trying to reconstruct the original Greek text of Diogenes' *Lives*.<sup>2</sup>

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It was only in the fifteenth century that readers of Latin had access to a complete translation of Diogenes' *Lives*: the famous translation produced by Ambrogio Traversari (1386–1439), the so-called *versio Ambrosiana*.

When Traversari took on the *Lives*, he was already experienced in translating the Greek texts of the early Christian theologians. During the years in which he devoted himself to Diogenes Laertius, Traversari continued to work on the Greek Fathers, translating the *Pratum Spirituale* (*Spiritual Meadow*) by the Byzantine John Moschus (c. 550–619).

Traversari approached Diogenes' text slowly, and with real hesitation. On the one hand, there were many linguistic and interpretative difficulties presented by the doctrinal summaries and citations, but also by the numerous poetic epigrams by Diogenes and other authors. (Traversari eventually decided not to translate the poetry, offering instead a paraphrase of each epigram's content in his own Latin prose.) Religious concerns further vexed Traversari, who faced a profane text that included detailed accounts of the teachings of Epicurus and other pagan heretics.

We can reconstruct the stages that lead to Traversari's translation by reading his letters. He first mentions Diogenes' *Lives* in a letter written between 1418 and 1419 (*Epistolarium* 6.14 Canneti-Mehus) to Francesco Barbaro (1390–1454), thanking him for sending a Greek codex of Diogenes, among other things. The codex<sup>3</sup> is

2 For *versio Aristippi*, see Dorandi, *Laertiana*, 201–22; and Ricklin, "Vorsokratiker in lateinischen Mittelalter," 111–29. For editions of Jeremiah of Montagnone, see "Epytoma sapientie": *Incipit compendium moralium notabilium compositum per Hieremian iudicem de Montagnone civem Paduanum* (Venice, 1505); and of Pseudo-Burley, see H. Knust, *Gualteri Burlaei liber de vita et moribus philosophorum* (Tübingen, 1886); and J. O. Stigall, "The *De vita et moribus philosophorum* of Walter Burley: An Edition with Introduction" (PhD diss., University of Colorado, 1956). On the manuscripts of Pseudo-Burley and the history of the text, see the articles of J. Prelog, "Die Handschriften und Drucke von Walter Burleys *Liber de vita et moribus philosophorum*," *Codices Manuscripti* 9 (1983): 1–18; "Zur Bewertung der Textzeugen von Walter Burleys *Liber de vita et moribus philosophorum*," *Mittelaltersches Jahrbuch* 20 (1985): 164–83; and "De Pictagora physopho: Die Biographie des Pythagoras in dem Walter Burley zugeschriebenen *Liber de vita et moribus philosophorum*," *Medioevo* 16 (1990): 190–251.

3 Currently Laurentianus 69.35, siglum **H**.

gave an account of Thomas Ricklin's "La Mémoire des philosophes: Les Débuts de l'historiographie de la philosophie au Moyen Age," in *La Mémoire du temps au Moyen Age*, ed. A. Paravicini Bagliani (Florence: Sismel, 2005), 249–310; and Thomas Ricklin's "Vorsokratiker im lateinischen Mittelalter: Thales von Milet im lateinischen Diogenes Laertius von Henricus Aristippus bis zur lateinischen edition princeps (1472/1475)," in *The Presocratics from the Latin Middle Age to Hermann Diels*, ed. O. Primavesi and K. Luchner (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2011), 111–56.

probably the one that Demetrios Scaranos (d. 1426) had copied for Traversari, as we deduce from another letter addressed to Barbaro from Ambrogio dated November 1, 1419 (*Epistolarium* 6.12).

Until 1424, Traversari showed little interest in Diogenes despite insistent requests for a translation not only from Cosimo “il Vecchio” de’ Medici (1389–1464) but also from the archbishop of Genoa, Pileo de Marini (c. 1377–1429). In a letter addressed to the archbishop dated February 27, 1424,<sup>4</sup> Traversari lists the difficulties in complying with his request: his lack of leisure time, the difficulties in carrying out such an important translation, and finally the conflict between his Christian convictions and the pagan philosophers. The archbishop persisted and asked Niccolò Niccoli (1364–1437), a humanist in the Medici court, to help persuade Traversari.

On March 16, 1424, Traversari wrote to Niccoli and stressed the many difficulties of the translation, and the time it would take (*Epistolarium* 8.1, 8.10). Another reason for delay appears in subsequent letters to Niccoli from May 25 and June 21, 1424 (*Epistolarium* 8.8–9), in which a new protagonist enters the picture: the theologian Antonio di Massa. Traversari nevertheless overcame his misgivings. And in a letter dated November 19 of that same year,<sup>5</sup> Traversari announced to the archbishop of Genoa that three days earlier he had begun to translate Diogenes.

In the years that followed, Traversari told correspondents that he had in his possession two Greek manuscripts of Diogenes’ *Lives*, both unreliable.<sup>6</sup> One of the manuscripts was copied on a codex belonging to Guarino da Verona (1374–1460), the other a version of the codex that Antonio di Massa had brought to Constantinople (perhaps the Venetian codex, Marcianus gr. 393).

Traversari understood the limitations of these two texts. Knowing that the quality of his translation would depend on the accuracy of what he was rendering into Latin, he asked his patrons to find and send him a third version of the Greek text. In a letter from July 8, 1425 (*Epistolarium* 6.25), Traversari stresses the difficulties he has encountered in trying to translate the philosophic passages while waiting for a third Greek codex. Several days later, the third manuscript arrives (perhaps the current Parisinus gr. 1758 or the Vaticanus gr. 140).<sup>7</sup> Traversari immediately arranges for its collation, but the translation is slow going. A year later, in 1426 (*Epistolarium* 8.17), Traversari complains about the difficulty he is having with Epicurus’ texts and asks for help from

Carlo Marsuppini (1399–1453), a fellow humanist who also served as a chancellor of the Florentine Republic.

For several years Traversari stopped mentioning Diogenes in his letters. But his work on the Latin text had to continue amid difficulties tied to obscurities in the original Greek, its proper rendering into Latin, and his unresolved religious misgivings.

At last, at the beginning of 1433, Traversari sent word to Cosimo de’ Medici in a private letter (*Epistolarium* 7.2) that his Latin version of Diogenes Laertius was finished. He also composed a public letter, dated February 8, 1433, to serve as a preface to the translation. A fair copy of the translation was prepared by Traversari’s collaborator and copyist, Friar Michele di Giovanni.<sup>8</sup>

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And so began in earnest the circulation in Latin of Diogenes Laertius’ *Lives*—at first in various manuscript copies, and later in printed form. Their sheer number suggests the popularity it enjoyed from the beginning.

The first printed edition of Traversari’s translation was published by Francesco Elio Marchese (1448?–1517), based on a copy of Michele’s manuscript. It was published in Rome around 1472, with Giorgio Lauer. A reasonably faithful version of the Latin text, the Marchese edition nevertheless made one significant change: after the preface, the publisher added an index in which the philosophers covered by Diogenes are listed alphabetically. This index even includes the names of the Stoic philosophers whose lives were covered in the missing fragment of Book 7 (an omission Traversari noted clearly in his original Latin translation).

Unfortunately it was not Marchese’s edition but Benedetto Brugnoli’s (1427–1502), printed in Venice in 1475 (with Nicolas Jenson), that led to the widespread dissemination of the *versio Ambrosiana* in the Western world. Marchese’s Roman edition was never reprinted, while Brugnoli’s Venetian edition was reprinted many times and made widely available.

Brugnoli viewed his publication as an improvement on the Latin of the *versio Ambrosiana*; he reprinted Traversari’s Latin paraphrases of the Greek poetry—but also added his own Latin verse translations of the epigrams. With successive reprints of the Brugnoli edition, the Latin of the original *versio Ambrosiana* grew increasingly unfaithful.

Still, the enormous success of printed versions of Traversari’s Latin translation during the Renaissance contributed to the dissemination of Diogenes Laertius’ *Lives* in widening circles of readers who were ignorant of Greek. The popularity of the work made Renaissance readers aware of the lives and thought of a number of previously unfamiliar philosophers and philosophical schools, including the Cyrenaics, the Cynics, the Stoics, the Pyrrhonians, and the Epicureans.

4 Leopoldo Puncuh, “Carteggio di Pileo de Marini, arcivescovo di Genova (1400–1429),” in *Atti della Società Ligure di Storia Patria* 11, no. 1 (1971): 139–40.

5 *Ibid.*, 164.

6 This is according to a letter that Traversari sent May 27, 1425 (*Epistolarium* 6.23) to Leonardo Giustiniani, the humanist and Venetian statesman (c. 1383–1446).

7 See the letter from Traversari to Giovanni Aurispa (1376–1459) dated July 19, 1425.

8 Marzia Pontone, *Ambrogio Traversari monaco e umanista: Fra scrittura latina e scrittura greca* (Turin: Nino Aragno Editore, 2010).

The *versio Ambrosiana* should, furthermore, be considered in relation to the numerous Italian translations that were carried out in the second half of the fifteenth century (the first was published in Venice in 1480). Despite contrary declarations by the authors of these translations, it has been shown, with substantial proof, that they were based not on the Greek text but on Traversari's Latin.

Even a subsequent and more accurate Latin translation, prepared by Tommaso Aldobrandini (d. 1572) and posthumously published by his nephew, Cardinal Pietro Aldobrandini (1594), never managed to replace Traversari's as the model for the successive Latin translations that accompanied the printed Greek text of Diogenes' *Lives* up through the edition first published by Carel Gabriel Cobet in 1850. It was thus through the *versio Ambrosiana* (however inaccurately disseminated) that the Latin West

first came to know, and appreciate, the work of Diogenes Laertius in its entirety.<sup>9</sup>

—Translated from the Italian  
by Julia Hein

<sup>9</sup> It is necessary to devote a serious work to a new modern critical edition of the *versio Ambrosiana*, based on Traversari's autograph and on the Greek witness Ambrose was able to consult, in particular the Laurentianus 65.39 and other exemplars that could have been in his possession for however long. The edition of the *Letter to Menoceus* by Epicurus (10.122–35) that Gigante first published on the basis of Traversari's original and Michele's copy gives a concrete and encouraging idea of the breakthroughs that await us. The result will not only be an edition of the *versio Ambrosiana* penned by the Calmadolese friar, but also a Latin text on which one will be able to base investigations when searching for a more precise identification of the codex by Antonio di Massa, the one by Giustiniani, and eventually the codex by Aurispa hypothesized by Knoepfler.

## DIOGENES LAERTIUS AND THE PRE-SOCRATICS

André Laks

The notion of a Pre-Socratic period in philosophy has its roots in antiquity. Plato in his *Apology* and Xenophon in his *Memorabilia* both insisted that Socrates had had nothing to do with the type of impious cosmological speculation with which thinkers before Socrates had been widely associated. In a famous passage, Cicero said that Socrates “had brought back philosophy from the sky to the earth.” In spite of these important antecedents, the idea of the “Pre-Socratics” is undeniably a *modern* creation. The expression “Pre-Socratic philosophy” first occurs, as far as we know, in a handbook on the history of philosophy published by J.-A. Eberhardt in 1788.

Although there was general agreement by then that a decisive break in the history of philosophy had taken place sometime before Aristotle, there was debate in the nineteenth century about where this break occurred—with Socrates, or Plato? This debate, which also raised the question of how the Sophists should be evaluated and classified, involved great philosophers such as Schleiermacher, Hegel, and Nietzsche (who all had strong theories of history), as well as great historians of philosophy, such as E. Zeller and H. Diels. If the notion of a school of “Pre-Socratic philosophers” eventually superseded that of “Pre-Platonic philosophers,” this was due to the conjunction of Nietzsche's mature view of Socrates as the beginning of decadent modernity and Diels's widely read collection of Pre-Socratic material, published in 1903 under the title *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker* (*The*

*Fragments of the Pre-Socratics*). The implication was that there existed a single line of philosophical development in ancient Greece, with Socrates as the pivotal figure, demarcating a “before” and an “after.”

This modern conception of the history of philosophy contrasts with the account we find in Diogenes Laertius. Consider the following passage from the Prologue of his book (1.13–15):

But philosophy has two origins, one that dates back to Anaximander, the other to Pythagoras. Anaximander was a student of Thales; Pythagoras studied with Pherecydes. The school originated by Anaximander was called Ionian because Thales, who as a native of Miletus was Ionian, was Anaximander's teacher. The other school was called Italian, after Pythagoras, who practiced philosophy for the most part in Italy. [14] The one school, the Ionian, ends with Clitomachus, Chrysippus, and Theophrastus; the Italian with Epicurus. The succession passes from Thales through Anaximander, Anaximenes, Anaxagoras, Archelaus, to Socrates, who introduced moral philosophy; from Socrates to the various Socratics, especially Plato, who founded the Old Academy; from Plato through Speusippus and Xenocrates; to Polemon, Crantor, Crates, and Arcesilaus, who founded the Middle Academy, to Lacydes,

who founded the New Academy, Carneades, and Clitomachus. And thus it ends with Clitomachus. [15] It ends with Chrysippus in the following way: from Socrates it passes to Antisthenes, then to Diogenes the Cynic, Crates of Thebes, Zeno of Citium, Cleanthes, and Chrysippus. It ends with Theophrastus as follows: from Plato it passes to Aristotle, and from Aristotle to Theophrastus. And in this way the school of Ionia comes to an end.

The succession of the Italian school is as follows: from Pherecydes it passes to Pythagoras, then to his son Telauges, then to Xenophanes, Parmenides, Zeno of Elea, Leucippus, and Democritus, who had many students, among whom one should mention Nausiphanes and {Nauicydes}, who taught Epicurus.

This passage, which announces the overall structure of the *Lives*, assumes that Greek philosophy can be divided into two parallel but distinct traditions, which flourished in two different regions of ancient Greece, one in Ionia in the East, the other in Italy and Sicily in the West. Accordingly, the “Ionian succession” occupies one part of the work (Books 2 to 7), while the “Italian succession” takes up another (Books 8 to 10).

One immediate conclusion is a negative one: Diogenes Laertius recognizes no “Pre-Socratics” in the modern sense. This is true in two related respects: first, the various philosophers we used to gather under this name do not constitute an autonomous group for Diogenes; and second, each of the successions forms a continuous whole, without any mention of a decisive break into before and after. What we get in Diogenes is not two segments on a single line, but two independent and continuous lines.

There is some emphasis, in the “Ionian” lineage, on Socrates as “the ‘first to discourse about the conduct of life’ (a characterization repeated in the section dedicated to him [2.20]). Yet this was hardly conceived as a deep caesura. Plato’s *Phaedo* skillfully, almost diabolically, managed to integrate Socrates’ early rejection of natural philosophy with a narrative that depicted the mature Socrates as engaged in an inquiry about the causes of generation and corruption (96a). Plato thus paved the way for the unbroken presentation Aristotle made of his predecessors in the first book of his *Metaphysics*. In Book 5 of his *Tusculan Disputations*, Cicero also presented the history of philosophy as a continuous one, treating its subject as essentially of a practical nature. Socrates’ abandonment of the study of the sky to concentrate on human affairs only meant the renewal, he suggested, of an older conception of philosophy as primarily a form of political wisdom aimed at legislative knowledge.

Plato, Xenophon, and Cicero all had their own reasons to portray Socrates’ interest in ethical and political questions as a rejection of natural science: at worst, an interest in cosmology could provoke suspicions of impiety

(Plato and Xenophon); at best, it distracted attention from the more important question of how best to shape the conduct of human life (Cicero).

But the Socratic interest in ethics could also be read as simply taking an important step toward the completion of a philosophical program according to which philosophy is a complex discipline including a number of subdisciplines, including *both* ethics *and* physics.

In Diogenes Laertius, the sense of a continuity between Socrates, despite the novelty of his approach, and his predecessors is made manifest by the construction of Archelaus—a pupil of Anaxagoras who is also said to have been Socrates’ teacher—as an intermediary between “physics” and “ethics.” Archelaus, Diogenes writes at 2.16, “seems also to have touched upon ethics. For he discussed laws and goodness and justice. . . . Archelaus held that . . . the just and the shameful exist not by nature, but by convention.” The implication is clearly that Socrates, for all his originality, simply focused on an aspect of philosophy that was already well established.

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From this point of view, one could venture to say that Diogenes Laertius is Aristotle’s true heir: for Aristotle’s story of the development of philosophy, in Book A of the *Metaphysics*, also subordinates the ethical orientation of Socrates’ thought to the *longue durée* of a philosophical inquiry about the first causes and principles that, according to Aristotle, had begun with Thales (*Metaphysics* 1.3). Indeed, there are striking similarities in the treatment of Socrates in Diogenes and in Aristotle. For Diogenes, Archelaus had already broached the ethical questions that Socrates pursued, as we have just seen; for Aristotle, Socrates’ focus on ethics is no more than a generational and hence an almost contingent feature: what Socrates is primarily interested in is in fact an epistemological problem, the question of definition (Aristotle, *Generation of Animals*, 1.642a28–31).

A further important similarity between the two, which also is a difference from Diels’s *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, is that the Sophists are excluded from their histories of philosophy (with the exception of Protagoras). It may be significant that Philostratus, a near contemporary of Diogenes, devoted a book specifically to *The Lives of the Sophists*, as if the two works were complementary. In any case, a number of modern collections of Pre-Socratic philosophers also leave the Sophists aside.

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The differences between Diogenes and Aristotle are even more telling than the similarities. Aristotle recounted one continuous, if complex, history of philosophy; his account assumes that what is developing, thanks to the efforts of successive generations of philosophers, is a systematic field of conceptual inquiry, and that this mode of inquiry is teleologically oriented.

Diogenes’ continuity boils down to institutional

succession; from a conceptual point of view, there is no discernible system at all. The “opinions” of philosophers are simply “what they happen to think”—“what they approve of” because it so “pleases” them (Greek *ta areskonta*; Latin *placita*); they are, more than anything, an aspect of their “lives.” What interests Diogenes is not the construction of philosophy itself *sub specie aeternitatis* (or rather *sub specie Aristotelis*) but the display of individual philosophers adorned with individual doctrines. Paradoxically enough, Aristotle himself, because he dedicated so much attention to chronological questions and even to questions of personal character, can be considered as providing the remote origin of this orientation: the model of “succession,” on which Diogenes Laertius relies, most probably originated two centuries before him with a certain Sotion, who is usually presented as a Peripatetic scholar.

Still, as a historian of philosophy, Aristotle towers above Diogenes. The latter lacks conceptual depth—so much so that it is not clear he is interested in “philosophy” as Aristotle understood it at all. His presentation of the difference between the Ionian and Italian traditions is purely geographical; he never considers that the two might be correlated with two distinctive philosophical orientations, such as the religious orientation of the Italian philosophers and the naturalism of the Ionians. There is no notion in Diogenes Laertius that geography determines ways of thinking. His two parallel stories, the one that leads from Thales to the Stoics, and the other that leads from Pythagoras to Epicurus, simply coexist. This is particularly strange since the geographical criterion becomes insignificant early on, with the concentration of all the philosophical schools in Athens. (According to Diogenes Laertius, the first to transport philosophy to Athens was Archelaus [2.16]; other sources say it was Anaxagoras.)

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Thus, if one looks for “our” Pre-Socratic philosophers in Diogenes Laertius, one will find them cut off from one another. First, there is Book 1, which is entirely devoted to the Seven Sages: in principle, Diogenes distinguishes them from the philosophers, although there is an interesting hesitation in this respect about the most famous of them, Thales of Miletus. In the Prologue, as we have seen above, Thales is the founder of the Ionian tradition of philosophy; in Book 1, however he is the first of the Sages.

In Book 2, Diogenes presents four more “Pre-Socratic” philosophers—Anaximander, Anaximenes, Anaxagoras, and Archelaus—before turning to Socrates. Most of the rest of our Pre-Socratics appear toward the end of the work, in Book 8, which is entirely devoted to Pythagoras and his successors (Empedocles, Epicharmus, Archytas, Alcmeon, Hippasus, Philolaus) and in Book 9 (Heraclitus, Xenophanes, Parmenides, Melissus, Zeno of Elea, Leucippus, Democritus, Protagoras, Diogenes of Apollonia).

In this latter book, we encounter yet another change with respect to the succession announced in the Prologue: Xenophanes, although he still precedes Parmenides, is now coupled with Heraclitus; both are presented as two isolated (“scattered”) figures who, each for different reasons, cannot be integrated into either the Ionian or Italian genealogy (cf. 8.50 and 91). The reasons for this are clear enough in the case of Heraclitus, whose name, oddly but typically, was not mentioned at all in Book 1: according to a well-established tradition which in part relies on one of his own declarations, Heraclitus was a haughty philosopher who had no personal disciples and, above all, no teacher (cf. 9.5). Matters are less clear for Xenophanes, who does feature as Parmenides’ master in the Prologue. One can speculate that the construction of an “Eleatic” sub-filiation, in the wake of Plato’s *Sophist* (242d), on the basis of Xenophanes’ interest in “the one” god, which made him a forerunner of Parmenides’ “one” being, was felt by some to conflict with his alleged Skepticism (which Diogenes himself denies at 9.20; see also 9.72). He thus became a candidate to join Heraclitus as an anomaly. (It is interesting that the section on Parmenides presents Xenophanes as only one of his *possible* masters [9.21].)

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Diogenes was until the late eighteenth century *the* great model for historians of philosophy: this is because his project is historical rather than conceptual; because its chronological scope is much more extended than Aristotle’s could ever be (it includes the Hellenistic schools); and because it contains much more material and information (whatever its nature and quality may be) than survive in Aristotle’s extant treatises.

But with the emergence of new historical approaches and conceptions of history at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Diogenes became something of an embarrassment. Hegel’s judgment about the respective value of Aristotle and Diogenes in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* is harsh—and representative: “Aristotle is our most abundant authority; he studied the older philosophers expressly and most thoroughly, and he has, in the beginning of his *Metaphysics* especially, and also to a large extent elsewhere, dealt with them in historical order: he is as philosophic as erudite, and we may rely upon him. We can do no better in Greek philosophy than study the first book of his *Metaphysics*.”<sup>1</sup> By contrast, “The book of Diogenes Laertius is an important compilation, and yet it brings forward copious evidence without much discrimination. A philosophic spirit cannot be ascribed to it; it rambles about amongst bad anecdotes extraneous to the matter in hand. For the lives of philosophers, and here and there for their tenets, it is useful.”<sup>2</sup>

1 G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. E. S. Haldane (London, 1892), 1:166–67 (pt. 1, sect. 1, ch. 1).

2 *Ibid.*, 167–68.

There are good reasons to subscribe to Hegel's judgment, but possible ways around it: Diogenes' very weaknesses can also be converted into a powerful instrument directed against any purely conceptual view of the history of philosophy. Nietzsche is the most prominent representative of this more positive attitude to Diogenes Laertius.

Precisely because Diogenes was as interested in the lives of his philosophers as in their thinking, he could be read as opening the way to a reflection on philosophy's status: the traditional title of this book, *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*, thus becomes more than a description of its actual content: it names, at a second, reflexive level, an important philosophical problem—that of the relation between doctrine and life.

This aspect, which was important for Jacob Burckhardt's analysis of the relation between philosophy and culture in his *History of Greek Culture*, also played an important role in Nietzsche's philosophical promotion of the "Pre-Socratics." For according to Nietzsche (who had initially relied, in his lectures at the University of Basel, on the expression "Pre-Platonic philosophers"), Socratic ethics had done more than redirect the course of philosophy: it had affected the course of humanity at large by breaking with a formerly "tragic" worldview in favor of a moral optimism that laid the ground for the development of Christianity, democracy, and socialism.

The Pre-Socratics thus became crucial for sketching the outlines of a tragic form of philosophy. *This* was why it was important to understand who these great figures were. And Diogenes could help here. In a famous section of *Human, All Too Human* entitled "The tyrants of the spirit," Nietzsche writes, "Aristotle especially seems to have no eyes in his head whenever he stands before these men"—he mentions Thales, Parmenides, Pythagoras, Empedocles, and Democritus. "And so it seems as though these glorious philosophers had lived in vain, or as though their only function had been to prepare the way for the quarrelsome and loquacious hordes of the Socratic schools."<sup>3</sup> Diogenes Laertius, by contrast, because of the kind of material he preserved, was an invaluable resource, if what was at stake was retrieving the Pre-Socratics' original greatness and status within Greek culture.

And Diogenes Laertius does provide us with a great deal about Pre-Socratic philosophers that is either unique or uniquely presented. Often it is most useful as a way to reconstruct how they were read and appreciated down to the Hellenistic period, although there is also plenty of other apparently reliable material. For Diogenes Laertius' book is characterized by its profound heterogeneity—a feature fundamental to the kind of history he was engaged in, and which makes it difficult most of the time to decide who is speaking—Diogenes Laertius or the many sources he uses and arranges for his own, often inscrutable purposes.

3 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, trans. R. S. Hollingdale (Cambridge, 1986), 124 (vol. 1, sect. 261).

I shall finish, then, by showing how Diogenes may be the source for crucial information and insights about these ancient Greek philosophers—which makes him both an inexhaustible resource for scholarship and, in spite of his shortcomings, an everlasting source of reflection.

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The chapters on some of the archaic thinkers are rather meager. This is the case, for example, of the relevant chapters in Book 2; for the treatment of Archytas, Alcmeon, Hippasus, and Philolaus in Book 8; and with the accounts of Parmenides, Melissus, and Diogenes of Apollonia in Book 9.

Even there, however, we get revealing snippets. We would not know, for example, how Alcmeon or Diogenes of Apollonia's books began were it not for Diogenes Laertius' antiquarian habit of quoting the first lines of a given work, which must have been originally a way of identifying its author (see 8.83 and 9.57, respectively). And the chapter on Parmenides is interesting just because it presents an unfamiliar way of reading him ("He was the first to declare that the earth is spherical and is situated at the center" [9.21]). Without Diogenes Laertius, we would not know about the ancient dispute as to whether Parmenides was the disciple of Xenophanes, of Anaximander, or of a certain Ameinas (an otherwise unknown Pythagorean)—which reflects the existence of a debate about Parmenides' philosophical ascendance, and hence about the nature of his teachings.

A last example I would like to adduce is the thin section on Anaximenes in Book 2, which, apart from reproducing apocryphal letters from Anaximenes to Pythagoras, also happens to contain a characterization of Anaximenes' style that is important for appreciating the question of his place in the development of philosophical writing ("He wrote simply and plainly in the Ionic dialect" [2.3], implicitly opposing him to Anaximander's "poetic" inclinations).

More extended sections often preserve invaluable documents, even when these are of questionable provenance. Take the summary of Pythagoras's alleged doctrines (8.25–33). This may tell us little about the verifiable views of the real Pythagoras, but it tells us a great deal about his reception in a period of which we otherwise know practically nothing. Consider, too, the detailed catalogue of Democritus' works, which Thrasyllus has organized by tetralogies, "as he also arranged Plato's works" (9.46–49). Above all, Diogenes Laertius is our only source for a number of precious Pre-Socratic fragments, from Heraclitus and Empedocles.

There is also Diogenes' suggestive power, not in spite but rather *because* of his paratactical mode of composition. These seemingly miscellaneous juxtapositions often trigger reflection, and may well be themselves the expression of a special kind of reflection—the reader is free, at least, to read Diogenes as if his parataxis *were* a deliberate device.

Consider just one example. In his life of Empedocles, Diogenes tells us, “Satyrus, in his *Lives*, says that Empedocles was also a doctor and an excellent orator”; he then adds that “Gorgias of Leontini, at any rate, who excelled in rhetoric and has left a treatise on the art, had been his student”; “Apollodorus, in his *Chronology*, says that Gorgias lived to the age of 109”; and then that Satyrus says Gorgias was present when Empedocles did magic tricks. Finally, he quotes nine lines where Empedocles promises a disciple that he will not only teach him to heal, but to “bring back from Hades a dead man’s strength,” and more generally to master meteorological phenomena. This jumble of information suggests a number of relationships between medicine and magic, magic and rhetoric, and master and disciple that, while they remain indefinite, are also open to a variety of intriguing interpretations, some of which are reflected in scholarly literature about Empedocles and Gorgias.

But perhaps the ultimate source of Diogenes Laertius’ mysterious appeal is his fascination with the death of philosophers. The story of Empedocles’ jump into the cra-

ter of Etna (9.67–74), in particular, is behind several great literary creations, such as the three versions of Hölderlin’s *Death of Empedocles*, Matthew Arnold’s “Empedocles on Etna,” and Bertold Brecht’s “Empedocles’ Shoe.”

Also worth mentioning is the recurring pattern of death by revenge, so to speak, wherein a philosopher dies because of the classical elements his doctrine had downplayed. Thales, who had chosen water as the ultimate substance of things, dies from heat and thirst. Heraclitus, who had elected fire as his cosmic principle, suffers a fatally abnormal accumulation of fluid in the cavities of his body. And Pythagoras in one version dies at the hands of an angry mob as he is “trying to avoid the beanfield”—one of the foods he considered taboo.

These transparently symbolic anecdotes all tell us something about the relationship of philosophy to life in general, and may stand for a specific approach to intellectual history of which Diogenes Laertius remains for us the only full-fledged representative. His Pre-Socratics, just as Nietzsche intuited, play an important part in this (alternative) history of philosophy.

## PLATO’S DOCTRINES IN DIOGENES LAERTIUS

John Dillon

Diogenes Laertius’ life of Plato is one of his most substantial achievements, and is thus a particularly suitable perspective from which to evaluate the sometimes baffling way the author of *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers* represented philosophical doctrines. I will focus on the first segment of his survey of Plato’s doctrines (*areskonta*), in Book 3 (67–80), after the life proper and an extensive review of Plato’s works and their editing (3.47–66).<sup>1</sup>

Diogenes’ account needs to be viewed against the background of previous collections of the philosophical opinions, or doxographies, of Plato. These date back to the period of the so-called Old Academy (347–266 BC), the school Plato left at his death. It seems likely that it was the third head of the Academy, Xenocrates of Chalcedon, in the period 339–314 BC, who first strove to forge Plato’s

philosophical insights into a systematic body of doctrine.<sup>2</sup> He, however, was not concerned to produce anything like a summary, such as we find in later times.

At this early stage, the nearest such approach we find is from the pen of Theophrastus, Aristotle’s successor as head of the Peripatetic School, who composed *Opinions on Natural Philosophy* (*Physikōn Doxai*), in which he included Plato, crediting him with a two-principle system of the same type attributed to him by Diogenes:<sup>3</sup> “Plato wishes to make the principles two in number, the one a substrate, in the role of matter, which he calls ‘the all-receiving’ (*pandekhes, Timaeus* 51a), the other as cause and motive agent (*kinoun*), which he connects with the power of God and of the Good.”

The next doxographers of any significance date from the first centuries BC and AD. Arius Didymus, the court philosopher of the emperor Augustus, seems to have composed a comprehensive survey of the opinions of the philosophers. He may have been of the Stoic persuasion,

1 The second, and rather longer segment (3.80–109), consists of a most curious collection of allegedly Platonic “divisions” (*diairesis*) of philosophical concepts, attributed, rather implausibly, to Aristotle. Since these also occur in a Christian recension, we may suppose that Diogenes is transcribing them from some (probably Hellenistic) source. He makes no attempt to link this to what precedes it.

2 Diogenes lists an impressive body of works from his pen (4.11–14), covering virtually all aspects of Platonist philosophy.

3 Hermann Diels, *Doxographi graeci* (1879), p. 485, 1–4.

but if so he does not impose his views very strongly. His work is preserved fairly extensively in the much later *Anthology* of Johannes Stobaeus (late fourth century AD), but it also seems to be an important source for *The Handbook of Platonism (Didaskalikos)* of Diogenes' approximate contemporary Alcinous.

In chapter 12 of this work, entitled "On the generation of the world," for example, we can see (from parallels in Stobaeus, and in Eusebius' *Praeparatio Evangelica*) Alcinous using Arius' *On the Doctrines of Plato* virtually verbatim, and we may suspect that such borrowing is much more widespread than we can observe. The work of a later doxographer, Aetius, who seems to date from the late first century AD, is preserved in a compilation, *On the Physical Doctrines of the Philosophers*, falsely attributed to Plutarch. In contrast to Theophrastus, but in agreement with Arius (if we may judge from Alcinous, chapters 8–10), he attributes to Plato a system of three principles: God, Matter, and Idea (in the singular).<sup>4</sup>

All these figures attest to a flourishing tradition of doxography on which Diogenes can draw, but it cannot be said that he is particularly close to any of the surviving practitioners of the genre, although he is, like them, dependent on only one major dialogue of Plato—the *Timaeus*—for the majority of his exposition. Still, there is much that is peculiar in his presentation of this material. It is to these peculiarities of the doxography of Diogenes that I now turn.

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Here and elsewhere in *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*, Diogenes seems broadly to be following the traditional division of philosophy into three areas: physics, ethics, and logic. But unlike most of his predecessors, Diogenes starts his account of Plato's physics by summarizing Plato's views on the soul. This is a significant choice, I think, betokening an account of Plato that stresses the pivotal role of the soul both in the structure of the universe and of the individual.

Complications arise straightaway. Diogenes declares that Plato holds the soul to be immortal; it takes on many bodies in succession and has a numerical first principle (*arkhē arithmētikē*). So far, so good—although the emphasis on the soul's arithmetical nature is more characteristic of Plato's immediate successors, Speusippus and Xenocrates, than of Plato himself (even if derivable from Plato's account in the *Timaeus*, 35a–37c).<sup>5</sup> But the phrase Diogenes has tacked on to this passage—"whereas the body's first principle is geometrical"—has aroused suspicion because of its apparent irrelevance to the topic of the soul; even if one might argue that there is at least

a loose association of ideas here, and that the soul, once embodied, gives the body a geometrical structure derived from the soul's own mathematical essence.<sup>6</sup>

Worse complications follow. Diogenes next presents us with a definition of the soul: "a form of breath diffused in all directions [*idea tou pantēi diestōtos pneumatos*]" (6.67). What we have here is, to all appearances, a fine farrago: the core of the definition, without *pneumatos* tacked onto it, is the one propounded by Plato's successor Speusippus, a formulation that follows logically from Speusippus' overall metaphysical scheme.<sup>7</sup> The final *pneumatos*, however, introduces a new concept entirely, specifying that what is thus extended is actually a *pneuma* (breath, spirit).

While this addition might seem at first a careless conflation, in fact it signals something more interesting, for this form of the definition actually corresponds to that of the Stoic Posidonius.<sup>8</sup> Posidonius himself seems substantially to adopt the mathematicizing definition of Speusippus: "the Form of the omni-dimensionally extended, constructed according to number which comprises harmony," while also characterizing the soul—as would after all befit a Stoic materialist—as "hot *pneuma*." What we may be seeing here in Diogenes, however, is not so much the direct influence of Posidonius, but rather the Stoicizing tradition of Platonism descending ultimately from Antiochus of Ascalon, which incorporates certain formulations of Posidonius.<sup>9</sup>

*Pneuma*, after all, is a concept already utilized by Aristotle, after he had largely "deconstructed" the soul in its Platonist sense, to explain how *phantasia* and purposive action arise in the soul-body complex—specifically, the "innate spirit" (*symphyton pneuma*) residing especially in the blood around the heart (*De generatione animalium* 736b27 ff.). Further, Heraclides of Pontus, within the old Academy, held that the soul was composed of *aether*, or pure fire, akin to the substance of the heavenly bodies, a position that would have strengthened Antiochus' in his Stoicizing stance.<sup>10</sup>

6 Cicero, in *Academica* 1.6, makes Varro, his spokesman for the Platonist position of Antiochus of Ascalon, declare that the union of the "efficient force" and matter involves the introduction of geometry—implicitly in the creation of three-dimensional bodies.

7 Discussed by me at more length in *The Heirs of Plato: A Study of the Old Academy (347–274 BC)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003), 40–64. Speusippus' multilevel universe involved, at its summit, a pair of (supraessential) One and Multiplicity (*plēthos*), followed by a level of (essential) Number, followed in turn by Soul, which has a geometrical essence. This he doubtless saw as being a "clarification," rather than a contradiction, of Plato's doctrine as he understood it!

8 Ludwig Edelstein and I. G. Kidd, eds., *Posidonius*, vol. 1, *The Fragments* (1972; repr., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), fr. 141.

9 In fact, Mario Untersteiner, in "Posidonio nei placita di Platone secondo Diogene Laertio III," *Antichità classica e cristiana* 7 (1970), has gone so far as to propose Posidonius as the source behind Diogenes' exposition of Platonic doctrine here. Antiochus will fill the bill equally well, without straying outside the Platonist fold.

10 In the Antiochian summary of Platonist philosophy at Cicero, *Academica* 1.26, the stuff of souls as well as of the stars is declared to be the Aristotelian fifth substance, or *aither*.

4 *Ibid.*, 287, 17ff. He describes *idea* as "an incorporeal essence in the thoughts and imaginings of God" (*ousia asōmatos en tois noēmasin kai tais phantasiais tou theou*). This concords well with Alcinous (ch. 9); Diogenes Laertius (3.76–77) is less than specific as to whether the Ideas are thoughts in God's mind, though he probably assumes they are.

5 And indeed from Aristotle's report in the *De anima* 1.2.404b16ff. (see below).

In other words, Diogenes is transmitting a largely Antiochian form of Platonism.<sup>11</sup> We will see how far this impression is confirmed or challenged by what follows.

Diogenes goes on to suggest a new conflation, or confusion, this time between individual soul and world soul (3.68–70). Drawing heavily on a passage of the *Timaeus* (36d–37c) where Plato describes the construction of the World Soul by the Demiurge, he now presents the soul as “enclosing the body from the centre outwards on all sides in a circle, and being compounded from the elements” (*synestanaí ek tōn stoikheíōn*).

What can Diogenes mean by this reference to “the elements”? Perhaps he (or his source) has combined Plato’s statement at *Timaeus* 37a—that the soul, through being made up of its components (Sameness, Otherness, and Being), is able to discern all the aspects of its environment—with Aristotle’s account, at *De anima* 404b16 ff., that Plato “makes the soul out of the elements” (*tēn psychēn ek tōn stoikheíōn poiei*), on the grounds that like must be known by like. However, the “elements” that Aristotle has in mind here are actually the first four numbers (the Pythagorean *tetraktys*), viewed as the principles of the point and the three dimensions. Some other creative soul, however—if not Diogenes himself—seems to have interpreted these *stoikheia* as the basic elements of the physical world, presumably on the grounds that the soul, in order to cognize it, will need to contain those elements within itself, at least in some sublimated form.<sup>12</sup>

It seems to me that a Stoicizing Platonist in the tradition of Antiochus could well have fastened on the basic concept, enunciated by Aristotle and arguably adumbrated in the above-mentioned passage of the *Timaeus*, that like must be known by like, and concluded that the four basic numbers identified by Aristotle as presiding over the dimensions must actually comprehend also the *principles* of the four elements. After all, Aristotle adds further down (404b25–6) that “numbers are alleged to be identical with the Forms themselves and ultimate principles (*arkhai*), and they are composed [or ‘derived’?] from the elements” (*eisi d’ ek tōn stoikheíōn*). This is a rather obscure remark of Aristotle’s. Probably he has in mind the first principles of One and the Great-and-Small, which he attributes to Plato, but he could be taken to be referring to the four material elements. I suggest this is what our source—and Diogenes—did take him to be doing.

One might even say, in Diogenes’ defense, that Plato himself, at *Timaeus* 35a, describes the composition of the

soul in a manner compatible with the individual soul as well as the world soul, and maintains a close parallelism between the two (only later, at 41d, specifying that individual human souls are actually the outcome of a “second mixing” in the demiurgic Mixing Bowl, resulting in a somewhat inferior product—second and third pressings, as it were). This passage Diogenes chooses to ignore, possibly because the later Stoicizing tradition makes no such distinction between world soul and individual souls.

In the middle of 3.69, Diogenes turns from the description of the soul to a specification of first principles. Here we find initially a two-principle universe, much as it is presented in Cicero’s account of Antiochian metaphysics at *Academica* 26 ff., with the proviso that in the Ciceronian passage (29) the active principle, while termed “God” and “Intellect,” is also characterized as “the soul/mind of the world” (*animus mundi*), whereas Diogenes sticks closer to the *Timaeus* in distinguishing between these: “Plato posits two universal principles (*arkhai*), god and matter, and he calls god mind (*nous*) and cause (*aition*). He held that matter is formless and unlimited (*askhēmatistos kai apeiros*), and that composite things (*synkrimata*) arise out of it.”

In this statement, Diogenes takes no account of what in other doxographical accounts<sup>13</sup> is listed as a third principle, namely Form, or *Idea*, representing the Paradigm of the *Timaeus* as the sum total of the Forms. The third principle does turn up further on, in 3.77, where the Forms are characterized as “causes and principles” (*aitiai kai arkhai*), though they are implicitly subordinated to God as creator, the contents of whose mind they are apparently assumed to be.

Indeed, in one rather odd distortion of Plato’s views in the *Timaeus* (at 33b), Diogenes says (3.72) that Plato describes the cosmos as spherical “because such is the shape of its creator (*ho gennēsas*),” whereas in fact what Plato says is that the physical world is spherical because *its model*, “the Essential Living Being” (i.e., the Paradigm), is spherical. This gloss of Plato’s views makes sense, of course, if Diogenes is subordinating Plato’s Paradigm to Plato’s Demiurge. It also recalls the later Stoic characterization of God as spherical, which may accord as well with the views of Antiochus.<sup>14</sup>

The rest of Diogenes’ description of Plato’s view on the creation of the world, in 3.69–77, follows closely with a few exceptions the account in the *Timaeus*.

Diogenes, like some other ancient doxographers (such as Alcinous), has Plato accepting the temporal creation of the physical cosmos, against the prevailing consensus of most Platonists, but in accordance with the views of Plutarch and Atticus in the second century AD:<sup>15</sup> though matter “once moved in a disorderly manner,

11 He goes on to characterize the soul as “self-moved and tripartite,” appealing, for the former assertion, no doubt to *Phaedrus* 245c, and, for the latter, to the *Timaeus* 69c ff. rather than to *Republic* 4—though the epithets of the three parts, *logistikōn*, *thymoeides*, and *epithymētikōn*, are borrowed from the *Republic*, being not so named in the *Timaeus*.

12 This is perhaps what Diogenes has in mind below, in 3.69, when he speaks of the soul being able to recognize reality (*ta onta*) through having the elements harmoniously (*kata harmonian*) disposed within it.

13 E.g., Aët., 1.10.308 Diels; Plutarch, *Quaestiones conviviales* 8.2, 720b; Alcinous, *Didaskalikos* ch. 9.

14 Cf. Cicero, *Nat. D.* 1.18, 1.24.

15 Diogenes does not, however, as does Plutarch in the *Proc. An.*, postulate a precosmic disorderly soul; he sticks with matter.

it was brought together in one place by god, since he preferred order to disorder" (3.69; cf. *Timaeus* 30a). He then gives an account of the elements as combinations of the basic triangles, distinguishing (3.71) between their microcosmic levels, in which they are pressed together in the center to form living and inanimate beings, and the macrocosmic, where they are separated into their own proper spheres, i.e., fire at the outermost region, then air, water, and finally earth at the center (cf. *Timaeus* 58a–c).

In one detail, at 3.75, concerning the functioning of the earth in the cosmos, Diogenes plumps for a minority interpretation of a passage of the *Timaeus* (40b8–c1), where Plato is saying either that the earth is "compressed" (*illomenēn/eillomenēn*) around its center, or that it is "winding" (i.e., in motion) around it (interpreting variants of the same verb). Aristotle, in *De caelo*, 293b30–2 and 296a26–7, takes it in the latter sense, whereas such authorities as Plutarch (*Quaestiones plat.* 8.1006C), Alcinoüs (*Didaskalikos* ch. 15), and Proclus (*In Timaeum* III 136, 29–138, 11) take it in the former sense. Diogenes states firmly that the earth, "being central . . . revolves (*kineisthai*) around the center" (3.75). It is interesting, in this connection, that Cicero (*Academica* 123) takes Plato to be saying that the earth revolves, though he admits there is some obscurity about this (*sed paullo obscurius*); so that we may here have once again an Antiochian connection.

Very well. But then, just as his section on Plato's physics ends, Diogenes seems to contradict himself by baldly asserting that Plato "holds that god, like the soul, is incorporeal (*asōmatos*). For this renders him immune from decay and death" (3.77; emphasis added). What are we to make of this, in view of all that has preceded?

All I can suggest, if we are charitably to try to preserve some vestige of consistency in Diogenes' account, is that one may relate this passage to a similar one in the works of the Jewish Platonist philosopher Philo of Alexandria.<sup>16</sup> Like Diogenes in the puzzling passage on the incorporeality of the soul, Philo describes the Logos, in its immanent aspect within the cosmos, as well as the heavenly bodies and the soul, as *asōmatos*, while also recognizing that they are composed of "heavenly fire" (the Stoic *pyr tekhnikon* or *noeron*), since this is consistent with their changelessness and eternity. I suggest that this role could also have been assumed by the Aristotelian (and Old Academic) concept of aether. Such a position would once again bring Diogenes quite close to the presumed position of Antiochus; but, as I say, such an interpretation requires some generosity.

Diogenes ends by speaking of "the ideas" as "causes and principles whereby the world of natural objects (*ta physei synestōta*) is what it is"—a formulation reminiscent of a definition of Forms attributed to Xenocrates: "the paradigmatic cause of whatever is at any time composed

according to Nature" (*aitia paradeigmatikē tōn aei kata physin synestōtōn*).<sup>17</sup> One could imagine such a definition filtering down to Diogenes through Antiochus, though there is no evidence it did.<sup>18</sup>

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When Diogenes turns to Plato's ethics, which he treats much more briefly at 3.78–79, he begins, quite normally, with a definition of the *telos*, or purpose of life. And this is the prevailing definition in later Platonism, from Eudorus of Alexandria on: "likening oneself to God," *homoiosis theōi*, deriving from *Theaetetus* 176b–c—though Diogenes chooses to strengthen this to *exomoiōsis*, a compound form he shares with Philo of Alexandria.<sup>19</sup>

This produces a complication for my provisional theory about Diogenes' primary source, in that it distances him from Antiochus, for whom the preferred *telos* is the Stoic one of "life in conformity with Nature" (*homologoumenōs tēi physei zēn*).<sup>20</sup> There is admittedly an interesting passage in Cicero (*De Legibus* I 25), where, in an Antiochian context, he asserts that "virtue is the same in man as in God, and in no other species apart from that. Yet virtue is nothing else than one's nature made perfect and brought to a peak [of excellence] it constitutes therefore a likeness of man with God."<sup>21</sup> This effectively assimilates the Stoic definition to what would become the Platonist one, but Antiochus does appear to have retained the Stoic definition as his preferred formulation. Diogenes would thus seem to be reflecting here a later stage in the development of Platonist doctrine, possibly stemming from the first-century BC Platonist Eudorus of Alexandria.

On the matter of the role of virtue (*aretē*), however, Diogenes is once more in accord with Antiochus. "Virtue," he begins by declaring, "is sufficient for happiness (*autarkēs pros eudaimonian*)"—the Stoic position. But he immediately qualifies this, as would Antiochus, by specifying that the presence of both bodily and external goods are required (*prosdeisthai*) as "instruments" (*organa*)—though the sage will be no less happy in the absence of these.

As Diogenes sets out the doctrine, it comes dangerously near to self-contradiction, but then the Stoic position lends itself to that. Antiochus' solution was to make a distinction

17 Ap. Proclus, *In Parmenides* 888, 18–19 Cousin; cf. further on this in Dillon, *The Heirs of Plato*, 119–20.

18 Forms are mentioned at Cicero, *Academica* 1.30, but only as the eternally simple and uniform objects of the intellect, not as causes (though that is what they must be).

19 This is certainly Philo's preferred formulation, used fully six times, *De opificio mundi* 144; *De decalogo* 73, 107; *De specialibus legibus* 4.188; *De virtutibus* 8, 168. The compound form derives, doubtless, from Plato's use of it in *Timaeus* 90d4.

20 Cf. Cicero, *De finibus* 2.34; 5.26–7.

21 A good discussion of this passage, and of the *telos* in general, is to be found in Harold Tarrant, "Moral Goal and Moral Virtues in Middle Platonism," in *Greek and Roman Philosophy, 100 B.C.–200 A.D.*, ed. R. W. Sharples and R. Sorabji, *BICS* 94 (2007): 421–24.

16 Cf. my essay "Asōmatos: Nuances of Incorporeality in Philo," in *Philon d'Alexandrie et le langage de la philosophie*, ed. C. Lévy (Turnhout: Brepols, 1998) (repr. in my *The Platonic Heritage* [Farnham, Eng.: Ashgate-Variorum, 2012], essay 8).

between being “happy” and being “supremely happy.”<sup>22</sup> The sage is always happy, and this happiness cannot be removed from him; but the fullest happiness is only achieved with the aid of at least a sufficiency of the lower goods (and the absence of their opposites).

Summing up Plato’s views on the bodily and external goods, Diogenes lists only three of each (rather than four, to match the virtues): in the case of the bodily goods, “strength, health, a keen sensibility” (*euaisthesia*),<sup>23</sup> and in the case of the external goods, “wealth, good birth, and reputation.” It is notable—but perhaps not surprising—that, just below, in the so-called divisions (3.80), Diogenes represents Plato as upholding a more usual list of four bodily goods: “beauty, a good constitution (*euexia*), health, and strength” (more closely reflecting a list given in *Republic* IV 444d). Diogenes also offers a much more unusual list of four external goods, supposedly upheld by Plato: “friends, a good reputation, the prosperity of one’s country, and wealth.” That Diogenes makes no attempt to coordinate these two lists, presented within a page of each other, says something about his methods of compilation.<sup>24</sup>

Diogenes goes on to say that Plato expects the sage to take part in public affairs (*politeuesthai*), marry, and not transgress the established laws; he will even legislate (*nomothetēsein*) for his country, if circumstances call for it and his state is not excessively corrupt.<sup>25</sup>

All this adds up to a vote for the “mixed life” (*symmiktos bios*) as commended by the Antiochian spokesman Piso in *De Finibus* V (especially V 58), but set out already by Aristotle in *Pol.* VII 3. And in fact many people were trained in the Academy to take part in the affairs of their cities, such as Erastus and Coriscus of Scepsis, or indeed Dion in Syracuse, and Plato himself is a deeply political philosopher. Plato commends marriage in the *Laws* (VI, 772d–e), and he makes “not transgressing the laws” the moral, in particular, of the *Crito*. The injunction about being prepared to legislate for one’s state, if it is not hopelessly corrupt, can be derived from Plato’s remarks in the *Republic* (VI 488a–497a).

Diogenes passes on (3.79) to Plato’s doctrine of divine providence—“gods oversee human affairs” (*ephoran*

*ta anthrōpina*). This is a well-known doctrine, attested in the *Timaeus* (30b, 44c) and also *Philebus* (28d–e). He also tacks on an assertion of the existence of *daimones*, or semidivine beings, for which the major dialogues would be *Symposium* (202e), *Cratylus* (397d–e), and the *Republic* (III 392a); such stalwarts of the Old Academy as Xenocrates had developed quite an elaborate theory of *daimones*.<sup>26</sup>

Divine providence and *daimones* are presumably subsumed under ethics because of the moral quality of the interventions of superior beings in our lives. The section on ethics is rounded off, however, by a curious definition of “the notion of good” (*to kalon*). Plato, claims Diogenes, was the first to declare the concept (*ennoia*) of *to kalon* to be bound up with “whatever is praiseworthy (*epaineton*), rational (*logikon*), useful (*khērēsimon*), becoming, and appropriate”; and these in turn are all connected with the concept of “that which is consistent and in harmony with nature,” a clear reference to the Stoic definition of the *telos*, adopted by Antiochus: “living in accordance with nature” (*homologoumenōs tēi physei zēn*). This whole sequence of epithets, although it contains nothing contrary to Platonic doctrine, seems to be influenced more powerfully by Stoic syllogistic definitions of virtue.

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Diogenes moves on finally to a summary of Plato’s views on the topic of logic: “He also discoursed on the correctness of names (*peri onomatōn orthotētos*), and was thus the first to develop a science for correctly asking and answering questions, a science of which he made excessive use (*katakoros*)” (7.79).

This is a cursory reference, first to the practice of etymology, as carried out by Socrates (with a degree of irony that seems generally to have been lost on later generations) in *Cratylus*; and then to that of dialectic—which Diogenes characterizes as being employed by Plato to excess, a judgment perhaps emanating from a later dogmatic Platonist (such as was Antiochus), impatient with the use of the aporetic, or rhetorically baffling, aspect of Socratic dialectic to buttress a skeptical Academic position.

That is all Diogenes cares to say about Plato’s logic. His doxographic summary is rounded off (3.79–80), curiously, by what might appear to be a return to an ethical topic, but which is really, I think, intended as a comment on Plato’s use of myths, which Diogenes feels to be in need of some defense.

What he says is that Plato, in his dialogues, presents justice (*dikaioσynē*) as the law of god, as a stronger inducement to men to behave justly, by showing them what punishments await malefactors after death—and Plato’s description of these punishments lays him open, in the view of some, to being “overly devoted to myths” (*mythikōteros*).<sup>27</sup>

26 Cf. Dillon, *The Heirs of Plato*, 129–31.

27 Using this term in a sense apparently found nowhere else.

22 This is laid out in a passage of Varro’s *De Philosophia* preserved by Augustine in his *City of God* (19.3)—Varro being in philosophy a faithful follower of Antiochus—but is also widely implied in *De Finibus* 5. Alcinoüs is more austere (*Didaskalikos* ch. 27); he declares that happiness is dependent upon virtue alone.

23 This term is actually found in *Timaeus* 76d2, in connection with the description of the Demiurge’s fabrication of the head. Philo uses it three times (*Legum allegoriarum* 3.86; *Noë seu de sobrietate* 61; *De Abrahamo* 263), always in conjunction with health, and in the last passage as part of a sequence of four bodily goods, along with health, strength, and beauty.

24 But what, one might ask? The most charitable interpretation, perhaps, is that Diogenes did not regard these lists as incompatible, but rather as complementary.

25 I would certainly here read *apanaitēta*, with Casaubon, for the *euparaitēta* of the mss., which gives only a very forced sense.

Again, such criticism could come from either inside or outside the Platonist tradition, but we cannot put our finger on a source. The reference would seem to be primarily to the *Republic*, and in particular to the Myth of Er in Book X, though of course many other myths, such as those of the *Phaedo*, the *Gorgias*, and the *Phaedrus*, could be taken into consideration.

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As we have seen, Diogenes' account of the doctrines of Plato is in many respects muddled and superficial. Yet it reveals a bit of his method, if that is the right word—namely, how he went about representing the doctrines of his eminent philosophers. In the case of Plato, he seems to have relied heavily, not on primary sources, apart from the *Timaeus*, but on previous doxographers, whose work he has culled, perhaps more discriminately than some critics suggest.

The summary of Plato's doctrines seems on the whole to emanate from strongly Stoicized Platonist sources, possibly under the influence of Antiochus of Ascalon (perhaps his *Kanonika*, which seems to have concerned epistemology, but also some work or works on ethical themes), but borrowing as well at least one formulation (the definition of the soul) from the Stoic Posidonius, and departing from Antiochus in the adoption of the later Platonist doctrine of the *telos* (a feature it may owe to some such figure as Eudorus).

The resulting account may not tell us much about Plato's own views as we find them expressed in his dialogues. But it tells us a great deal about the transmission of philosophical doctrines in antiquity, through compact summaries of varying degrees of coherence and reliability—the raw material, along with traditional biographical lore, for Diogenes' own compendia.

## CYNICISM: ANCIENT AND MODERN

### R. Bracht Branham

**Cyn-ic** (sin'ik) *n.* **1.** A person who believes all people are motivated by selfishness. **2. Cynic.** A member of a sect of ancient Greek philosophers who believed virtue to be the only good and self-control to be the only means of achieving virtue. **—cynic adj. 1.** Cynical. **2. Cynic.** Of or relating to the Cynics or their beliefs. [Latin *cynicus*, Cynic philosopher, from Greek *kunikos*, from *kuon*, *kun-*, dog. See **kwon-** in Appendix.]

—*American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*

Cynic, *n.* A blackguard whose faulty vision sees things as they are, not as they ought to be.

—Ambrose Bierce,  
*The Devil's Dictionary* (1911)

A nice man is a man of nasty ideas.

Jonathan Swift,  
"Thoughts on Various Subjects" (1727)

There is a problem peculiar to Cynicism—or is it "cynicism"?—both as a word and a concept: it is Janus-faced, and it is often hard to say which way it is looking. Is it looking back to an ancient philosophical tradition (known in German as *Kynismus* and in English by the capitalized form "Cynicism") or forward to the modern perspective that can be derived from it (known in German as *Zynismus* and in English by the lowercase spelling "cynicism")?

If the ancient Cynicism is being invoked, what feature of the complex figures of Antisthenes, Diogenes, Crates,

or Menippus does it foreground—not to mention the five other philosophers whom Diogenes Laertius includes in Book 6?<sup>1</sup> Is it the rigorous asceticism of Diogenes of Sinope—his reduction of bodily needs to the biological minimum in the pursuit of moral autonomy? Or is it the evident pleasure he takes in breaking taboos about food or sex in his public demonstrations of exactly what living "according to nature" entails, shameless behavior that earned him the derisive epithet "dog" (*kuon*), a fighting word as old as the *Iliad*?<sup>2</sup> Or, if it is modern, lowercase cynicism that is meant, is it used to express the freedom from collective illusions and prejudices that a "cynic" attains by "seeing through" the idols of the tribe, or does it serve instead to describe a state of disillusionment and alienation that seems to make the postmodern cynic incapable of taking anything seriously?

Or finally, instead of designating either the ancient or modern philosophical perspective, is the term meant to evoke an eccentric literary tradition of philosophical satire and performance art associated, above all, with Menippus and Lucian?<sup>3</sup> This tradition—as the Russian

1 That is, Monimus, Onesicritus, Metrocles, Hipparchia, and Menedemus.

2 Thomas R. Walsh, *Fighting Words and Feuding Words: Anger and the Homeric Poems* (Oxford: Lexington Books, 2005); M. Faust, "Die Künstlerische Verwendung von *Kúur* 'Hand' in Den Homerischen Eyen," *Glotta* 48, no. 1 (1970): 8–31.

3 For Lucian and Menippean satire, see Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, trans. C. Emerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), ch. 4; R. Bracht Branham, *Unruly Eloquence: Lucian and the Comedy of Traditions* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989); and Joel C. Relihan, *Ancient Menippean Satire* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993).

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philosopher and literary theorist Mikhail Bakhtin has taught us—finds rich sources of humor in philosophers philosophizing, as in Lucian's *Philosophers for Sale!*, in which the founding fathers of Greek philosophy are auctioned off as slaves with Zeus and Hermes as the auctioneers.

Separately, why does being “cynical” seem to mean one thing when applied to ourselves (it's good to be free of illusions) and another when applied to someone else (it's unfortunate to be disillusioned and have nothing to believe in)? Is nothing sacred? If contemporary culture and society seem designed to breed “cynicism,” is being cynical therefore the hallmark of contemporary authenticity—the only possible honest response to a morally bankrupt present? Or is it the antithesis—an expression of our own bad faith, our collusion in the collective swindle?

In any case, the Janus-faced nature of Cynicism/cynicism is not a product of the modern world's complexity. The term was already bivalent in antiquity, distinctly affirmative in some contexts—as when Diogenes identifies himself to Alexander the Great as “Diogenes the Dog”—and pejorative in others—as when people throw bones at him, or otherwise treat him “like a dog.” And this dialogical quality extends to the nature of Cynic philosophy itself, which finds expression not in the Socratic scrutiny of definitions and examples or in systematically argued treatises like Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* but in a series of deliberate philosophical provocations that emerge from Diogenes' attempt to live “according to nature” while embedded in the culture of Athens in the fourth century BC.

But what exactly was Diogenes' relation to the philosophical culture of his day? Was he the prodigal son of the Socratic tradition, but one who never did come home again, choosing instead to live in his barrel as one “of those who have a right to call themselves homeless in a distinctive and honorable sense,” as Nietzsche would say?<sup>4</sup> Is that why, when asked what sort of person Diogenes was, Plato replied simply: “A Socrates—gone mad”? In that case, the ancient doxographers were onto something when they linked him to Socrates by casting him as the pupil of Antisthenes, who was with Socrates the day he drank the hemlock. Or did Diogenes—when propelled into exile from Sinope, his hometown on the Black Sea—bring something fundamentally new to Plato's Athens? Did he reject Socrates' intellectualist conception of human excellence—the doctrine that “virtue is

knowledge”—in favor of a somatic ideal? This construction of human flourishing is what Foucault would call a “practice of the self”: an *askesis*, or physical discipline, that serves a moral purpose such as self-sufficiency and happiness. Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé has persuasively argued for the latter interpretation in her monograph *L'Ascèse cynique*.<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, the primary sources we would use to answer such questions—the Cynic classics written by or about Diogenes, Crates et al.—are lost and survive only in anecdotes and aphorisms cited by much later authors, most notably Diogenes Laertius in his *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*.

While collaborating with Goulet-Cazé and thirteen other scholars on a collective history of Cynic philosophy and its reception in Europe, I became increasingly aware—thanks to the work of Heinrich Niehues-Pröbsting in particular—that Cynicism was far more important to the emergence of specifically modern forms of thought than was generally acknowledged. It made me wonder why specialists in modern literature, philosophy, and political theory were not giving the dogs the attention they deserved. After all, as Nietzsche wrote in *Human, All Too Human* (1878):<sup>6</sup> “The Modern Diogenes: Before one searches for man, one must have found the lantern. Won't it have to be the Cynic's lantern?”

Some twenty years later, things look very different. Following the publication of Niehues-Pröbsting's pioneering work on the nature of Diogenes' Cynicism (*Kynismus*) and how it devolved in the modern period into cynicism (*Zynismus*)<sup>7</sup> came the unexpected interventions of two high-profile thinkers.<sup>8</sup> In 1983 Peter Sloterdijk published *Kritik der zynischen Vernunft*,<sup>9</sup> which became the best-selling work of philosophy published in Germany since World War II; a year later Michel Foucault gave five lectures on Cynicism at the Collège de France, which brought to conclusion a two-year course on the history of *parrhesia* (or “freedom of speech”)—which Diogenes of Sinope calls “the finest thing in the world.”<sup>10</sup>

While both philosophers acknowledge their debt to Niehues-Pröbsting,<sup>11</sup> neither knew of the other's work.

5 Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé, *L'Ascèse cynique: Un Commentaire de Diogène Laërce VI, 70–71* (2nd ed.; Paris: Vrin, 2001).

6 Dedicated to Voltaire.

7 Heinrich Niehues-Pröbsting, *Der Kynismus des Diogenes und der Begriff des Zynismus* (Munich: Fink, 1979). This work deserves to be much better known than it is.

8 Louisa Shea, *The Cynic Enlightenment: Diogenes in the Salon* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010), 131–32.

9 Peter Sloterdijk, *Critique of Cynical Reason*, trans. M. Eldred (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

10 Michel Foucault, *Le courage de la vérité: Le gouvernement de soi et des autres II: Cours au Collège de France, 1984*, ed. F. Gros. (Paris: Éditions de l'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales/Gallimard, 2009). Foucault's lectures were eventually published in English as *The Courage of Truth*, trans. Graham Burchell (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

11 Shea, *The Cynic Enlightenment*, 136.

4 R. Bracht Branham and Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé, eds., *The Cynics: The Cynic Movement in Antiquity and Its Legacy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996). Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* (1882), ed. B. Williams, trans. J. Nauckhoff (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), sect. 377: “We who are homeless—Among Europeans today there is no lack of those who have a right to call themselves homeless in a distinctive and honorable sense: it is to them in particular that I commend my secret wisdom and *gay scienza*.” Once, when Diogenes was reproached for having been exiled from his hometown, he responded: “But it's thanks to that, you fool, that I became a philosopher!” (6.49).

Looking back, I now realize that my colleagues and I—along with Foucault and Sloterdijk—were unknowingly collaborating in the most important revival of interest in Cynicism and its modern reception since the Enlightenment, one that continues to this day and has already given rise to a series of important books, particularly on the afterlife of Cynicism and the origins and nature of its modern *doppelgänger*, “cynicism.”<sup>12</sup>

But why the recent surge of interest? After all, following the flurry of activity associated with the Enlightenment—scholarly, literary, and philosophical, among the philosophes and their contemporaries in Germany<sup>13</sup>—in the course of the nineteenth century Diogenes’ role as guard dog of the School of Athens was somehow forgotten. Among philosophers there were important exceptions, most notably Nietzsche, whose interest in the dogs grew as his thought matured.<sup>14</sup> In his late biographical essay, *Ecce Homo: How to Become What You Are* (1888), he boasts ironically that his own books attain, here and there, “the highest that can be attained on earth—*Cynismus*.”<sup>15</sup>

But Hegel’s dismissive treatment of the Cynics, however superficial, in his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*,<sup>16</sup> set the tone for academic philosophy in the nineteenth century: “There is nothing particular to say of the Cynics, for

they possess but little Philosophy, and they did not bring what they had into a scientific system.”<sup>17</sup> Hegel was looking for a system and could not manage to find one latent in the seriocomic deeds and sayings of Diogenes and Crates, but Zeno of Citium and Chrysippus could and did. Of course they had the Cynic classics, and Zeno, according to Diogenes Laertius (7.2–4), was converted to philosophy by a chance encounter with Crates: Chrysippus and Zeno’s philosophical response to the exemplary lives and utterances of Diogenes of Sinope and Crates is now known as Stoicism. *Pace* Hegel, to sever Stoicism from its roots in Cynicism is to render it incomprehensible on its own terms,<sup>18</sup> although it is true that some of the essential ingredients of Cynicism, most notably its philosophical use of shameless satiric humor (as seen, for example, in Diogenes’ defense of masturbating in public: 6.46),<sup>19</sup> did not survive the translation into the more respectable philosophy of Zeno, Chrysippus, and Cleanthes.

It may be expected that the age of Victoria was not particularly receptive to the unruly hounds of Athens and their habit of frank truth-telling, but attempts to use the Oxford English Dictionary to pinpoint the moment at which Diogenes’ Cynicism is degraded into its specifically modern form can be tricky. One scholar<sup>20</sup> cites the following example as evidence of the newly emergent modern meaning: “(1814) I. D’Israeli *Quarrels Auth.* III. 16 Our cynical Hobbes had no respect for his species.” But this usage is perfectly traditional and true both of Hobbes and of Diogenes, who agreed on at least one thing: the animal nature of man.<sup>21</sup> In fact, the OED’s characterization of modern usage—“cynical, *adj.* Now *esp.* disposed to disbelieve in human sincerity or goodness; sneering”—isn’t actually borne out by the examples it cites. Only one fits this description: “(1875) F. W. Farrar *Silence & Voices* iii. 65 A cynical journalism which sneered at every belief.” What does happen over time is that the association of Cynic/Cynical with a school of Greek philosophy and its governing canine metaphor—emblematic of Cynic teachings on multiple levels—is slowly forgotten. The rich legacy of Cynic satire as the

17 *Ibid.*, 479.

18 See Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé, whose meticulous analysis makes this fact radiantly clear: *Les ‘Kynica’ du Stoïcisme* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2003). For a review, see R. Bracht Branham, “School for Scandal: The Cynic Origins of Stoicism,” *Ancient Philosophy* 26 (2004): 443–47.

19 For analysis, see R. Bracht Branham, “Defacing the Currency: Diogenes’ Rhetoric and the *Invention* of Cynicism,” in Branham and Goulet-Cazé, *The Cynics*, 81–104.

20 See Mazella, *The Making of Modern Cynicism*, 15–16.

21 This is not to deny the interest of Mazella’s discussion of D’Israeli’s attack on Hobbes (*ibid.*, 15–16 and 170–84), but to stress that the epithet “Cynic” was profoundly ambivalent from the very beginning—it could have been worn as a badge of honor by Diogenes, but in so doing he was reversing its conventional use as an expression of real contempt. (The Cynics’ adoption of the term exemplifies what linguists call a “reclaimed epithet.”) Niehues-Pröbsting (*Der Kynismus des Diogenes*, 195–213) argues that the modern idea of cynics as Machiavellian is anticipated by Lucian in his treatment of Peregrinus Proteus as a philosophical-religious entrepreneur in his satire *On the Death of Peregrinus*.

12 Timothy Bewes, *Cynicism and Postmodernity* (London: Verso, 1997); William Chaloupka, *Everybody Knows: Cynicism in America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999); Alan Keenan, *Democracy in Question* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003); David Mazella, *The Making of Modern Cynicism* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007); Benjamin Schreier, *The Power of Negative Thinking: Cynicism and the History of Modern American Literature* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009); Shea, *The Cynic Enlightenment*; Sharon A. Stanley, *The French Enlightenment and the Emergence of Modern Cynicism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

13 Activity that produced at least one undeniable Cynic masterpiece, Diderot’s seriocomic *spoudogeloios* (i.e., comic-philosophical) *Rameau’s Nephew*, which the author called a “satire” and Goethe, writing to Schiller (December 21, 1804), called “a bomb that exploded in the middle of French literature”; it is cited and discussed by Heinrich Niehues-Pröbsting, “Diogenes at the Enlightenment: The Modern Reception of Cynicism,” in Branham and Goulet-Cazé, *The Cynics*, 352. For analysis of the Cynic Enlightenment and the emergence of “cynicism” among the philosophes, see the excellent studies by Shea, *The Cynic Enlightenment*, and Stanley, *The French Enlightenment and the Emergence of Modern Cynicism*.

14 As Niehues-Pröbsting has shown (“Diogenes at the Enlightenment,” 329–65).

15 “That Nietzsche still used one word, *Cynismus*, and did not distinguish between *Kynismus* (i.e., ancient Cynicism) and *Zynismus* (i.e., modern cynicism) demonstrates the unity [of the history of Cynicism] until the end of the nineteenth century”: Niehues-Pröbsting, “Diogenes and the Enlightenment,” 354. To mistranslate *Cynismus* as lowercase “cynicism,” as the Cambridge edition of *Ecce Homo* does, is not to obscure Nietzsche’s point but to obliterate it. See also R. Bracht Branham, “Nietzsche’s Cynicism: Uppercase or Lowercase?” in *Nietzsche and Antiquity*, ed. Paul Bishop (Rochester, N.Y.: Camden House, 2004), 170–81.

16 As E. S. Haldane observes, Hegel delivered his lectures “first in Jena in 1805–1806, then in Heidelberg in 1816–1817 and 1817–1818, and the other six times in Berlin between the years 1819 and 1830. He had begun the tenth course on the subject in 1831 when death cut his labours short.” G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. E. S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson (London, 1892), v.

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primary means of deconstructing conventional morality—so successfully revived and reinvented by authors as various as Rabelais, Erasmus, Swift, and Diderot<sup>22</sup>—is reduced to a journalistic “sneer,” like the Cheshire Cat reduced to his grin.

Yet we know the distinctly modern meaning of lowercase cynicism when we hear it, as it is memorably and precisely expressed by Oscar Wilde when he has a character (Lord Darlington) in *Lady Windermere’s Fan* (1893) observe: “a cynic is someone who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing.”<sup>23</sup> This definition is an almost exact inversion of the way Diogenes is represented in the anecdotal tradition in Diogenes Laertius, namely, as acutely aware that price and value rarely cohere—at least, according to the Cynics’ criteria, as his repeated mockery of the logic of exchange-value demonstrates:<sup>24</sup> for Diogenes of Sinope, use-value always trumps exchange-value.

Of course, the philological approach to the emergence of new meanings—that is, ways of using a word—has its limits. It is clear from the examples of Nietzsche (1844–1900) and Bierce (1842–1914) that both the ancient and modern meanings were still alive in the late nineteenth century and could be played off against each other, as Bierce does in *The Devil’s Dictionary* (1911)<sup>25</sup> when he defines the Cynic as “a blackguard whose faulty vision sees things as they are, not as they ought to be.” The all-but-forgotten term of abuse “blackguard,” which can serve as a noun (“scoundrel”) or a verb (“to revile”), serves to acknowledge the nineteenth-century devaluation of the “Cynic,” whose moral clarity is then vindicated in a witty reversal of that reductive judgment.

The two most important contexts for understanding the devaluation of the “Cynic” by some nineteenth-century writers are: (1) the reaction against the French Revolution, in which the philosophes are caricatured as cynical, destructive thinkers by conservatives like Burke;<sup>26</sup> and (2) the modern discourse of money and commerce,

which begins in the Enlightenment but accelerates with the rise of the industrial economy of the nineteenth century.<sup>27</sup> In the latter context, Cynicism takes precisely the form in which Wilde’s aphorism casts it—a way of thinking that seems to reduce all questions of value to matters of price, which in turn is determined not by individuals or by reason, but by the impersonal forces of a modern market economy. Indeed, the brutal new realities of an industrialized society have proven a fertile breeding ground for modern “cynics” of every stripe from the robber barons to Bernie Madoff.

In order to survive in this environment, one must learn lowercase cynicism as a *modus vivendi*. These specifically early-nineteenth-century forms of reaction—the slandering of the Enlightenment’s representatives as cynics by the Counter-Enlightenment,<sup>28</sup> on the one hand, and the fear of the demoralizing effect of modern commerce, on the other—presuppose a larger cultural shift identified by David Mazella in his indispensable study of the modern meanings of Cynicism: “the single largest factor in the transformation of the Cynic between the early modern through the Enlightenment period was the collapse of rhetorical humanism’s stratified model of face-to-face interaction, and its replacement by the new, post-rhetorical configuration of power and publicity demanded by a vernacular print culture.”<sup>29</sup> What this means in practice is that the walking, talking philosopher of antiquity, so lovingly reimaged by Renaissance authors, is slowly disassembled only to reappear as a set of disparate texts and discourses available for appropriation, however tendentious or alien to the ancient figure of Diogenes. Only a few, rare philosophers who are also artists of contempt, like Nietzsche or Diderot, could still grasp the tradition as a living whole in all its motley contradictions and make it their own.

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But as important as the bifurcation of Cynicism into a modern, reactive disposition and an ancient philosophical position is to its post-Enlightenment trajectory, it is the splitting off of philosophy from the life of the philosopher and the relegation of the latter to a matter of merely “biographical” interest that explains the philosophical decline of the dogs in the wake of Hegel.<sup>30</sup> The contrast between this characteristically modern, more academic conception of philosophy with that of Diogenes Laertius, who delights in the ways philosophers’ lives (and deaths) can mock or vindicate their philosophizing, could not be clearer. And it is precisely this more practical, existential understanding of philosophy as a source of models for how to live—not simply how to think or argue—that explains the great appeal the Cynics had for Renaissance

27 See Stanley, *The French Enlightenment and the Emergence of Modern Cynicism*, ch. 4.

28 Niehues-Pröbsting, “Diogenes at the Enlightenment,” 347.

29 Mazella, *The Making of Modern Cynicism*, 21.

30 Niehues-Pröbsting, “Diogenes at the Enlightenment,” 329–31; Shea, *The Cynic Enlightenment*, 133.

22 R. Bracht Branham, “Satire,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophy and Literature*, ed. R. Eldridge (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 139–59.

23 See Mazella, *The Making of Modern Cynicism*, ch. 6, on Cynicism, Dandyism, and Wilde.

24 For example, DL 6.35: “valuable things were exchanged for what was worthless, and vice versa—for a statue was sold for three thousand drachmas, but a quart of barley flour for two coppers.”

25 Bierce’s “cynical lexicography” was part of his journalistic repertoire for decades and eventually appeared as a volume of his collected works, i.e., *The Devil’s Dictionary* (1911); earlier installments had been entitled *The Demon’s Dictionary*, *The Cynic’s Wordbook*, and *The Cynic’s Dictionary*. See *The Unabridged Devil’s Dictionary*, ed. D. E. Schultz and S. T. Joshi (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2000), xv. Bierce wanted to retain the word “Cynic” for the title of his collected lexicography, only to be informed that his idea had already been stolen—presumably by a cynic: “the stuff has been a rich mine for a plagiarist for a many a year” (*ibid.*, xxi). For Cynic theft (i.e., rejection of conventional property rights), see Branham, “Defacing the Currency,” 93–94.

26 See Mazella, *The Making of Modern Cynicism*, ch. 5.

humanists and Enlightenment philosophes, as well as for contemporaries like Foucault and Sloterdijk, impatient to free philosophy from the confines of academe. In their hands, Diogenes becomes a means of rediscovering what Foucault calls “the scandalous banality of philosophy” in our own time.<sup>31</sup>

It is true, however, that even in antiquity the Cynics’ standing as philosophers was contested from the very beginning: their explicit emphasis on praxis over abstract theory wittily conveyed (in Diogenes Laertius) by Diogenes of Sinope’s mockery of academic philosophizing in the style of Plato (e.g., the theory of forms: 6.53) or Aristotle (e.g., syllogistic reasoning: 6.37 and 68) invited counterattacks. Indeed, their adversaries charged that Cynicism was merely a way of life and denied their status as philosophers who formed a legitimate school (*hairesis*). Not only did Diogenes denounce such canonical disciplines as music, geometry, and astronomy—all of which were taken with the utmost seriousness by Plato and Aristotle—as “useless and unnecessary” (6.73), but—so argued the critics—the Cynics lacked a coherent set of beliefs or clear conception of their own *telos* (or philosophical goal).

But as Goulet-Cazé observes, not only do the Cynics consider themselves unequivocally to be philosophers, “they challenged all others to the title.”<sup>32</sup> And their conception of philosophy as an antipolitical activity is exemplified in Diogenes’ mission: “to deface the currency”<sup>33</sup>—which meant nothing less than living in contradiction to one’s time, making the Cynic philosopher into a walking, talking, philosophical provocation and moral exemplum at once. It was, in fact, Diogenes’ quixotic determination to make his life into a demonstration of his philosophy, living “according to nature” in full public view—eating, urinating, defecating, masturbating, sleeping, begging, and teaching on the streets of Athens and Corinth—that made him both an intellectual scandal and a touchstone of philosophic authenticity rivaled only by Socrates.

While Cynicism never was institutionalized as a school like the Stoa or the Academy, it was the closest the ancient world ever came to a popular philosophical movement open to all. The Cynics considered gender and class irrelevant to the practice of philosophy, and poverty as positively edifying;<sup>34</sup> similarly, the traditional Greek conception of human identity that entailed belonging to a *polis* (or “fatherland”) was rejected in favor

of “cosmopolitanism,”<sup>35</sup> of being a “citizen of the world,” perhaps Diogenes’ most far-reaching invention.

But what makes the idea that Cynicism was something less than a philosophy so risible in retrospect is the remarkable story of its reception: how many philosophers have coined as many philosophically productive concepts as Diogenes or provoked as many philosophers and satirists to reflection? I have already mentioned cosmopolitanism, which has become a veritable branch of study in its own right for philosophers, political theorists, and social scientists—and spawned a voluminous scholarly literature.<sup>36</sup>

In addition, I would single out three ideas as fundamental to the Cynics’ afterlife: first, the founding metaphysical claim that nature, not culture (i.e., the gods and laws of society), is the unique source of ethical value, the sole oracle on how to live. As adapted first by Stoics and later by Romantics like Rousseau and, in our own time, by ecologists, animal rights advocates, and other biophilicists, the significance of this idea in an age of mountaintop removal and global meltdown could hardly be exaggerated. Second, the practical, ethical corollary of this claim: a mental and physical regimen (*askesis*), designed to free the human animal from the misguided and superfluous demands of society by making him as adaptable and self-sufficient as his creaturely nature allows. This idea has appealed to ascetics and social rebels from ancient Christians to contemporary survivalists. The third idea is entailed by the first two: the need for active resistance to the “social control of cognition”<sup>37</sup> through defiant acts of *parrhesia* (i.e., truth-telling) to those in power (e.g., Alexander the Great) and the invention of a seriocomic literature designed to deface the idols of the tribe—myth, religion, law and custom, and, not least, philosophy as conventionally conceived. The sacred—society’s most successful means of masking and manipulating power—must be left no place to hide.<sup>38</sup> To this end, the Cynics made laughter and fearless speech the hallmark of the true philosopher.

It is important to remember that “ancient Cynicism” actually refers to a process of transmission and reception that begins (for us) with Greek authors in the Roman empire such as Plutarch (c. 50–120 AD), Dio Chrysostom (fl. mid-first century AD), Lucian (c. 120–180 AD) and, of course, Diogenes Laertius (fl. early third century AD). When we first meet the Cynic Diogenes in the pages of our primary extant source (Book 6 of Diogenes Laertius), his image and its mean-

31 Shea, *The Cynic Enlightenment*, 185–88. Shea’s work is unusual for the subtlety and thoroughness of its grasp of both the ancient and modern traditions of Cynicism, as seen, e.g., in her analyses of Diderot, Sloterdijk, and Foucault.

32 For detailed analysis of the ancient debate, see Goulet-Cazé, “Was Cynicism a Philosophy?” in Branham and Goulet-Cazé, *The Cynics*, 21–27.

33 For detailed analysis of what “defacing the currency” meant in practice, see Branham, “Defacing the Currency,” 81–104.

34 W. D. Desmond, *The Greek Praise of Poverty: The Origins of Ancient Cynicism* (South Bend, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006).

35 See John L. Moles, “Cynic Cosmopolitanism,” in Branham and Goulet-Cazé, *The Cynics*, 105–20.

36 E.g., Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (New York: Norton, 2007).

37 See Branham on Mary Douglas (1968) in “Defacing the Currency,” 94–95.

38 Cf. Lucian’s Cynical praise of the old comic poets for “mocking all that’s holy”: Branham, *Unruly Eloquence*, 36. The Cynic principle of using any place for any purpose is an explicit denial of sacred space: the implication is that space is ethically neutral in all directions.

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ing have been shaped by oral and written traditions for more than five hundred years: Diogenes is always already a product of reception. Thus, unlike Plato and Platonism, there is no Cynicism apart from the history of its reception.

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From the beginning, that reception was markedly ambivalent: Lucian, for example, the great Greek satirist, took a scathing, even “cynical,” view of the practicing Cynics of his own day (in, for example, *On the Death of Peregrinus* and *The Runaways*), even while reviving and ventriloquizing the legendary Cynics of old in his Menippean works—such as *Menippus*, *Icaromenippus*, *Dialogues of the Dead*, and *Philosophers for Sale!* Some associations of the modern concept “cynicism” (which does, in fact, derive from ancient Cynicism)—irreverence, superiority, shamelessness—were always there and critics were happy to pounce on them. Beginning at least with Augustine (*City of God* 14.20.23), there was among Christians a deep suspicion of Cynic shamelessness, which may be an indisputable canine virtue but is an affront to the doctrine of original sin. That did not stop Dante from placing Diogenes among the greatest philosophers in the first circle of the Inferno, the limbo reserved for virtuous pagans; or Boccaccio in his *On the Fall of Great Men (De casibus virorum illustrium: 1355–1360)* from citing Diogenes cheek-by-jowl with John the Baptist!

Although the Cynic philosopher was evidently a figure known in the Middle Ages<sup>39</sup> from a variety of Arabic and Latin sources (e.g., Cicero, Valerius Maximus, Seneca, Macrobius), it is important to note that the modern history of his reception begins with the recovery of Book 6 of Diogenes Laertius—hitherto unavailable in Western Europe—in Ambrogio Traversari’s Latin translation (1433) and the first printing of the Greek text (Basel, 1533). In the early sixteenth century, the publication of Cynic-inspired literary texts such as the Latin translations of Lucian by Erasmus and Thomas More and Rabelais’s *Histories of Gargantua and Pantagruel* (1530s) ignited an unprecedented vogue for Menippean satire throughout Renaissance Europe. Ironically, the enormous popularity of Lucian’s Menippean works, which inspired original satires as well as imitations and translations in the vernacular languages, would make his reception the primary literary mode for the survival of Cynicism in Europe. Also important were anthologies of apothegms, a popular Renaissance genre (an influential example is Erasmus’ *Adages*); these routinely gave more entries to Diogenes of Sinope than to any other philosopher. Antisthenes, Crates, and even Demonax were also well represented.

39 See Sylvain Matton, “Cynicism and Christianity from the Middle Ages to the Renaissance,” in Branham and Goulet-Cazé, *The Cynics*, 240–64.

It was in this cultural context that Velázquez chose to paint a full-length portrait of Menippus (now in the Prado, Madrid).

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What is the moral of our story for someone about to read Book 6 of Diogenes Laertius, perhaps for the first time? I won’t gainsay its repetition, disorder, and sometimes contradictory character: it often seems unfinished or in need of an editor. It is worth noting, however, that this work-in-progress quality is not inappropriate to the subject matter of Book 6, since Cynicism has always been a philosophy-in-the-making, not a finished, unified theoretical system.

Diogenes is, as we would expect, up front about this: to someone who reproached him, saying “Though you know nothing, you philosophize” he responded with disarming honesty: “Even if I do pretend to wisdom (*sophia*), that in itself is philosophy” (6.64).

The fascination exerted by the iconic figure of Diogenes freely dispensing his topsy-turvy, carnivalesque wisdom while living in his doghouse—more accurately, a *pitthos*, a large, abandoned wine cask—is the most obvious reason for the longevity of Cynicism as a cultural phenomenon. And the key to this figure’s staying power is his philosophical use of humor. The biggest mistake a reader of Book 6 could make would be to ignore that humor or to treat it as merely incidental to the philosophy. The whole idea of the *spoudogeloios*<sup>40</sup> (i.e., seriocomic) figure or voice—probably the Cynics’ single most influential literary innovation—is to call into question what we take seriously and why by using humor as a means of perception and of altering perceptions. As Wittgenstein famously observed, “*Humor ist keine Stimmung, sondern eine Weltanschauung*”;<sup>41</sup> “Humor is not a feeling, but a way of viewing the world.”

This can make Diogenes’ humor seem surprisingly modern. To give only one example: when Diogenes was asked why he was begging alms of a statue, he replied, “To get practice in being turned down” (6.49). Now, this is still funny more than two millennia later, but there is also a lot of philosophy in it—as befits Diogenes’ seriocomic stance toward the world and his audience—since doing without (or getting turned down) and *not caring* exemplifies practical Cynicism: philosophy as a survival strategy. It recalls what Crates says he gained from philosophy: “a quart of lupines and to care for nothing” (6.86). Crates’ line, in turn, coheres with Diogenes’ response when asked what he had gotten out of philosophy—never an easy question for a philosopher: “If nothing else, I’m prepared for whatever happens” (*tukhe*: 6.63).<sup>42</sup>

40 For the concept, see Branham, *Unruly Eloquence*, ch. 1, “The Rhetoric of Laughter”; for the word *spoudogeloios*, see *ibid.*, 227n31.

41 Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Vermischte Bemerkungen* (1948), ed. G. H. von Wright and H. Nyman (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1977).

42 Branham, “Defacing the Currency,” 91.

All these responses could be taken to presuppose a story told about Antisthenes by Diogenes Laertius: once, when he was ill and in great pain, he called out, “Who would free me from my pains?” When Diogenes shows him a dagger, Antisthenes sees that the pupil requires instruction: “I said from my pains, not from my life!” (6.18–19). Nietzsche observes of this anecdote: “A very profound statement: one cannot get the better of the love of life by means of a dagger. Yet that is the real suffering. It is obvious that the Cynic clings to life more than the other philosophers: ‘the shortest way to happiness’<sup>43</sup> is nothing but the love of life in itself and complete needlessness with reference to all other goods.”<sup>44</sup>

43 The conception of Cynicism as a shortcut to happiness was part of its self-description in antiquity—and an implicit criticism of other schools. Cf. Heinrich Niehues-Pröbsting, “Der ‘Kurze Weg’: Nietzsche’s ‘Cynismus,’” *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* 24, no. 1 (1980): 103–22.

44 Niehues-Pröbsting, “Diogenes at the Enlightenment,” 356–57.

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If Diogenes Laertius is our most important source by far, it is because in transmitting the largest chunk we have of the anecdotal tradition in all its messy, canine profusion, he succeeds—perhaps by chance more than design<sup>45</sup>—in catching the Janus-faced philosopher in the act of pretending to wisdom (i.e., philosophizing) more often than any other source; and in so doing, he shows us what Lucian must have meant when he said of Menippus, the only author expressly called *spoudogeloios* in antiquity: “he bites even when he wags his tail.”<sup>46</sup>

45 To our horror, Diogenes Laertius confesses at one point that “many other sayings are attributed to him, which it would take long to recount” (6.69)—we would love to know what those were.

46 Lucian, *Menippus* (33), quoted in Branham, *Unruly Eloquence*, 36.

## ZENO OF CITIUM: CYNIC FOUNDER OF THE STOIC TRADITION

A. A. Long

There are two philosophers named Zeno in Diogenes’ collection of lives. The older one, famous for his paradoxes, was a citizen of Elea in southern Italy and lived during the fifth century BC. The younger Zeno, who is the subject of this chapter, hailed from the Cypriot city of Citium (modern Larnaka), immigrated to Athens as a young man, and founded the Stoic school of philosophy there at the end of the fourth century. This Zeno’s adherents were originally called Zenonians, following the common practice of naming a school after its founder, but the name did not stick. The younger Zeno, in the words of Diogenes:

used to give his lectures while walking up and down in the Painted Stoa . . . hoping to keep the place clear of crowds. . . . It was there that under the Thirty [Tyrants], fourteen hundred citizens had been put to death. People now went there to hear Zeno, and this is why they were called Stoics. The same name was given to his followers, who had originally been called Zenonians, as Epicurus says in his letters (7.5).

Since Epicurus was a few years older than Zeno, who outlived him, we can probably infer that Zeno’s students were already being called Stoics during the latter’s lifetime. As presented by Diogenes, Zeno is an intriguingly

ambiguous figure. We see it immediately in the story about his collecting followers while simultaneously discouraging bystanders. Diogenes does not tell us what Zeno lectured on, but the subject matter must have been lively enough to attract a crowd of curious listeners. We can plausibly identify the gist of it from Zeno’s first and most famous—or rather infamous—publication, entitled *Republic*. In this work of utopian political theory, Zeno presented proposals that would, if implemented, completely undermine the foundations of a traditional Greek polis and its cultural norms. Currency, courts of law, temples, gymnasia, and traditional education would be abolished. The nuclear family would be prohibited. Sexual relations would be based simply on mutual consent. Unisex clothing and partial nudity would be required of everyone. Ethical goodness would be the only criterion for citizenship, freedom, and friendship. From elsewhere we know that Zeno also challenged sexual taboos by permitting incest, recommending virtuous teachers to practice bisexual pedophilia, and elevating Eros to the role of the community’s tutelary divinity.<sup>1</sup>

1 For details see Malcolm Schofield, *The Stoic Idea of the City* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991); and Kathy L. Gaca, *The Making of Fornication: Eros, Ethics, and Political Reform in Greek Philosophy and Early Christianity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003). Diogenes’ outline (7.33–34) of the contents of Zeno’s *Republic* is mild meat compared with sexual details recorded elsewhere (see Sextus Empiricus, *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* 3.245–46 and

Diogenes reports that Zeno wrote the *Republic* under the influence of his first teacher, the Cynic Crates (7.4). This rings true, for many of Zeno's proposals recall Cynic contempt for conventional values and advocacy of "nature" as the appropriate standard. If Zeno lectured on these themes, we can understand people's eagerness to hear him. Yet Diogenes tucks his account of Zeno's shocking *Republic* into an appendix after ending the life proper with a typically elaborate account of Zeno's death. In the intervening episodes of the ensuing biography there is no trace of the social and sexual iconoclasm of the *Republic*. Zeno comes across as surly, prudish, and caustic, but no radical or intriguing cultural commentator.

Notwithstanding this scarcely engaging personality, Diogenes reports at some length on the way Zeno was courted by kings and awarded great honors at Athens in recognition of his sterling character, even though he was an immigrant. What did Zeno actually do to earn such accolades that included celebration in eulogistic verses by famous poets? Are these honors compatible with the subversive author of the *Republic*? Diogenes tells us nothing of any special acts of courage or kindness or civic benefaction. The most striking features of Zeno's character, as it emerges from these pages, are frugality, contempt for money or fame, a sharp tongue, and physical and mental toughness. All Diogenes' leading figures in the *Lives* are endowed with characters that fit appropriate generic aspects of their philosophies, making them stoical or skeptical in the modern sense of these epithets, as the case may be. But doubts remain about whether Diogenes' portrayal of Zeno's life is fully coherent, and if not, why it is not.<sup>2</sup>

That issue will occupy us in due course, but to begin, a prior question needs to be asked. Why did Diogenes devote more space to the biography and doctrines of the Stoic Zeno than to any other figure in his vast collection of philosophical luminaries? The earlier Zeno of the paradoxes is probably more familiar as a name to the modern public. That familiarity, however, is an accident of history. Given the prominence of Stoicism in both ancient and early modern philosophy, Zeno of Citium should be as famous a name as Epicurus. Diogenes, writing some five hundred years after the origins of Stoicism, registers Zeno's significance by making this life the longest of the collection. Much of it, conforming to Diogenes' practice in dealing with the leading Greek philosophers, covers the doctrines of the founder's movement rather than his actual vita. But we are still left with the fact that the pages under Zeno's name occupy 160 "chapters" (the numbered

subdivisions in this edition) of Diogenes' complete work. Next in descending order of magnitude come the lives of Epicurus at 154 chapters, Plato at 109, Diogenes of Sinope (the Cynic) at 62, Pythagoras at 50, Pyrrho at 48, Aristotle at 35, and Socrates at 30. These lives are the longest in Diogenes Laertius' entire collection, which comprises eighty-two individuals in all. Zeno of Citium tops the list in sheer volume of space.

Statistics of relative length apart, these eight lives, from Diogenes' historical perspective, completely match the significance and influence of the schools or movements associated with the names. Thus, taking them now in their chronological order, we have Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato (founder of the Academy), Diogenes (reputed founder of Cynicism), Aristotle (founder of the Peripatos), Pyrrho (reputed founder of Skepticism), Epicurus (founder of the Garden), and Zeno (founder of Stoicism). Even from a modern perspective one would be hard put to discard any member of this octet in favor of substituting some other name. All eight figures except Socrates were founding fathers of distinct philosophies or schools, and Diogenes Laertius, in line with the doxographical tradition that he follows, views Socrates as a *de facto* founder. He makes Socrates the originator of philosophical ethics (1.14), with a succession of "Socratics" that includes Plato and subsequent Academics, and a further line of succession through the Cynics right down to the Stoic Chrysippus over a time span of two and a half centuries (1.15).

After factoring in the relative lengths of these lives, we may still be surprised by the coverage devoted to the Cynic Diogenes and to post-Aristotelian philosophers, and even more surprised by the brevity accorded to Aristotle himself. Diogenes Laertius' allocations of space to these figures, however, or rather the allocations he found in his sources, reflect philosophical and historical judgments that were being made in the late Hellenistic and early Roman imperial epochs. Epicurus (the only philosopher besides Plato to whom Diogenes assigns an entire book) and Zeno were the founders of this period's most popular and culturally diffused philosophies. Aristotle would have to wait another century for his philosophical greatness to be fully acknowledged. Diogenes' seventh book continues after Zeno with the lives and doctrines of six later Stoics, making it the longest book of all and about one quarter of the whole oeuvre in extent.

In this historical context, then, the amplitude of Diogenes' life of Zeno, with its lengthy survey of all three parts of Stoic philosophy (logic, physics, and ethics), is quite appropriate. What Diogenes could not have foreseen is the exceptional value the life's doctrinal material would acquire for modern historians of philosophy. That is because the works of the numerous Stoic philosophers he mentions have survived, if at all, only in fragmentary and summary form. Diogenes' life of Zeno is a uniquely important source of information about Stoic philosophy in its formative Hellenistic period. The doctrinal sections

*Against the Mathematicians* 11.190–91. Diogenes' qualms in writing about sex are on view when he alludes to the similar theories of Chrysippus (7.187–88).

2 David Hahn finds in Zeno's supposed letter to King Antigonus (7.8–9) "a thinly disguised outline of the Stoic theory of education and moral development." This text, however, is probably a first-century BC fabrication. David E. Hahn, "Zeno Before and After Stoicism," in *The Philosophy of Zeno*, ed. T. Scaltsas and A. S. Mason (Larnaka, Cyprus: Municipality of Larnaka/Pierides Foundation, 2002), 29–56.

are also distinctive in the sheer number of their references to what Zeno or Chrysippus or some other Stoic actually “said,” often with explicit reference to their specific works. Our other encyclopedic sources for Stoic doctrines generally present the material in the form “as the Stoics say” rather than “as Antipater says in the seventh book of his work *On the Cosmos*” (7.148). While Diogenes purports to be giving a general account of Stoicism from the time of Zeno onward, he also cites individual Stoic philosophers and their works with unusual frequency, making his work in this regard exceptionally valuable.<sup>3</sup>

We can be sure that Diogenes’ authorial contribution to the doctrinal material he records was editorial and bibliographical rather than creative in any interesting philosophical way. What is largely beyond recovery, however, is the methodology he employed in excerpting from his sources. When he reports Posidonius’ theories about the sun’s composition and size, he refers to two of that prolific Stoic philosopher’s books (7.144). He references his statement about the same figure’s opinions on the composition of snow by mentioning the eighth book of Posidonius’ *Discourse on Nature* (7.153). Should we suppose that Diogenes had these and other such works on his desk? That is unlikely. Most probably he found the bibliographical information in the sources he drew upon, but we can still ask why he took the trouble to report it so precisely. I raise this question because Diogenes’ life of Zeno is a complex composition, not only in the sense that it is a patchwork, but also because it invites many questions about what it seeks to tell us both about Zeno’s biography and about the account of Stoic doctrines as such.

Of all the ancient philosophical schools, the Stoa in the Hellenistic era was the largest in the sheer number of attested figures who have left a mark on the historical record by their output of books. It was also one of the most diverse schools in the detailed positions adopted by its leading thinkers, especially during its formative years. As in the schools of Plato, Aristotle, and Epicurus, Zeno was followed by an official line of successive heads. Book 7 of Diogenes includes the lives of the first two of these figures in the persons of Cleanthes, who was a student of Zeno’s, and Chrysippus, who was probably too young to have actually been taught by the founder. The life of Chrysippus breaks off at the point where Diogenes is in process of recording that philosopher’s enormous bibliography (7.202).

Between Cleanthes and Chrysippus, Diogenes (7.177) presents the life of Sphaerus. This Stoic, another student of Zeno, became the court philosopher at Alexandria to one of the Ptolemaic kings. Immediately after Diogenes concludes his generic account of Stoic physics but before commencing the life of Cleanthes, he appends brief lives of three dissident Stoics (7.160)—Ariston, Herillus, and Dionysius.

These three philosophers had all associated with Zeno, but they came to differ from him sufficiently to be ousted from the orthodox Stoic entourage at Athens, at least from the vantage point of the school as it developed after Zeno’s death. Zeno had a further student, Persaeus, whom we can gauge to have been more compliant; for Zeno sent Persaeus, who had lived with him in Athens and whose father came from Citium, to King Antigonus of Macedonia as a proxy for himself (7.36).

Both parts of Diogenes’ life of Zeno, the biography section and the much longer doxography, draw on authors who range in date from Zeno’s own lifetime down to the middle years of the first century BC. Following Chrysippus the most noteworthy Stoic philosophers, as we know from elsewhere, were another Diogenes (of Babylon), Antipater (of Tarsus), Panaetius (of Rhodes), and Posidonius (of Apamea, Syria). These and several others are frequently cited in Diogenes Laertius’ doctrinal sections, especially Posidonius for his views on physics. Some scholars think Diogenes originally ended his book on the Stoics with the lives of these and other later Stoics, but had he done so, that work would have become unwieldy.<sup>4</sup> We should assume rather that these later Stoics are represented in the doxography because Diogenes’ sources or some sources of his sources made prominent mention of them.

Stoic philosophers presented a united front on such basic doctrines as the world’s providential governance and the necessity and sufficiency of virtue for happiness. On much else, including the scope of the school’s curriculum, there was not only disagreement between individual thinkers but also considerable development through time. Whereas Epicureans revered their founder’s words and regularly celebrated his birthday, Stoic philosophers were charged by a Platonizing critic with constant quarreling among one another for the more than four centuries up to his own time.<sup>5</sup> Diogenes Laertius, as we have seen, indicates schisms among the first generation of Zeno’s students, but disagreements did not stop there. Chrysippus was challenged on points of moral psychology by Posidonius, and Panaetius questioned the doctrine of the world’s everlasting recurrence. Zeno seemingly laid down a broad agenda for his followers, especially in the doctrine of the world’s providential governance and the ethical need to extirpate irrational emotions, but it was Chrysippus who established the school’s intense focus on logic, for which it was famed and also criticized in Roman times.

Signs of disagreement and difference of emphasis between individual Stoics are explicit in Diogenes’ outline of Stoic doctrines, especially in its introductory pages (7.39–42), and they continue to be evident later if we read between the lines. Equally noteworthy, on the other

3 I. G. Kidd tabulates the occurrences of Stoic philosophers and their books in the doxographical section of the life. I. G. Kidd, “Zeno’s Oral Teaching and the Stimulating Uncertainty of His Doctrines,” in Scaltsas and Mason, *The Philosopher of Zeno*, 351–64.

4 One of our manuscripts lists the names of twenty Stoics subsequent to Chrysippus, but that is not sufficient reason for thinking that Diogenes composed their lives.

5 Numenius, cited by Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica* 14.728a.

hand, is how often Chrysippus' name and works are cited alongside those of Zeno, indicating their community of viewpoint (7.134, 136, 142–43, 148, and 150). I take this solidarity as an indication that Diogenes was working from sources that wanted to emphasize continuity between the founder of the school and Zeno's second and greatest successor. Unlike Epicurus, who was notorious for his large output of books, Zeno was not a voluminous author. Just as we have wondered about what exactly Zeno did to impress the Athenians so strongly during his residence in their city, we may also ask whether Stoicism would have become one of Greece's greatest philosophical schools without the strong input of Chrysippus. To sharpen the relevance of this question, I turn now to take a closer look at the biographical sections of Diogenes' life of Zeno.

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We may begin with an analytical summary of the contents, to which I attach the paragraph numbers in parentheses. I also note the names of the main sources cited or probably used for these paragraphs by Diogenes or by Diogenes' sources, together with the approximate dates of their flourishing. The names of Stoic philosophers are printed in bold.

- A. Nationality and physique (7.1): Timotheus (c. 250 BC), Apollonius (50 BC), **Persaeus** (280 BC), and **Chrysippus** (240 BC).
- B. Philosophical teachers (7.2): **Hecaton** (80 BC) and Apollonius.
- C. Conversion to philosophy (7.3–5).
- D. List of Zeno's writings (7.4).
- E. Zeno's lectures in the Athenian Stoa (7.5).
- F. Zeno's honors and decrees at Athens (7.6–12): Apollonius.
- G. Biographical chitchat (7.12–16): Antigonus of Carystus (240 BC).
- H. Anecdotes and sayings (7.16–24): Apollonius.
- I. Other philosophical teachers, philosophical claims (7.25–26): Hippobotus (200 BC) and **Hecaton**.
- J. Poets' verses on Zeno (7.27).
- K. Zeno's death (7.28): **Persaeus** and Apollonius.
- L. Epigrams by various poets (7.29–30).
- M. Epigram by Diogenes (7.31).
- N. Conversion to philosophy again (7.31–32): Demetrius of Magnesia (50 BC).
- O. Summary, criticism, and expurgation of Zeno's *Republic* (7.32–34).

What are we to make of this biography?<sup>6</sup> The points

6 David Hahn dissects the episodes and sources with far greater detail and precision than I can offer here. I chiefly differ from him in finding Diogenes' Zeno more strongly marked overall by Cynic traits in spite of the efforts of his later Stoic sources to pin that aspersion primarily on Ariston. David E. Hahn, "Diogenes Laertius VII: On the Stoics," in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt*, II.36.6, ed. Wolfgang Haase and Hildegard Temporini (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1992), 4076–182.

of greatest interest and puzzlement are sections B and I on Zeno's philosophical teachers, and sections C and N on Zeno's conversion to philosophy. Why did Diogenes present this material twice, and why did he intersperse these sections with different subject matter? Rather than account for these issues as due simply to Diogenes' random or thoughtless methods of composition, we should take them as evidence, drawn from his various sources, of disagreements and uncertainties concerning the appropriate way to present the life of the Stoic founder some two hundred years after Zeno's death, at a time when Stoicism, especially at Rome, had become the most illustrious and influential school of philosophy.

In approaching the accounts of Zeno's teachers and conversion, we know that an important source of some of his material and its organization was Apollonius of Tyre, who wrote a work in more than one book on Zeno's life during the first century BC.<sup>7</sup> Apollonius is named five times in Diogenes' life of Zeno, more often than any other authority. What chiefly indicates Apollonius' significance, however, is not statistical but the strong probability that his *Life of Zeno*, just like the sources of Philodemus' contemporaneous *History of Stoics*, sought to minimize the influence of Cynicism on Zeno's philosophical formation and lifestyle.<sup>8</sup> Evidence for this claim is indirect but more than mere conjecture. Before turning to it, we need first to see that a minimally Cynic Zeno is in stark tension to the general structure of Diogenes' composition.

The main determining principle of Diogenes' *Lives* is "succession," meaning a line of development that supposedly runs from the founder of a school onward (1.14–16).<sup>9</sup> This hoary compositional device could be authentic, in the sense that the line from Plato to Clitomachus (Diogenes, Books 3 and 4) genuinely represents successive heads of the Academy. But the successions could also be quite artificial, as they are in the case of Diogenes' first book, which runs from Thales to Pherecydes, in a line of figures who long preceded the origin of philosophical schools either in the institutional sense or in a looser sense of master and pupil. According to Diogenes' introduction of the succession scheme, as we have seen, there was a line from Socrates via Cynics down to the Stoic Chrysippus. In full, this line went from Socrates to Antisthenes to Diogenes of Sinope to Crates to Zeno to Cleanthes to Chrysippus. The second half of the line is a genuine succession, but not the first half. Antisthenes was a leading associate of Socrates, but he did not found a Cynic school in the sense of a formal institu-

7 Apart from Diogenes' citations here, Apollonius is known only from mention of him by the geographer Strabo (16.2.4) as writing an account of Zeno and the philosophers of his school "somewhat before my time." This gives Apollonius an approximate floruit of 50 BC. Apollonius himself was clearly a strong Stoic sympathizer but probably not an actual teacher of Stoicism.

8 On Philodemus' work and the prudish worries that it registers about Zeno's *Republic*, see Schofield, *The Stoic Idea of the City*, 9–10.

9 Full discussion in Jaap Mansfeld, "Diogenes Laertius on Stoic Philosophy," *Elenchos* 7 (1986): 295–382.

tion. It is uncertain whether Diogenes studied under him or even met him. Crates did associate with Diogenes, but their association too was informal rather than institutional.

That brings us to Crates and Zeno. Diogenes Laertius devotes Book 6 of his *Lives* to a succession of Cynics, starting with Antisthenes and concluding with Menedemus. He ends this life by giving a summary of “the doctrines they [Cynics] held in common” (6.103–5). By way of preface to this account, he alludes to Ariston, Zeno’s dissident pupil, who, he says, agreed with the Cynics in restricting philosophy to ethics. Diogenes’ summary of generic Cynic doctrine includes the following passage, which I quote in full:

They also hold that the goal is to live in accordance with virtue, as Antisthenes says in his *Heracles*—exactly like the Stoics. For these two schools have much in common. Hence it has been said that Cynicism is a shortcut to virtue. And it was in the manner of the Cynics that Zeno of Citium lived his life.

[105] They also think that one should live frugally, eating only for nourishment and wearing only the cloak; and they despise wealth, fame, and noble birth. Some, at any rate, eat nothing but vegetables, drink nothing but cold water, and use whatever shelters or tubs they find, like Diogenes, who used to say that it was characteristic of the gods to need nothing, and of godlike men to need very little.

They hold that virtue can be taught, as Antisthenes says in his *Heracles*, and once acquired cannot be lost; that the wise man is worthy of love, has no flaw, and is a friend to his like, and that nothing should be entrusted to fortune. They maintain, like Ariston of Chios, that what is intermediate between virtue and evil is indifferent.

These, then, are the Cynics. We must turn to the Stoics, whose founder was Zeno, a student of Crates.

What immediately follows this passage is the first line of Diogenes Laertius’ life of Zeno.

Diogenes’ readers, then, if they read his work in its book sequence, will not only come to Zeno with the information that he was a student of Crates. They will have also learned that Zeno actually lived the Cynic way of life, consisting of frugality and contempt for wealth, fame, and noble birth. Diogenes’ anecdotal material concerning Zeno illustrates his adoption of these principles (see, for instance, 7.16 and 26).<sup>10</sup> The doctrine that virtue is the

goal of life also comes up repeatedly (7.7, 8, 10, and 30). Diogenes leaves no doubt, therefore, that Zeno was strongly influenced by Cynicism, and Cynicism as taught by Crates. Yet he doesn’t quite say that Zeno exemplified every Cynic trait mentioned here. Only “some” Cynics are vegetarian abstainers from wine and willing to live in tubs rather than houses. And it is Ariston, Zeno’s dissident pupil, to whom the “indifference” doctrine is attributed. As we are told in Diogenes’ life of Ariston (7.160), he, rather than Zeno, went the whole way with the Cynics.

That difference, however, as one starts to read the life of Zeno in its Cynic context, is not a matter of any great emphasis. We can expect to hear about Zeno’s tutelage under Crates, as indeed we will hear of it, in some detail. Let us now ask how, if we were conservative Romans of elite status like Cicero, we would respond to a Stoic philosophy that not only advocated contempt for wealth, fame, and noble birth, but also espoused the scandalous doctrines that Zeno had put forth in his *Republic*, the impetus to which had reached him from Crates and more remotely from the Cynic Diogenes. Cicero dismisses the Cynics or “some Stoics who are virtually Cynics” with scorn and unmistakable disgust (*De officiis* 1.128). He was not alone in his patrician responses. Some Stoics had already become so embarrassed by Zeno’s *Republic* that one of them, as Diogenes Laertius tells us in his appendix (7.34), a librarian at Pergamon, actually deleted the offending passages from Zeno’s works.<sup>11</sup>

We are now in a position to return to Apollonius’ *Life of Zeno*. Diogenes, on the authority of Apollonius, records an exchange of letters between Zeno and King Antigonus of Macedonia (7.7–9). There is no good reason to reject out of hand the king’s interest in Zeno, though it does recall a bit too neatly Alexander the Great’s interest in the Cynic Diogenes. What provokes more suspicion is the unctuous tone of the king’s letter, inviting Zeno to visit him, and the bland and condescending tone of Zeno’s response, wherein he declines the invitation on grounds of age. Nothing could be further from Cynic asperity and frankness. We can be virtually certain that the correspondence is a fabricated and rather unconvincing attempt to give Zeno a polish and social standing that were quite at odds with a Cynic demeanor.<sup>12</sup> As to Zeno’s Athenian honors, while they were presumably genuine, the eulogistic decree proposing them was not prompted by an outpouring of democratic love of Zeno; it was moved by the Macedonian king’s agent at Athens (7.12 and 15). It would be naïve to think that philosophy at Athens was immune to influence from political power brokers.

Evidence both to acknowledge and to play down the

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*Hellenistic World*, ed. A. W. Bulloch et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 303–29.

<sup>11</sup> See Schofield, *The Stoic Idea of the City*, for details.

<sup>12</sup> In his letter to King Antigonus, Zeno describes himself as eighty years old. To give a semblance of authenticity to the letter, Apollonius greatly exaggerated Zeno’s age at death (DL 7.28).

<sup>10</sup> Caizzi makes a convincing case for the view that Cynicism was a major part of the image that Zeno sought to convey. F. Declava Caizzi, “The Porch and the Garden: Early Hellenistic Images of the Philosophical Life,” in *Images and Ideologies: Self-Definition in the*

influence of Crates comes from the sections I have marked B and I and C and L in my analytical summary. This material, as I mentioned, raises two large and overlapping questions: Who were Zeno's philosophical teachers and how did Zeno come to be interested in philosophy?

Diogenes starts the life (7.2) by reminding his readers that he has already told them Zeno was a student of Crates. He continues, with an evasive "they say," to report that Zeno "attended the lectures of Stilpo and Xenocrates for ten years, according to Timotheus in his *Dion*; and those of Polemon as well."<sup>13</sup> After describing how Zeno first encountered Crates, composed his *Republic* under Crates' influence, and experienced other teachers, Diogenes writes: "He finally left Crates and studied with the above-mentioned men for twenty years" (7.5). The ten-year/twenty-year inconsistency does not inspire confidence in Diogenes' authorial control. Moreover, chronology excludes the possibility that Zeno had actual contact with the Platonist Xenocrates as well as his successor Polemon.

Crates, Stilpo, and Polemon might seem a sufficient-ly varied bunch to give Zeno as broad an education as any budding ancient philosopher could want. But near the end of the life Diogenes reports, on the authority of Hippobotus (one of the earliest sources), that Zeno studied dialectic with Diodorus Cronus (7.25), and only after that training, as if it were a necessary qualification, proceeded to Polemon. All of this, apart from the misinformation about Xenocrates, could be true. What we know, or think we know, of Zeno's philosophy from elsewhere could seem to authenticate it. Unfortunately Diogenes himself says little to corroborate the details beyond the close and initial association with Crates, supplemented by Zeno's interest in dialectical disputes and sophisms (7.16 and 25). Apart from his detailed excursus on Zeno's *Republic*, which confirms the Cynic connection so pointedly, Diogenes is largely reticent in the biographical part of the life about Zeno's specific contributions to Stoic doctrine.

How did Zeno come to be interested in philosophy in the first place? On this theme the life is even more uncertain. Sections B, C, and N yield three accounts.

The first account is this: on the authority of the coeval Hecaton and Apollonius, roughly of Cicero's age, we are told (7.2):

when he [Zeno] consulted an oracle about what he should do to live the best life, the god replied that he should have intercourse with the dead. Grasping the oracle's meaning, he read the works of the ancients.

<sup>13</sup> Timotheus was an Athenian author; Diogenes cites his *On Lives* at 7.1. Stilpo (DL 2.113–20), a Megarian philosopher, is represented by Diogenes as very close to Crates, while Polemon (DL 4.16–20) headed the Platonic Academy for many years. Diogenes does not mention Zeno in his life of Polemon, but he attests to Zeno's close associations with Megarian philosophers, including not only Stilpo and Diodorus, mentioned in this life, but also Alexinus, in his life of the Megarian Euclides (2.109–10).

Diogenes tells nothing about the chronology and location of Zeno's oracular consultation. We are left to guess whether it occurred when Zeno was a youth in Cyprus or after he reached mainland Greece. Mysterious though the passage is, there can be little doubt about its implicit meaning: Zeno is represented, just like Socrates in Plato's *Apology*, as someone whose life-changing moment was an oracular response. In addition, Zeno interpreted the oracle, we are to understand, as an injunction to study works that could tell him about Socrates.

The Socratic connection, though only implicit in this first account, is made definite in Diogenes' next paragraph. There, however, instead of giving an elucidation of the oracle, Diogenes writes:

He [Zeno] became a student of Crates under the following circumstances. Transporting a cargo of purple dye from Phoenicia to the Piraeus, he was shipwrecked. On reaching Athens (he was then a man of thirty), he sat down in a bookseller's shop. [3] The bookseller was reading aloud the second book of Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, and Zeno was so pleased that he asked where such men could be found. At that very moment, fortunately, Crates happened to be walking past. Pointing him out, the bookseller said, "Follow *him*." From then on he studied with Crates, proving in other respects well suited for philosophy, though he was bashful about adopting Cynic shamelessness. Hence Crates, who wanted to cure him of this, gave him a pot of lentil soup to carry through the Cerameicus. And when he saw that Zeno was ashamed and tried to keep it hidden, he struck the pot with his cane and broke it. As Zeno was running away, the soup streaming down his legs, Crates said, "Why run away, my little Phoenician? Nothing terrible has happened to you."

Xenophon's *Memorabilia*, on this second account, gave Zeno a fortuitous literary introduction to Socrates at a time when he was already a traveling salesman. The main point of this nicely embellished story is not to connect Zeno with Socrates but to explain how he became Crates' student. We should notice, though, that while the account is generally positive about Zeno's association with Crates, it is careful to exempt Zeno from Cynic "shamelessness."

We should now jump ahead to section N, noting its curious position after the epigrams on Zeno's death:

Demetrius of Magnesia, in *Men of the Same Name*, says that Zeno's father, Mnaseas, being a trader, came often to Athens and brought home many books about Socrates for Zeno, who was still a boy. [32] Thus even in his native place he got good training; and then,

## ZENO OF CITIUM: CYNIC FOUNDER OF THE STOIC TRADITION

on reaching Athens, he attached himself to Crates. And it seems, he adds, that when the <earlier> philosophers were unsettled in their views, Zeno defined the goal of human life. They say he used to swear “by the caper” just as Socrates swore “by the dog.”

This third story of Zeno’s conversion to philosophy neatly reconciles the two earlier accounts. We now learn that Zeno was in fact devoted to Socrates long before he reached Athens. Hence his encounter with Crates was not fortuitous but deliberate. But, as the second account also proposes, Zeno attached himself to Crates as a means to gain access to Socrates. To emphasize the hallowed Socrates as Zeno’s primary allegiance, this third account tells us that Zeno aped Socrates, who used to swear “by the dog” in adopting a special oath as his trademark.

These three accounts are mutually consistent, more or less, but their emphases differ strikingly. The first account, the oracular story, hints strongly at Socrates and omits Crates. The second and third accounts connect Zeno with both Crates and with Socrates, but with differences of emphasis. The second account gives us a lively and largely positive portrait of Zeno’s encounters with Crates.<sup>14</sup> The third account, focusing more strongly on Zeno’s Socratic connections, is entirely factual and dispassionate.

No source for the second account is mentioned, but I think we can be fairly sure that Diogenes did not get it from Hecaton and Apollonius, who were his sources for the oracular account. I take it that both these authors, writing at around the time of Cicero, were eager to play up Zeno’s Socratic connections and to play down his early Cynic phase. Cynicism, of course, was a Socratic movement in many of its ideas and prescriptions. In the Roman Empire, as we know from the works of Seneca and Epictetus, Stoic philosophers were happy to acknowledge Cynic aspects of Stoicism. That phase of philosophical history, however, long postdates Diogenes’ sources.

The second account is not only the fullest but is also, in light of its circumstantial detail, probably the earliest—which is not to say that it is historically exact.<sup>15</sup> Was Zeno really, as this account claims, a Cypriot dye merchant, who suffered shipwreck? We are left guessing about the exact sequence of events. For after digressing to Zeno’s publications, Diogenes returns to the shipwreck:

He [Zeno] finally left Crates and studied with the above-mentioned men [i.e., Stilpo, Xenocrates, and Polemon] for twenty years. Hence he is reported to have said, “I had a

<sup>14</sup> As if to emphasize the decisive influence of Crates, Diogenes inserts his list of Zeno’s writings (7.4), starting with the *Republic* and climaxing with *Recollections of Crates*, at the point when Zeno is about to leave Crates for the other teachers.

<sup>15</sup> I conjecture that it derives ultimately from the pen of Antigonus of Carystus, who was close to Zeno in date, and wrote about the lives of several early Hellenistic philosophers.

good voyage when I was shipwrecked.” Others, however, claim that Zeno said this in reference to his time with Crates. [5] Some say he was spending time in Athens when he heard that his ship was wrecked, and he said, “Fortune does well to drive me to philosophy.” But others say that it was after he had disposed of his wares in Athens that he turned his attention to philosophy.

The chronology is again wildly inaccurate, making Zeno more than fifty years old when he finished studying with other philosophers. As to the discrepant accounts of Zeno’s turn to philosophy after shipwreck, what lies behind them is probably a Hellenistic liking for romantic stories about the conversion of a worldly figure to an ascetic lifestyle rather than anything genuinely historical.

The mercantile and shipwreck stories are completely absent from section N, the third account. Now it is not Zeno but his father who is the merchant. This account, the authority for which is the first-century BC source Demetrius of Magnesia, reads like a further attempt to play down both the Cynic and the salesman connections in favor of Zeno as earnest schoolboy, dedicated to Socrates from his early days. This emollient account, like the first one, was probably current some two hundred years after Zeno’s death.

Attempts to detach the mature Zeno from his Cynic origins mark Diogenes’ life intermittently throughout, but in the end they fail to dislodge the impression that Zeno’s encounter with Crates was the most decisive moment in his life. Much of the anecdotal material and many of Zeno’s apothegms would be completely at home in Diogenes’ biographies of the Cynics. Zeno has the Cynic Diogenes’ gift for repartee, the cutting rejoinder, and the mockery of pomp and circumstance, and he too, though less drastically, practiced poverty. The chief difference between Diogenes and Zeno, in Diogenes Laertius’ two lives, is stylistic and professional. Diogenes was a showman, using shock tactics as his teaching method and flourishing in the limelight. Zeno, temperamentally scholastic and unsociable, became the professor who grafted Cynic challenges to conventional values onto a comprehensive philosophy of universal and human nature.

Diogenes’ biography of Zeno is an amalgam of fact, hearsay, and fantasy. Which predominates? Fact, in my opinion, is to the fore in the historicity of Zeno’s formative encounter with Crates (however it came about), in the influence of Socrates and the Megarians Stilpo and Diodorus, and in the final testimony concerning Zeno’s *Republic*. Fantasy emerges in the sanitized passages derived from Apollonius, where Zeno loses his Cynic pedigree and becomes rather pompous and boring. As for the anecdotes and apothegms, so typical of Diogenes’ predilections, while some derive from reminiscences of Zeno recorded

by his contemporary followers, many of them are interchangeable with other figures from other lives. The latter are only the stuff of a *Reader's Digest* Zeno, a Stoic without the qualities to inspire the real Stoa.

Zeno must have been a lot more interesting and brilliant than Diogenes Laertius makes him out to be. He was not charismatic perhaps, like Epicurus, but challenging, witty, and sufficiently Socratic to stamp that exemplary name on the Stoic tradition ever after. Unlike

Socrates, Zeno did write books, but they were probably short and pithy. Much of his contemporary impact was oral. While Zeno's writings have left only scanty marks on Diogenes' treatment of his life, Diogenes has left us our fullest record of Zeno's Cynic *Republic*. In relegating it to an excursus, Diogenes reflects the worries of later Stoics about their founder's respectability, but he did not suppress mention of it, and for that we should be especially grateful.

## SKEPTICS IN DIOGENES LAERTIUS

James Allen

Modern historians of philosophy recognize two forms of ancient Skepticism, Academic and Pyrrhonian. The former took root in the Academy, Plato's school, under the leadership of Arcesilaus, the fifth philosopher to succeed the founder as its leader (or "scholarch"), and was the dominant tendency in the school until its dissolution in the first century BC.<sup>1</sup> Pyrrhonism took its name from Pyrrho of Elis, an older contemporary of Arcesilaus, but there is good reason to suspect that the school came into existence, or was revived, by Aenesidemus of Cnossus, a onetime member of the Academy who was active in the first century BC, a good two centuries after Pyrrho's death (though one would never guess this from Diogenes' few mentions of Aenesidemus in his account of Pyrrho and Pyrrhonism). If this is right, the members of the later Pyrrhonist movement looked to Pyrrho for inspiration rather than being able to trace a line of succession back to him. It flourished well into the Christian era and is known to us principally through Sextus Empiricus, likely active in the late second century AD, much of whose substantial philosophical oeuvre has survived.

Arcesilaus' contemporaries saw a resemblance between him and Pyrrho, as witness Ariston of Chios, a Stoic who quipped that Arcesilaus was a hybrid, with "Plato in front, Pyrrho behind, Diodorus in the middle" (4.33).<sup>2</sup> Diogenes Laertius, however, treats the two forms separately. In his fanciful scheme dividing philosophers into two successions, the Ionian begins with Anaximander, the pupil of Thales, and the Italian begins with Pythagoras. He places Socrates in the Ionic tradition (1.13–15), and discusses Arcesilaus and succeeding Academics, who are likewise viewed as part of this tradition, in Book 4, which takes up the story (begun in Book 2)

of Socrates and his successors. The whole of Book 3 is devoted to Plato, the most eminent of all Socrates' pupils.

Book 9, where Diogenes discusses Pyrrho and Timon, is more of a mixed bag. He begins with lives of the Pre-Socratics Heraclitus and Xenophanes, whom he presents as *sporadic* (scattered) philosophers (9.1–20), before returning to the Italian tradition, the subject of Book 8, with a life of Parmenides (9.21–23). There follow lives of Melissus, Zeno of Elea, Leucippus, Democritus, Protagoras, Diogenes of Apollonia, Anaxarchus, and then Pyrrho and Timon. Apart from Diogenes of Apollonia, all of these figures are connected by a master-pupil relationship, real or imagined. In any case, the lineage that links Pyrrho to the atomist Democritus is likely both real and important.

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The Greek adjective *skeptikos* derives from *skeptesthai* to "look into" or "inquire." The Pyrrhonists applied it to themselves in order to emphasize commitment to open-minded inquiry that, in their view, set them apart from those whom they labeled "dogmatists"—so called because they took themselves to be in firm possession of the essential truths of philosophy (their dogmas), obviating the need for further inquiry. Though the Academics did not call themselves Skeptics and were not referred to as such by others until much later, the description "open-minded inquirer" applied at least as well to them as to the Pyrrhonists, and the affinity between the two schools was widely recognized and much discussed in antiquity.<sup>3</sup> Even Sextus Empiricus, who reserved the title Skeptics for his fellow Pyrrhonians and dismissed the Academics as negative dogmatists who were convinced that knowledge is impossible, had to concede that Arcesilaus came close to being a Skeptic in the Pyrrhonian sense (*Outlines of Pyrrhonism* 1.220–35).

1 John Dillon, *The Heirs of Plato: A Study of the Old Academy (347–274 BC)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003).

2 Diodorus Cronus, whom Diogenes places in the succession of the Socratic Euclides of Megara (see 2.111–12), was among other things a virtuoso in argument and a master of logical puzzles, and it is this side of his philosophical character that Ariston has in view.

3 Plutarch (first and second century AD) wrote a book about the question, which has not survived. Gellius (second century AD) says it was much discussed by Greek authors (XI v 6).

Ancient Skepticism was characterized by two teachings. The first was *akatalēpsia*, the thesis that nothing is or can be apprehended, which often amounts to, and is translated as, the denial that knowledge exists or is possible. The second teaching was *epochē* (suspension)—the recommendation that one suspend judgment or withhold assent on all questions as a result of *akatalēpsia*.<sup>4</sup> These were often couched in terms of the ancient philosophical ideal of the wise person: even the wise person is not capable of secure apprehension and will therefore suspend judgment.

Diogenes Laertius presents both Arcesilaus and Pyrrho as pioneers of Skepticism. The former, he says, was “the first to suspend judgment” (though he may have meant that he was the first philosopher to do so in the Academy) (4.28); the latter, he says, introduced the practice of *akatalēpsia* and *epochē*, though both terms were likely first used in the Academy (9.61).

As a philosophy that challenges the very possibility of knowledge, Skepticism inevitably invites questions about its relation to its own teachings. Do the Skeptics *judge* them to be true and represent themselves as *knowing* this? How can they do either consistently with their own Skeptical teachings? It comes as no surprise, then, that critics in antiquity argued that Skepticism was self-refuting: its teachings could not be asserted without making implicit claims to knowledge. Critics also charged that Skepticism in practice produced paralysis (*apraxia*): by prohibiting the exercise of judgment, the Skeptic sabotaged our ability to act. These charges and the responses they elicited from both Academic and Pyrrhonian Skeptics did much to shape the development of both varieties of ancient Skepticism (see 9.102–5).

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Arcesilaus and Pyrrho both belonged to the category of nonwriting philosophers (1.16, 4.32). Their choice not to write may have been related to the nondogmatic character of their philosophies (4.32). In any case, as a result, the biographical lore that is such an important part of Diogenes’ book assumes an even greater significance in his treatment of these two major Skeptics, especially Pyrrho.

The story of Arcesilaus according to Diogenes is exceedingly simple in outline. Against a backdrop of undoubted institutional continuity, the Skeptical turn initiated by Arcesilaus is presented as a radical rupture in the history of Platonism and of Plato’s Academy. Diogenes credits Arcesilaus with three innovations (4.38). He was the first to argue for suspension of judgment (*epochē*) in response to the opposition between competing arguments; the first to argue on each side of the question; and the first to alter the teaching handed down from Plato by making it more contentious (or “eristic”) through the practice of argument by question and answer. As a result,

<sup>4</sup> See Gisela Striker, “Sceptical Strategies,” in *Doubt and Dogmatism: Studies in Hellenistic Epistemology*, ed. Malcolm Schofield, Myles Burnyeat, and Jonathan Barnes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 54–83.

Arcesilaus came to be viewed as the founder of the so-called Middle Academy (cf. 1.19).

Arcesilaus was unquestionably a major innovator, but this account should give us pause. We may well wonder whether the Academy, before Arcesilaus became scholar, was really as dogmatic as Diogenes maintains. (Plato laid down a fixed set of doctrines, he says, to which his immediate successor, Speusippus, and by implication all Academics before Arcesilaus, adhered; a selection is included [3.67–80].) Other classical sources suggest that the Academy from its inception welcomed a variety of research programs and fostered a philosophical culture of dialogue and debate. There is also an ancient tradition of interpreting Plato as a kind of Skeptic.<sup>5</sup> Diogenes himself acknowledges a debate over whether or not Plato was dogmatic in his philosophizing (concluding that he was [3.51–52]). The idea that Plato was a Skeptic may well have been the work of Skeptics within the Academy, who wanted to present themselves as the founder’s legitimate heirs. (In his life of Pyrrho, Diogenes suggests that some Pyrrhonians held a similar view [9.72].)

We do not have to endorse the view that Plato was a Skeptic, however, to see how effectively the considerations assembled in support of it undermine the opposite view, that he was a dogmatic philosopher. Plato’s dialogues abound in expressions of doubt and hesitation. Views are advanced tentatively; the unresolved problems they face and the need for further investigation are constantly emphasized. The Socrates depicted in a number of the dialogues practices a dialectical method of inquiry that permits him, despite his professed ignorance, to subject positions and the claims to knowledge of those who hold them to Skeptical examination.

Against this background, the third innovation with which Arcesilaus is credited by Diogenes—that he altered the teaching transmitted from Plato through arguing by question and answer—looks more like a revival of the Socratic method so vividly illustrated in several of Plato’s best-known dialogues.<sup>6</sup> In this regard, one biographical nugget preserved by Diogenes is especially illuminating: Arcesilaus was such an enthusiastic admirer of Plato that he possessed a copy of his complete works—a fact that, if true, set him apart from his Academic contemporaries

<sup>5</sup> See Julia Annas, “Plato the Sceptic,” in *Methods of Interpreting Plato and His Dialogues*, ed. James C. Kjaage and Nicholas D. Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 43–72.

<sup>6</sup> To be sure, “eristic” is usually a pejorative term, used by Plato among others to distinguish the formally similar method of question and answer, practiced by the sophists in order to display their cleverness and achieve apparent victory in argument, from Socrates’ arguments, which he undertakes in pursuit of truth and understanding. Diogenes’ reference to “eristic” simply reflects the difficulty outsiders to the practice had distinguishing the two, which often struck them as similar displays of competitive logic-chopping. The rhetorician Isocrates, a younger contemporary of Socrates and older contemporary of Plato, who set up a school to rival the schools of Plato and Aristotle, notoriously lumped together as practitioners of eristical argument those whom we view as philosophers and the sophists.

(4.32). One could conclude from it that Arcesilaus was, and saw himself as, a philosophical practitioner of dialectic in the mold of Socrates.<sup>7</sup>

The second innovation should be understood in this light. Mastery of dialectic permits a philosopher like Arcesilaus to argue on either side of a question with a real or imagined interlocutor. The premises that, as questioner, he offers to his opponent are ones to which the latter—the answerer—is committed or which he will find it difficult to reject. They need not represent Arcesilaus' own views, if any, and the conclusions drawn from them will be consequences to which the opponent and not Arcesilaus is committed. Arcesilaus' preference seems to have been to have his partners in discussion take a position against which he would then argue dialectically, rather than taking both sides of the argument himself (as the most eminent of his successors, Carneades, would sometimes do).

Suspension of judgment (*epochē*), the first innovation, is the basis for regarding Arcesilaus as a pioneer of a new form of Skepticism and as the founder of the Middle Academy. To see how his practice of Socratic dialectic prepared the way for this development, it is essential to take into account the philosophers whom he chose as his principal opponents and partners in debate, the Stoics. One piece of lore transmitted by Diogenes is suggestive: like Arcesilaus, Zeno of Citium, the founder of Stoicism, studied in the Academy. Other formative influences on Zeno, like Crates the Cynic, also belonged to the Socratic tradition, albeit other branches of it, and Zeno, like Arcesilaus, should be viewed as a philosopher inspired by Socrates.

From Socrates, Zeno and the Stoics took an ideal of virtue as wisdom, which in their view was the sole necessary and sufficient condition for a life of perfect happiness (*eudaimonia*). They also took the radical view that wisdom was completely immune to error, a claim based on their school's distinctive understanding of knowledge. They identified apprehensive impressions (*katalpētikai phantasiai*) as the criterion of truth, the ultimate basis for our grasp of the truth (cf. 7.54). These are self-evidently true impressions, usually sensory, that arise in ideal (though not uncommon) conditions. Apprehension (*katalēpsis*), the assent to an apprehensive impression, is a necessary condition for knowledge—but is not knowledge itself, which the Stoics define as firm apprehension, which is unshakable by argument. This requires that the truths apprehended also be understood in their systematic relations to one another. By avoiding assent to nonapprehensive impressions, someone who realizes the Stoic ideal of wisdom eliminates one source of error; he protects himself against the other source, faulty reasoning, by a mastery of dialectic, a discipline the Stoic

version of which corresponds to modern logic.

Assent to impressions that fail to meet all these conditions the Stoics define as (mere) opinion; and the wise person will, they hold, suspend judgment rather than harbor opinions. Some of the terminology the Academics used ("suspension of judgment," "apprehension," etc.) was of Stoic origin. And the stringent prohibition of opinion, which would require total suspension of judgment in the absence of apprehensive impressions, was also Stoic in origin (Sextus Empiricus, *Against the Mathematicians* 7.157). The Academics' arguments for the Skeptical theses, then, include crucial assumptions taken over from their Stoic opponents.

Arcesilaus and the Academics who came after him argued that the Stoic conditions for knowledge were impossible to meet. For every true impression formed in the ideal conditions specified by the Stoics, they argued, there could be another impression that was indistinguishable from it but false. In support of this contention, they raised many doubts of a kind familiar to us from the later Skeptical tradition, based on dreams, madness, other abnormal states of mind, optical illusions, and the like. Though they did not deny that many of our impressions are likely true, they argued that none is self-evidently true, and none therefore is fit to serve as a criterion of truth as the Stoics understood it. The Stoics in contrast argued that action, and therefore life, was impossible without assent, which they insisted was warranted only by apprehensive impressions. The implication was that the Academic argument must be mistaken. Arcesilaus responded by trying to show that action without assent was possible, so forestalling this line of criticism.

On a strictly dialectical interpretation—according to which the Academics' premises are borrowed from their opponents' position and assumed for the sake of argument in order to deduce consequences that are problems for those opponents—the Academics themselves were not committed to the conclusions of their arguments. It was the wise person as conceived by Stoic philosophy, and not the wise person as conceived by the Academics, who would be required to suspend judgment if those arguments were sound.

Nonetheless most of the philosophers of the Academy after Arcesilaus' time—with variations and exceptions—seem to have adopted a stance or an outlook summed up in the two key teachings of *akatalēpsia* and of *epochē*, both of which they plausibly imputed to him. The fullest account we have, Cicero's *Academica*, suggests that these terms were used by at least some Academics to characterize the attitude of open-minded inquirers who have so far been unable to resolve the difficulties uncovered by their investigations, and who therefore provisionally suspend judgment.<sup>8</sup> In other words, the best ancient tes-

<sup>7</sup> See A. A. Long, "Diogenes Laertius, Life of Arcesilaus," *Elenchos* 7 (1986): 429–49; and John M. Cooper, "Arcesilaus: Socratic and Sceptic," in *Knowledge, Nature and the Good* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004), 81–103.

<sup>8</sup> A translation with an illuminating introduction and commentary can be found in Charles Brittain, *Cicero on Academic Skepticism* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2006).

timony indicates that Arcesilaus and his followers did *not* fall into the kind of contradictory position the ancient Skeptics were sometimes accused of holding by claiming to know that nothing can be known (and which modern scholars call “negative dogmatism” or “dogmatic skepticism” with regard to knowledge).

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Diogenes’ account of Pyrrho in Book 9 combines a biography of the founder with an extensive exposition of the philosophy of his school in its late form (9.74–108),<sup>9</sup> an approach similar to that in Book 7, covering the life of Zeno of Citium and Stoic philosophy. I will concentrate on the sections Diogenes devotes to Pyrrho’s life, philosophy (9.61–69), students (9.70), and alleged precursors (9.71–73).

According to Diogenes, Pyrrho was a painter before turning to philosophy under the influence of Anaxarchus, who introduced him to Democritean teachings. Both men seem to have been most influenced by Democritus as an ethical thinker rather than a natural philosopher, although Pyrrho may also have been influenced by Democritus’ occasional expressions of doubt about the possibility of reliable knowledge. He and Anaxarchus are said to have accompanied Alexander the Great. This enabled Pyrrho to mingle with the “Naked Sages” (or Gymnosophists) of India and the Magi of Persia (9.61).

Diogenes assigns the encounter with Eastern wisdom a crucial part in Pyrrho’s approach to philosophy, inspiring his introduction of two novel teachings: that nothing is apprehensible (*akatalēpsia*), and that therefore a suspension (*epochē*) of judgment about all claims to know the truth is warranted. As we have seen, however, there is reason to think that these two terms were first used in the Academy.

The gloss on Pyrrho’s views that Diogenes immediately goes on to offer does not help clarify matters: “For he said that nothing is beautiful or ugly, or just or unjust, and that likewise in all instances nothing exists in truth, but men do everything by custom and by habit; for each thing is no more this than that.” The view expressed here sounds less like a form of Skepticism—that we lack knowledge and should suspend judgment—than a dogmatic denial that certain things exist and an explanation for the illusion that they do: custom or habit. What is more, the emphasis is plainly on moral properties. Indeed Cicero knew Pyrrho only as a moral thinker, whom he classifies together with the heterodox Stoic Ariston of Chios as an “indifferentist”—someone who holds that nothing apart from virtue is of the slightest value, including those items to which most ordinary human beings and many philosophers attach importance—health,

wealth, good reputation, status, pleasure, and so on.

Diogenes relates the story of how Pyrrho was allegedly prevented from straying in front of carts or walking over cliffs and the like only by friends concerned for his safety (9.62). The anecdote invites an epistemological interpretation: because he distrusted the evidence of his own senses, Pyrrho was a menace to himself, rescued only by the good sense of his friends. But most of what Diogenes says about Pyrrho’s character and the anecdotes offered about his life invite an ethical reading.

Calmness, tranquillity, peace of mind, imperturbability, and detachment from worldly affairs—these are the traits Diogenes stresses in his portrait. Pyrrho’s student Nausiphanes reports that his own student Epicurus often quizzed him about the man whose life and attitude he admired greatly (9.64). *Ataraxia*, or freedom from distress, one of the qualities for which Pyrrho was most celebrated, is one of the chief characteristics of the fully happy human being, according to Epicurus, as it had been for Democritus. The flavor of Pyrrho’s reputation is conveyed by a story related by the Stoic Posidonius (c. 135–c. 51 BC). On board a ship in a stormy sea, Pyrrho directed the attention of his panicky fellow passengers to a pig, which continued eating in complete indifference to the danger. That, he said, was the kind of tranquillity (*ataraxia*) the philosopher should cultivate (9.68).

Thus, though the sources cited in Book 9 see Pyrrho as a Skeptic in the mold of later Pyrrhonists, much of what Diogenes relates about him supports Cicero’s picture of a moral indifferentist who embodied to an especially high degree the ancient ideal of wisdom as a kind of supreme imperturbability and detachment.

Later Skeptics in fact raised various doubts about the existence of a continuous succession connecting Pyrrho with later Pyrrhonism (9.115–16); some even questioned whether the school’s members should be named after him. The Pyrrhonian answer to such doubts recorded by Diogenes is instructive: “someone who resembles Pyrrho in thought and life could be called a Pyrrhonian” (9.70). Sextus Empiricus takes a similar line: “the school is called ‘Pyrrhonian’ because Pyrrho seems to us to have approached skepticism more bodily and visibly than anyone before” (*Outlines of Pyrrhonism* 1.7). This tends to confirm that it was Pyrrho’s manner of life and attitude that impressed later followers at least as much as his teachings.

Diogenes has hardly anything to say about those teachings. For help we must turn to Eusebius, quoting Aristotle’s summary of Timon’s account of Pyrrho’s views.

[Pyrrho’s] pupil Timon says that whoever wants to be happy must consider these three questions: first, how are things by nature? Secondly, what attitude should we adopt toward them? Thirdly, what will be the outcome for those who have this attitude? According to Timon, Pyrrho de-

<sup>9</sup> An examination of this section with comparisons to Sextus Empiricus can be found in Jonathan Barnes, “Diogenes Laertius IX 61–116: The Philosophy of Pyrrhonism,” in *Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt*, II.36.6, ed. Wolfgang Haase and Hildegard Temporini (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1992), 4241–301.

clared that (i) things are equally indifferent, unmeasurable, and inarbitrable. (ii) *For this reason* neither our sensations nor our opinions tell us truths or falsehoods. (iii) Therefore for this reason we should not put our trust in them one bit, but we should be unopinionated, uncommitted, and unwavering, saying concerning each individual thing that it is no more than it is not, or it both is and is not, or it neither is nor is not.<sup>10</sup>

The context (in both Eusebius and in Aristocles) suggests that Timon's point is epistemological, and the passage may describe a possibly dogmatic form of skepticism about the impossibility of knowledge.

Probably the most widely accepted reading of this passage is epistemological. It endorses a plausible emendation that would have Pyrrho deduce (i) from (ii) by reading "through the fact that" instead of "for this reason" in (ii).<sup>11</sup> On this reading, (ii) is about the weakness of our mind or our senses, presumably established by familiar Skeptical arguments based on conflicts among appearances and judgments, and the conclusion in (i) is about the impossibility of knowledge. According to an alternative metaphysical interpretation, which retains the manuscript reading "for this reason," Pyrrho's point of departure is an insight into the indeterminate nature

of reality from which he concludes that our minds and senses cannot be trusted, not because they are defective, but because reality lacks the determinate nature it would need in order to be grasped. According to a third, ethical interpretation, which also retains the manuscript readings, (i) describes things insofar as they relate to action and conduct. The epistemological emphasis in (ii) would, according to these interpretations, be due to Timon rather than Pyrrho.

The matter remains controversial, and Pyrrho's real thoughts are likely to remain elusive. What little is known about him is compatible with different readings, and the same seems to have been true of his pronouncements, such as they were. Pyrrho's truest legacy to the school that bore his name may well have been the image of a life of supreme tranquillity, detached from any positive assertions about the good conduct of life. The most distinctive characteristic of later Pyrrhonism, which set it apart from Academic Skepticism, was its goal—a "suspension of judgment," as Diogenes memorably writes, "attended by tranquillity as if by its shadow" (9.107). Sextus, who goes into the matter more fully, represents this as a chance discovery. Seeking to resolve the anomalies presented by conflicting appearances and opinions, Pyrrho's followers were compelled to suspend judgment by the opposing considerations of equal strength on each side of every question; the peace of mind they had long sought, though in vain, came as the unexpected result (*Outlines of Pyrrhonism* 1.25–30). Later Pyrrhonism, then, uniquely combines the tranquillity exemplified by Pyrrho with practices of argument leading to suspension of judgment for which the Skeptical Academy was the most important, though not the only, source.

10 Eusebius, *Praeparatio evangelica* 14.18.1–5; A. A. Long and David N. Sedley, eds., *The Hellenistic Philosophers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 1:14–15.

11 See Richard Bett, *Pyrrho: His Antecedents and His Legacy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); T. Corey Brennan, "Pyrrho on the Criterion," *Ancient Philosophy* 18 (1998): 417–34; and Jacques Brunschwig, "Pyrrho," in *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy*, ed. K. Algra et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 241–50.

## EPICURUS IN DIOGENES LAERTIUS

James Allen

Epicurus is the subject of the tenth and last book of *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers* (cf. 1.15) and the last of the "Italian line" of philosophers, according to the fanciful successions Diogenes used as an organizing principle. Other members of that line were discussed in Book 9, including Democritus, the ancient Greek world's most prominent atomist before Epicurus and a critically important influence on him in physics and ethics, despite his protestations of independence.

While the plan of the *Lives* therefore dictated where the treatment of Epicurus would fall, his appearance at the end of the work had a further significance.

In one of the handful of passages that seem to afford a glimpse of the author, Diogenes tells us that the *Chief Maxims*—forty statements by Epicurus—that will conclude Book 10 will also be the crown (*colophon*, or "summit") of

his book as a whole. By closing his work in this way, he says he will have made its end the starting point of the happy life (10.138). This expression of sympathy for Epicurus, together with other signs of approval, has led some scholars to suspect that Diogenes was himself an Epicurean.

Book 10 is unique in presenting the views of its subject at length in his own words. Apart from the biographical and doxographical material of the kind familiar to us from the other nine books and the forty doctrines, it contains three letters from Epicurus to his followers, summarizing and expounding his teachings for their benefit. These letters are a primary source for what we know about the teachings of Epicurus, but they are also notoriously hard to understand.

The result is a book with the following plan, the bulk of which is made up of primary source material (\*).

- 1–29: Epicurus' life.  
 30–33: Canonic (epistemology).  
 34–83: *The Letter to Herodotus*,\* which tackles natural philosophy, broadly conceived.  
 83–116: *The Letter to Pythocles*,\* which concentrates on one department of natural philosophy, heavenly phenomena (“meteorology” in the ancient sense)—such as the size of the sun, the waxing and waning of the moon, and the like.  
 117–21: An ethical doxography, chiefly the attributes of the wise person.  
 121–35: *The Letter to Menoecus*,\* about ethics.  
 136–38: More ethical doxography, especially about pleasure.  
 139–54: *Chief Maxims*.\*

We have nothing like these letters for the other two main Hellenistic schools, the Stoa and the Academy. Thanks to the letters and the poem *De Rerum Natura*, the first-century BC masterpiece in Latin verse by Lucretius, a follower of Epicurus, we are better supplied with firsthand information about his philosophy than that of any of his rivals.<sup>1</sup>

Diogenes begins with a biography of Epicurus (341–270 BC). Though an Athenian citizen, Epicurus was born on the Ionian island of Samos, coming to Athens only at age eighteen. In his early years, in a pattern familiar from other lives related by Diogenes, he studied with a number of teachers, including the Platonist Pamphilus (10.13–14). One of his mentors was the Democritean philosopher Nausiphanes; to judge by the harsh words allegedly exchanged between the two, their relations were strained (10.8 and 13; cf. 9.69). Epicurus' polemics in *On Nature* and ancient charges that he plagiarized Nausiphanes in his work on epistemology suggest that his teacher was more important to Epicurus than his claim to have learned nothing from him would indicate. According to other testimonies preserved by Diogenes, Epicurus was stimulated to pursue philosophy by reading Democritus on his own and was self-taught (10.2–3 and 13). His insistence on his own originality and independence, however accurate, set him apart from other philosophers of his time.

The life includes an extensive catalogue of abuse and slander directed at Epicurus (10.3–8). According to some reports he returned the favor with interest (10.8), but Diogenes clearly believed that this charge was itself a slander. As a champion of the view that pleasure is the primary and natural good and that happiness, the supreme goal, consists of a life of pleasure, Epicurus was peculiarly vulnerable to accusations that he led a dissipated life. According to Diogenes, Timocrates, a onetime

follower of Epicurus and brother of his lifelong friend and philosophical partner, Metrodorus, made a minor career out of such charges after leaving the school (10.6).<sup>2</sup>

Attacks like this were to be expected. What surprises is Diogenes' impassioned defense of Epicurus: surely his detractors must have been mad (10.8), for he was a man of universal goodwill (*philanthrōpia*) and a generous friend esteemed by all who knew him. Diogenes cites testimony that Epicurus and his companions, far from living a life of sybaritic indulgence, were remarkably austere in their tastes and habits (10.9–11). The account squares with what we know from other sources, even critics of Epicurus like Cicero, who conceded that Epicurus was indeed, as his followers maintained, a decent, kind, and abstemious man while insisting his admirable life conflicted with his philosophy.

The school founded by Epicurus on a property he purchased outside Athens' walls came to be known as the Garden—a true community of friends, says Diogenes, drawn from all walks of life, including Epicurus' servants, who practiced philosophy together with him (10.10).<sup>3</sup> With a few exceptions, the people he attracted remained friends for life. Diogenes is struck by the school's long continuous history, which he views as a tribute to the bonds fashioned by Epicurus in the early days of the community (10.9), one that he says survived after others perished—though scholars suspect Diogenes is echoing a source from an earlier period rather than referring to an Epicurean school still extant in his own day.

Epicurus' will and a letter written shortly before his death, with which the biographical portion of his life concludes, lend support to the admiring portrait already sketched (10.16–22). The will freed his slaves and provided for the maintenance of friends and for the children of Metrodorus, who had died before him. It also secured the continuation of the school by naming Hermarchus as his successor. Other provisions may suggest something like a cult to modern readers—the injunction that his birthday be celebrated each year, for example, and that his memory and that of Metrodorus be honored on one day of each month.

Following his usual practice, Diogenes appends an account of one of Epicurus' most prominent students, Metrodorus, who is the subject of a brief life, and others who are merely named. He adds a list of his best books rather than all of them because, according to Diogenes, Epicurus was an exceptionally prolific author, much given to repetition and disinclined to revise (10.26–28).

2 David Sedley argues that the tradition representing Epicurus as a uniquely vituperative critic of other philosophers goes back to the testimony—sometimes false, sometimes exaggerated—of Timocrates. David Sedley, “Epicurus and His Professional Rivals,” in *Etudes sur l'épicurisme antique*, ed. Jean Bollack and André Laks, *Cahiers de Philologie* 1 (Villeneuve d'Ascq, Fr.: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 1976), 119–59.

3 See Diskin Clay, “The Athenian Garden,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Epicureanism*, ed. James Warren (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 9–28.

1 A text of *De Rerum Natura* with an excellent translation and notes can be found in *Lucretius: On the Nature of Things*, ed. M. F. Smith, trans. W. H. D. Rouse (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992).

Diogenes now turns to Epicurus' philosophy as expounded in the three letters, prefacing the *Letter to Herodotus* with a brief but illuminating account of Epicurean epistemology, or "canonic." The word "canon" means straightedge, and though Epicurus was not the first to use the term in the metaphorical sense of a standard of judgment or measure of truth, he seems to have been most responsible for turning it into a term of art in Hellenistic epistemology.<sup>4</sup> Another important innovation is his formulation of the idea of a concept (*prolēpsis*), to which he assigns a crucial role in thinking and reasoning. The term and the idea were taken over by the Stoics, and the notion of concepts has exerted an immense influence on the whole subsequent history of philosophy. Above all, he set the agenda for Hellenistic epistemology, and thereby much of the philosophy it influenced, with his insistence that human knowledge and understanding are rooted in perceptual experience (10.31–32; cf. 10.38).

Epicurus intended the letters to serve as summary presentations of his teachings for those who lacked the time or the ability to master their more detailed treatment in his treatises (10.35–37). Despite this they are as formidably difficult as any works of ancient philosophy, especially the *Letter to Herodotus*. The philologist Hermann Usener, whose 1887 edition of the letters marked a major advance in Epicurean scholarship, said in the preface to the *Epicurea*, his magnum opus, that he had devoted the better part of his energies to it for years not out of a liking for the man or an interest in his philosophy but because of the exceptional challenge presented by the many difficulties in the letters preserved by Diogenes Laertius.

The *Letter to Herodotus*, concerning physics, is the longest of the three, but it would be a mistake to infer that Epicurus regarded the subject as the most important part of philosophy. Rather he believed, as did other Hellenistic philosophers, that its study contributed to happiness, the achievement of which is the concern of ethics.

Happiness is a life of pleasure, according to Epicurus, which is therefore the goal toward which all our choices and actions should be directed. He regarded the removal of all pain as the highest form of pleasure; once that was achieved, the pleasures of the table or the bedroom were often enough not worth the bother. As other philosophers observed, including antiquity's other school of hedonists, the Cyrenaics, this did not seem at all like pleasure as it was ordinarily understood.<sup>5</sup>

4 See Gisela Striker, "κριτήριον τῆς ἀληθείας," in *Essays on Hellenistic Epistemology and Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 22–76.

5 Diogenes discusses the Cyrenaics in his life of Aristippus, 2.65–104, and briefly compares their views on pleasure with those of Epicurus at 2.89 and 10.137. Cf. John M. Cooper, "Pleasure and Desire in Epicurus," in *Reason and Emotion: Essays on Ancient Moral Psychology and Ethical Theory* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999), 485–514.

Instead the condition esteemed by Epicurus resembles the tranquillity, peace of mind, and imperturbability valued by other philosophers whom no one regarded as hedonists. Indeed the term *ataraxia*, already used by Democritus and meaning freedom from mental distress, figures prominently in Epicurus' account of the condition of the happy human being (10.85 and 128), and his interest in Pyrrho's manner of life is also noteworthy.<sup>6</sup> Pyrrho was known and admired above all for his imperturbable calm.

Epicurus held that mental pleasure was greater than physical pleasure and mental pain greater than physical pain (10.137). By making tranquillity impossible, then, fears and anxieties were greater threats to happiness than physical pain. Chief among them in his view were anxiety about divine meddling in human life and fear about the fate that awaits us after death, to which superstitious beliefs about both give rise. By providing us with a clear understanding of the nature of reality, the universe, and everything in it, the study of nature demolishes these beliefs and thereby frees us from one of the principal impediments to happiness.

Among other things, knowledge of nature will permit us to see that the world we inhabit and perceive is but one of an infinite number of worlds in the infinite universe, formed, as is everything, by the chance collision of atoms. The gods had no part in the creation of this or any other world, and no power to interfere, or interest in interfering, with us. When we die, our souls, which are compounds of atoms in our bodies, dissolve, so bringing to a total and irreversible end the existence of the self, for which, therefore, there can be no afterlife to be anxious about. Hence the need for natural philosophy. If we were not troubled by false beliefs and the fears and anxieties attendant upon them, natural philosophy would be of no use (*Chief Maxims* XI and XII, at 10.142–43; cf. 10.85).

The letter proceeds systematically. First Epicurus declares that nothing comes to be from nothing, or perishes into nothing (10.38). Then he argues that apart from body there also exists void—empty space (a position rejected by Aristotle and, within the world system, as opposed to the universe as a whole, also by the Stoics: 10.39). This proposition, like the first, is established by means of an appeal to experience; according to Epicurus, motion, whose existence is a fact proved by observation, would be impossible without void space into which bodies can move. There follow arguments that there is a lower limit to the physical division of bodies; at this point one reaches indivisible, absolutely indestructible, perfectly solid atoms (10.41); that space is infinite in extent, and atoms are infinite in number (and of an indefinitely large though not infinite number of shapes) (10.41–42).

6 According to Nausiphanes (DL 9.64).

We also learn a good deal about how perception works: bodies emit continuous effluences—films of atoms—which cause perception when they come into contact with organs of sense. The perceptions to which they give rise are, of course, the basis for the reasoning that yields the atomic explanation for the process of perception itself.

Though these topics are expected in an exposition of natural philosophy, two other distinctive views in the *Letter to Herodotus* are not. The first is Epicurus' so-called doctrine of minimal parts (10.56–59).<sup>7</sup> Not only did he hold that the division of bodies into physically distinct parts separated from one another by void space must come to an end, he also maintained that the intellectual or theoretical division of space—whether void or occupied by body—into smaller units of spatial magnitude has an absolute lower limit. So whenever there are two atoms of unequal size, the volume, length, or whatever you like of each must be a whole-number multiple of the least unit, not further divisible, of the corresponding kind; it is impossible for one to exceed the other in size by a fraction of this unit. Epicurus seems to have held the same for time, denying that every finite length of time is divisible into shorter units.

His position is in striking contrast to that of Aristotle, and it was likely devised in conscious opposition to it. Aristotle believed in a single finite world, every physical part or portion of which was potentially divisible without limit, as was every finite interval of time in the infinite span of its existence. Epicurus held that the universe is eternal, infinitely extended in space and containing an infinite number of worlds, yet he maintained that finite portions of space were divisible into smaller units of spatial magnitude only a finite number of times.

In common with some other ancient philosophers, Epicurus regarded the developments of human culture as a chapter of natural philosophy. This explains why the *Letter to Herodotus* includes discussion of the origins of speech and language, the second surprising topic it tackles.<sup>8</sup> Epicurus opposes other philosophical and popular accounts, which consider speech (as well as other distinctive human achievements) a gift of the gods, an invention of exceptionally gifted human beings, or in other ways a manifestation of divine providential regard for humankind. In Epicurus' own explanation, the communicative potential of human beings' natural powers to emit and hear sounds is spontaneously discovered and only later refined and enlarged gradually by deliberate conscious effort. The effect is to diminish the gap between animals and human beings.

<sup>7</sup> See David J. Furley, "Study I: Indivisible Magnitudes," in *Two Studies in the Greek Atomists* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1967).

<sup>8</sup> See Alexander Verlinsky, "Epicurus and His Predecessors on the Origin of Language," in *Language and Learning: Philosophy of Language in the Hellenistic Age*, ed. Dorothea Frede and Brad Inwood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 56–100.

And by emphasizing that linguistic communication is the result of discovering uses for the powers of voice and hearing, rather than (as other philosophers held) the purpose for which they were designed or the use for whose sake they exist, his theory can fairly be viewed as the ancestor of efforts to explain the development of speech and language in the context of evolutionary theory.

The prominence Diogenes gives to "meteorological" phenomena by including the *Letter to Pythocles* is explained by Epicurus' view that heavenly phenomena are an especially fertile breeding ground for superstition (cf. *Chief Maxims* XIII, at 10.143). Even Aristotle had thought there was an important element of truth in the perennially popular view that the heavenly bodies were divine and that celestial phenomena showed the gods at work (*Metaphysics* 1074a38–b10).

The most distinctive and original element of Epicurus' approach to celestial matters is the method of multiple explanation, which gives the letter an interest beyond the phenomena discussed in it. He held that our aim as natural philosophers should not always be to discover the single correct explanation for the phenomena under examination (as it was in establishing the fundamental principles of the natural world). Rather, Epicurus says, one should be satisfied if we can find a number of possible explanations and not insist on rejecting some in favor of others when there are no grounds to do so (10.87, 94, 98, and 113).

For example:

The waning and, in turn, the waxing of the moon may be due to the rotation of the body and equally well to configurations assumed by the air; they may also be due to occultations, or may happen in any of the ways the facts of our experience can suggest to explain such phenomena. But one must not be so enamored of the explanation based on a single cause as groundlessly to reject the others from ignorance of what can and cannot be understood by a human being, and the consequent longing to understand what cannot be understood. Furthermore, it may be that the moon's light emanates from itself; alternatively, it may be derived from the sun (10.94).

Since the ultimate aim is to banish superstition, it suffices to know there are plausible natural explanations for a phenomenon, without being certain which explanation is correct. But evidence from outside the letter suggests Epicurus also held the intriguing view that in an infinite universe containing infinite worlds and existing for eternity, all genuinely possible explanations must be realized in some world at some time, if not in our own world at this time (cf. Lucretius 5.526–33).

*The Letter to Menoceus* contains explanations of, and arguments for, some of the central ethical teachings of Epicurus. One of its main effects is to demonstrate how much the Epicureans had in common with the arguments of other philosophical schools.

It begins with an exhortation to the lifelong study of philosophy, presented as the sure means to happiness (10.122). Epicurus proclaims his belief in the gods, saying he rejects only popular misconceptions of the divine, whose credulous acceptance is true impiety (10.123; cf. 10.133). He celebrates possession of the virtues as the sole necessary and sufficient condition for happiness (10.132; cf. *Chief Maxims* V, at 10.140). He makes short work of the charge that when his school identifies pleasure as the goal it means the pleasure of a dissolute life (10.131–32). Above all, he embraces the ancient philosophical ideal of self-sufficiency, which frees us from dependence on circumstances beyond our control and renders our happiness immune to the influence of fortune (10.130 and 134; cf. *Chief Maxims* XVI, at 10.144).

In what is perhaps the most innovative element in the system expounded in the letter, however, desires are divided into three kinds: (i) natural and necessary; (ii) natural but not necessary; and (iii) neither natural nor necessary (10.127; cf. *Chief Maxims* XXVI, XXIX, and XXX, at 10.148–49). Natural and necessary desires must be satisfied for one to live, to be free of pain, and to be happy. They are few and easily satisfied. Nonnatural desires—those based on false opinions about what is good or necessary to our happiness—are empty. An ancient gloss (or scholion) to *Chief Maxims* XXIX offers “desires for crowns or for statues dedicated in one’s honor” as examples (10.149).

Had Epicurus been content with these two divisions, his view would seem to belong to the ascetic tendency so prominent in ancient philosophy. The key to happiness, from that perspective, is to reduce one’s desires to the bare minimum, the better to diminish or eliminate the chances of failing to fulfill them. The Cynic Diogenes of Sinope, for example (Book 6), could plausibly be viewed as following such a strategy. But Epicurus recognized another class of desires natural to have and harmless to fulfill, even though we can be happy without satisfying them. The same scholion gives the desire for “luxurious food” as an instance (10.149).

Epicurus’ idea, which sets him apart from the philosophical apostles of the ascetic life with whom he otherwise has so much in common, seems to have been that there need be no harm in desiring—and enjoying—a full range of pleasures so long as we are able to take them or leave them. Any other attitude, as Epicurus observes in *Chief Maxims*, will be a recipe for misery (10.149). Correct appreciation of the nature of desires will permit us to enjoy all the pleasures life has to offer when circumstances permit, but allow us to remain just as contented

when they do not. He concludes the letter by affirming that those who take these and similar truths to heart will live like gods among men (10.135).

After a brief section on ethical subjects omitted in the letter, Diogenes sets out the forty *Chief Maxims* that he describes as the crown of his *Lives* (10.138–54). All but two relate to ethics (XXIV and XXV concern epistemology). When natural philosophy is mentioned, its value or use, not its substantive content, is discussed. No overall plan seems to govern the collection, though there are clusters of doctrines dedicated to common themes. Two clusters deserve special attention.

Doctrines XXXI–XXXIX (10.150–54) present in concise form Epicurus’ theory of justice, which shows his ability to cast a fresh eye on an important subject.<sup>9</sup> He rejects theories of natural justice, according to which our behavior toward one another is subject to a set of obligations applying to all human beings in all circumstances, independently of positive law (XXXIII). On the contrary, he maintains that justice has no existence outside a compact or convention: it imposes no obligations on, and affords no protections to, those not party to the compact. Nevertheless he speaks of “natural justice,” as well as the nature of justice and a corresponding concept of justice (XXXI, XXXVII). The nature of justice is to be a mutually beneficial agreement not to harm on condition of not being harmed: there is a standard against which systems of justice can be measured and a perspective from which they can be criticized. Doctrine XXXVIII explains how different compacts containing different rules can be equally just because of variations in local conditions, and how a compact that had been just because it promoted mutual benefit could, owing to changing circumstances, cease to be just in whole or in part.

The second noteworthy cluster comprises the first four doctrines, which contain a compact summary of the promise of Epicurean philosophy and are likely what Diogenes had principally in mind when he spoke of ending his book with teachings that are the beginning of happiness (10.139–40). Later Epicureans condensed the four doctrines even further into the so-called *tetrapharmakos*, or fourfold remedy:

God presents no fears, death no worries. And while the good is readily attainable, evil is readily endurable.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> See Antonina M. Alberti, “The Epicurean Theory of Law and Justice,” in *Justice and Generosity: Studies in Hellenistic Social and Political Philosophy*, ed. André Laks and Malcolm Schofield (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 161–90.

<sup>10</sup> Text and translation in A. A. Long and David N. Sedley, eds., *The Hellenistic Philosophers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 1:156, sect. 25j.

# DIOGENES LAERTIUS AND NIETZSCHE

Glenn W. Most

It is well-known that Friedrich Nietzsche began his career as a classicist but turned himself into an important figure of modern philosophy; less well-known is the role that Diogenes Laertius played in this trajectory.

As a philosopher, Nietzsche admired Diogenes Laertius for transmitting memorable anecdotes and reports regarding the lives and doctrines of the great Greek philosophers, and Nietzsche learned from him a lesson about the relation of philosophy and life that would shape his own thought and legacy. But as a young philologist who studied Diogenes with the more limited project of investigating his methods and reliability as a compiler of earlier sources on the history of Greek philosophy, Nietzsche ended up having a much less positive view of his value. To explain this curious state of affairs, we must begin with a few words about Diogenes himself.

Like most prose authors of later antiquity, Diogenes Laertius composed his treatise by compiling, selecting, arranging, and revising the works of his predecessors. After all, by Diogenes' time, many centuries had elapsed since the death of most of the philosophers he was discussing; their original writings were frequently difficult to understand, and many were hard or even impossible to come by; those writings that did circulate were often incomplete, textually corrupt, or even forged. An enormous scholarly literature on this vast and heterogeneous material had already developed. Under these circumstances, it would have been irresponsible, even irrational, for Diogenes to refuse to take advantage of the scholarship of preceding generations. In this regard, his situation is not essentially different from our own.

But we are the uneasy heirs of centuries of the gradual professionalization, improvement, and refinement in historical method. Whatever doubts and controversies still mark contemporary research, nowadays no reputable historian of philosophy, or of any other subject, will fail to attempt to obtain access to original sources, to evaluate them with regard to their authenticity and reliability as scrupulously as possible, or to attain as full, as systematic, and as critical an overview of the secondary scholarship as possible.

Historiography in the ancient world was less disciplined and consistent, more amateurish and individualistic. It would obviously be unfair to measure Diogenes' work by the standards of our own day. But even within the terms of ancient scholarship, his treatise displays a number of perplexing features.

On the level of surface detail, it seems rife with incoherencies, contradictions, obscurities, and non sequiturs; the style is uneven; and where quotations begin and end is often unclear. More generally, the work raises at least three questions regarding its own character: the

dates of the author, his philosophical orientation, and his intended audience. An answer in one passage seems to contradict another, or what we think we know about ancient Greek philosophy from other sources.

How are such difficulties to be dealt with? Since the Renaissance, various strategies have been tried: ignore them; emend them to produce a more acceptable meaning, on the theory that they arose not in the head of the original author but in the hands of subsequent scribes; or try to explain them away.

None of these maneuvers has been very successful. Ignoring the problems has not made them disappear. Much of the language has proved resistant to emendation, and the intellectual contortions required to explain away the difficulties are seldom worth the exegetical gains. What is more, piecemeal approaches are always hampered by their trade in hypotheses invented *ad hoc*. Would a different kind of approach not be preferable, one that solved all the puzzles at once?

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Precisely this was the young Nietzsche's idea. Suppose the internal inconsistencies or those reports that conflict with what we think we know about Diogenes or Greek philosophy were written originally not by Diogenes but by his sources, and that he had simply copied them into his own work. If we could determine which sources he had used, could we not interpret the problematic passages more satisfactorily, and would we not be in a better position to assess the reliability of the information he transmits?

By asking these questions, Nietzsche applied to Diogenes Laertius the recently developed and fashionable German scholarly method of *Quellenforschung*, or "source criticism"; and by providing startling if specious answers, he launched a brilliant if brief academic career.

Nietzsche was one of the first to try to develop a single coherent and universal theory of the relations between Diogenes and his sources. His strategy was to explain discrepancies within the *Lives* as the result of differences among the sources; its goal was to arrive at a hypothetical but highly detailed narrative of the ways in which Diogenes had excerpted, compressed, and compiled all the sources available to him, one that would show the text as we have it as the inevitable result of all these operations.<sup>1</sup>

In the writings Nietzsche published for a nonprofessional audience, the few explicit references to Diogenes are uniformly positive: he is held up as a model for a true understanding of at least the spirit if not the letter of

<sup>1</sup> See especially Jonathan Barnes, "Nietzsche and Diogenes Laertius," *Nietzsche-Studien* 15, ed. Wolfgang Müller-Lauter and Karl Pestalozzi (1986): 16-40.

Greek philosophy, in opposition to the German academic establishment of professional philosophers and classicists who looked down on him but in fact understood far less about the real character of the Greek philosophers than he did. So, most famously, in “Schopenhauer as Educator,” the third of Nietzsche’s *Untimely Meditations*, published in 1874:

Who for example will save the history of Greek philosophy once again from the soporific fumes that have been diffused upon it by the learned, but not overwhelmingly scientific—and unfortunately extremely boring—works of Ritter, Brandis, and Zeller? I for one would rather read Laertius Diogenes than Zeller, because in the former there lives at least the spirit of the ancient philosophers, but in the latter neither that spirit nor any other one.<sup>2</sup>

And in a number of crucial passages Nietzsche wrote about the lives and characters of the Greek philosophers, especially the Pre-Socratics—e.g., in “Philosophy in the Age of Tragedy” and the section on “The Tyrants of the Spirit” in *Human, All Too Human*—Diogenes’ influence is transparent even if Nietzsche does not mention him by name.<sup>3</sup>

Intense study of the text of Diogenes was also crucial in helping Nietzsche to free himself from the constraints of university philology and philosophy and to develop a new and deeply personal conception of the relation between philosophical speculation and a philosophical way of life—one that was to make a strong impression on subsequent generations.

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By contrast, the view of Diogenes to be found in the writings Nietzsche composed as a classical philologist and intended for a professional readership starts unenthusiastically and concludes extremely negatively. The more Nietzsche worked on Diogenes in his early years, the more he came to see him not as a learned and honest authority on ancient Greek philosophy but instead as a liar, a thief, and a fool. For example, in an unpublished manuscript on “Laertius Diogenes and His Sources. A Contribution to the History of Ancient Literary Studies,” he writes

What is La. Di. to us? Nobody would waste a word about the lowbrow physiognomy of this writer if he were not by chance the dim-witted watchman who guards treasures without hav-

ing a clue about their value. He is the night watchman of the history of Greek philosophy: no one can enter into it unless he has given him the key.<sup>4</sup>

In the years 1866–1868, Nietzsche worked on the competition prize question *De Laertii Diogenis fontibus* (“On the Sources of Diogenes Laertius”), researching not only the sources of Diogenes himself but also those of imperial, late ancient, and Byzantine scholarship and of various earlier classical and Hellenistic Greek prose authors (Herodotus, Aristotle), as well as the ancient life of Hesiod. The Byzantine encyclopedia *Suda*, which presents significant overlaps with Diogenes’ text, was a particular focus, along with such other authorities as Apollodorus, Athenaeus, Plutarch, Aulus Gellius, Hesychius, Eustathius, the *Etymologicum Magnum*, and Stobaeus. Nietzsche’s posthumously printed notes show how many radically different hypotheses he tried out and how gradually and tentatively he developed his provisional conclusions.<sup>5</sup> Yet the three lengthy philological studies he published on the subject in 1869 and 1870 are clear, dogmatic, and self-assured.<sup>6</sup>

In all three essays, he argued that almost all the information to be found in Diogenes Laertius was derived not from the earliest sources Diogenes names but from a single intermediate source, the lost *Compendium of the Philosophers* written by the shadowy figure Diocles of Magnesia (whom Nietzsche assigns to the first century BC, although most more recent scholars date him a century earlier). In Nietzsche’s view, Diocles himself had cited many of the earlier sources he had used, such as the lost work on homonyms by the first-century BC author Demetrius of Magnesia; Diogenes had done little more than mechanically transcribe Diocles’ source references together with his data, remarks on dating, etc., into his own work. According to Nietzsche’s hypothesis, Diogenes had also inserted some individual reports he derived from the works of Favorinus (c. AD 85–155); Nietzsche at one point even suspected Favorinus had been Diogenes’ sole source for most of his information. He also later suggested that for the Pyrrhonian Sceptics Diogenes had used another, unidentifiable source. The significant overlaps between the reports in Diogenes and in the *Suda* were due not to the latter having derived its information from the former but to the dependence of both texts upon lost common sources. The real reason Diogenes had written his book, Nietzsche suggested, was to provide an artificial framework that would justify republishing the wretched epigrams he had written about the deaths of the philosophers. Nietzsche further speculated that these had been a total

2 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Kritische Studienausgabe* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1999), 1:417. The passage goes on to launch a spirited attack upon the pedantic, merely verbal study of the history of philosophy in the universities, and to claim that the only valid criticism of a philosophy is to see whether one can live according to it. For a similar passage in Nietzsche’s notebooks, cf. *ibid.*, 7.782.

3 *Ibid.*, 1:799–872; Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, in *ibid.*, 2:214–18, sect. 261.

4 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Werke und Briefe. Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe. Werke* (Munich: C.H. Beck’sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1933–1940) 5:126.

5 The materials are available most completely in *ibid.*, vols. 4–5.

6 See *Kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli, Mazzino Montinari, et al. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1967ff), 2.1.75–245.

failure with the public when they had first appeared as part of a collection of his miscellaneous poems and that he was anxious to find a pretext for republishing them.

Nietzsche's analysis was intended to unmask Diogenes not only as a thief who had stolen all the jewels he passed off to posterity as his own, but also as a writer so stupid he did not notice that many of the sources he was transcribing made statements about chronology and philosophical orientation that became nonsense when Diogenes took them over unchanged. No doubt partly in order to emphasize the value and brilliance of his own research, Nietzsche exaggerated both Diogenes' importance and his stupidity. He came to do so by closely analyzing some of the same passages that had bothered earlier scholars (and that have continued to bother later ones), partly by uncritically accepting as fundamental methodological principles four suspicions about Diogenes as a writer and as a person:

1. *Somnolence*: Over and over again, Nietzsche asserted that Diogenes must have been half asleep when he excerpted his sources. Evidently, Diogenes had transcribed so much that he became tired and simply kept on copying out things that were irrelevant or false without even noticing what he was doing.

2. *Indolence*: Nietzsche preferred to assume fewer sources rather than more sources. He suspected Diogenes to have been so lazy that he stayed with one source as long as possible and only moved on to another one when this became absolutely necessary.

3. *Secondhand erudition*: The more learning Diogenes flaunted, the more Nietzsche presumed he derived it from intermediate sources rather than from his own reading of the sources named.

4. *Deliberately misleading references*: According to Nietzsche, Diogenes always took care to mention somewhere the authors he copied so he could not be accused of having suppressed their names altogether. But to mislead the reader he took just as much care to mention them only in passing, for the sake of minor details, and usually so as to disagree with them.

The result was a Diogenes almost incredibly doltish, and dishonest to the point of moral turpitude. At one point, adopting the tone of the vice squad, Nietzsche wrote, "If we are severe, then we must call this a hypocrisy and unreliability on the part of the author and we must keep a sharp watch on this kind of character trait."<sup>7</sup>

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At first Nietzsche's prodigious exercise in *Quellenforschung* enjoyed some success. His essay won the prize (perhaps not least because the competition had been designed with him in mind, and apparently no other candidates presented themselves). His research on Diogenes was an important factor in his being offered a professorship at Basel.

<sup>7</sup> *Werke und Briefe*, 4.229–30.

But within a few years, Nietzsche's theories had started to crumble, and soon they fell apart altogether. In 1880, Ernst Maass (who went on to have a distinguished career as a classical scholar) could still discuss Nietzsche's hypothesis as one that scholars had to take seriously, even if they had to reject it in the end.<sup>8</sup> But already one year earlier Hermann Diels, in his epoch-making work on the Greek doxographers, had contemptuously dismissed the theory as less than a cobweb, and had derided Nietzsche for misunderstanding the grammar of the single sentence that served as a lynchpin for his whole argumentation.<sup>9</sup>

Since then, Nietzsche's work on Diogenes would have been largely forgotten had it not been *his* work. Philosophically interested readers have usually tended to ignore the more technical writing in classical philology he did as a student and professor. Their tendency may have been reinforced not only by the general disciplinary boundaries separating classics from philosophy since the nineteenth century but also in particular by the exclusion of Nietzsche, at least until recently, from the canon of scholars deemed acceptable by the world of professional classicists. More recently, when interest in Nietzsche finally became acceptable in that world, it was above all his speculations on Greek religion and tragedy that commanded their attention.

Even within the much smaller world of scholars interested in Diogenes Laertius, Nietzsche has not received much attention, let alone found acceptance. This is not hard to understand. For even though his hypothesis cannot really be disproven (and even though it has found at least one authoritative, albeit half-hearted, defender<sup>10</sup>), it is liable to various objections. For example, the putative centrality of Diocles encounters grave difficulties if we date him not, as Nietzsche did, to the first century BC, but instead, as most scholars do now, to a century earlier.

Worse is a fatal methodological flaw: for to claim that Diogenes merely took over most of his information thoughtlessly from Diocles means that the text that we actually possess, Diogenes', is denied any intellectual, philosophical merit of its own, while its qualities are attributed instead to a different text that we do not possess and about which we know almost nothing. This means not solving the problems posed by Diogenes, but instead just kicking the can down the road.

So we can understand why Nietzsche's hypothesis has largely been forgotten except by specialists. This is regrettable, not because it has a high probability of being correct but for two other reasons.

The first is that Nietzsche's analysis of Diogenes' procedures as a writer shows them to be uncannily, if only

<sup>8</sup> E. Maass, *De biographis graecis quaestiones selectae* (= U. von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf, *Philologische Untersuchungen*, 1880).

<sup>9</sup> Hermann Diels, *Doxographi graeci* (1879), 78. But cf. Barnes's careful discussion of this extremely difficult and textually uncertain sentence (7.48), in "Nietzsche and Diogenes Laertius."

<sup>10</sup> Barnes, "Nietzsche and Diogenes Laertius."

partially, similar to certain aspects of his own: studying Nietzsche on Diogenes helps us understand something about Nietzsche himself. For, as his private notebooks reveal, Nietzsche was not only a brilliant writer but also a voracious reader, a habit that bore all kinds of fruit in his own work. Many of the texts he wrote, published and unpublished, arose out of his reaction to those he read, and they often so clearly bear the traces of his reading that they can come to look like palimpsests through which we can glimpse, more or less faintly, the lineaments of his library.<sup>11</sup>

Nietzsche's use of excerpts from and partial revisions of other writers' texts does not in the least mean he is a plagiarizer, for his intention was not to fool his readers. Rather, he found certain ideas and formulations so fascinating that he could not help but incorporate some version of them into his own thinking and texts. And yet the analogy between Nietzsche and Diogenes is in the end misleading: for the results of Diogenes' reading remain undigested, crudely laid out without having been elaborated and transformed by a searing, hermeneutical intelligence. In Nietzsche, everything is rethought and reformulated by an unrelenting process of scriptural metabolism into the style we immediately identify as his own. Perhaps it was Diogenes' lack of assimilation that made Nietzsche so impatient and intolerant of him.

The other reason to recall Nietzsche's hypothesis is the more important one for the present volume: what sources Diogenes used and how he used them necessarily remain crucial questions in writing the history of Greek philosophy itself. Nietzsche's source-oriented answers fell out of favor at first because they were problematic, but in the end because the source-oriented questions for which he devised them fell out of favor themselves. The result has been that for a long time both Nietzsche's answers and his questions seem to have dropped out of the consciousness of classical philologists. The article on Diogenes Laertius in the standard large-scale encyclopedia of classical philology, dating from the beginning of the twentieth century, still takes seriously the business of unraveling Diogenes' sources (though it mentions Nietzsche only once in passing, as a dangerous example of manifest error).<sup>12</sup> A German handbook from 1975 declares that it is impossible to know what Diogenes' sources were and how he used them, while the corresponding English reference work asserts no less dogmatically that we can trust Diogenes when he tells us

what his sources were and can in general know what these were and how he used them.<sup>13</sup>

Only more recently has the subject of Diogenes' use of sources returned to the forefront of research in all its fascination and difficulty.<sup>14</sup> Nowadays we are less inclined to reduce late ancient compilations to the mere sum of their sources and more to see them as relatively autonomous works with their own dignity, engaged in the creative interpretation and application of the traditions that stand behind them. The result is that the very questions Nietzsche was asking in such a mechanistic and censorious way have lost much of the interest they once had. If reformulated so as to be more flexible and less condemnatory, however, they deserve to be of interest once again.

The likeliest explanation for the incoherencies and other defects in Diogenes' treatise is not that he was a plagiarizer: there is no evidence he intended such a deception of his readers any more than Nietzsche did. Instead we may assume that he did not live to put the finishing touches to his treatise and that all we possess now are the notes he made from his reading and more or less finished sketches for some chapters. So his book was probably published posthumously.<sup>15</sup> Who were his literary executors, and how competent were they philosophically? Did they compile all of his work or only a selection of it, and according to what criteria? To what extent, if at all, did they revise it, and why did they publish it?<sup>16</sup> Those tempted to call Diogenes an *asinus germanus* ("perfect ass")<sup>17</sup> should pray instead that the preparatory notes for their own unpublished works never see the light of day. Had he lived to complete his work we would doubtless still wonder about the reliability of his sources and his use and interpretation of them. As it is, the unfinished state of his treatise puts those puzzles in relief. We will surely not want simply to adopt Nietzsche's precise answer to them; but nor should we conceal from ourselves how urgent and perplexing they really are.

13 H. Dörrie, "Diogenes" [11], *Der kleine Pauly* (Munich, 1975), 2.46; H. S. Long, "Diogenes Laertius," *Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1970), 349.

14 The article by David T. Runia, "Diogenes" [17], in the updated *Neuer Pauly*, vol. 3 (Stuttgart-Weimar, 1997), 603, is admirably cautious and indicates clearly both the importance and enormous difficulty of these questions. On the other hand, the revision of Long's article by R. W. Sharples in the 3rd edition of *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) maintains the earlier formulations entirely unchanged in this section.

15 To be sure, at 10.138 Diogenes says that he is putting "the finishing touch . . . to my entire work"; but this does not mean that he actually lived long enough to complete the rest of it before he set what he thought might be the seal on its conclusion.

16 On the other hand, it is surely exaggerated to claim, as Schwartz does in *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, that Diogenes' treatise consists of nothing more than note cards that had fallen into total disorder and were thrown together, largely at random.

17 See H. Usener, *Epicurea* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1887), xxii.

11 See, e.g., T. Fries and G. W. Most, "Die Quellen von Nietzsches Rhetorik-Vorlesungen," in *Nietzsche oder "Die Sprache ist Rhetorik,"* ed. J. Kopperschmidt and H. Schanze (Munich: Fink, 1994), 17–38, 251–58; and "Von der Krise der Historie zum Prozess des Schreibens: Nietzsches zweite *Unzeitgemässe Betrachtung*," in *Schreibprozesse. Zur Genealogie des Schreibens*, ed. Peter Hughes, Thomas Fries, and Tan Wälchli (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2008), 133–56.

12 E. Schwartz, "Diogenes" [40], *Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft* 9; Halbband (Stuttgart, 1903), 745.

# GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

Jay R. Elliott

Diogenes Laertius' *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers* is a unique invitation to the world of ancient philosophy in all its fullness, from its complex arguments and doctrinal disputes to its scholarly successions and political intrigues. As Diogenes' writing reveals, his relation to ancient philosophy was already that of a scholarly investigator seeking to collect and synthesize a vast amount of material from philosophical texts, letters, biographies, and other sources. Two thousand years later, we lack access to many of the sources that Diogenes worked with, yet we have access to much more by way of modern scholarship and commentary. Because the *Lives* draw together so many aspects of the world of ancient Greek philosophical culture, the literature that is of potential interest to its readers is nearly infinite. In the pages that follow we provide a compact overview of this literature, focusing on texts that are most likely to be of interest to the student or general reader rather than the specialized scholar. The aim is to place the work of the present translation in context and to help readers to take the next steps in their further exploration of the world of ancient philosophy. The overview is divided into three main sections: first, materials pertaining to Diogenes' *Lives* itself, including editions and other translations of the text, as well as secondary literature on it; second, introductions to the study of ancient Greek philosophy; and third, materials relevant to specific philosophers and schools discussed in the *Lives*. With a few exceptions, we include translations and secondary materials in English only. Since much of the most important scholarly work related to the *Lives* has been done in French, German, or Italian, this is a significant limitation. Readers of those languages are encouraged to consult the editions and translations mentioned immediately below.

## LIVES OF THE EMINENT PHILOSOPHERS

### Editions

The most authoritative edition of the Greek text of Diogenes' *Lives* is Tiziano Dorandi, ed., *Diogenes Laertius: Lives of Eminent Philosophers* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); it includes a critical apparatus with variant readings of the text, cross-references to parallel passages in other ancient sources, an introduction that surveys the manuscript tradition through which *Lives* have come down to us, a bibliography, and a useful *Subsidium Interpretationis* connecting specific passages in the text with relevant pieces of scholarship. Dorandi's version of the text forms the basis for the present translation. Other modern editions, each of which includes variant readings of the text's disputed passages, are: Robert D. Hicks, ed. and trans., *Diogenes*

*Laertius: Lives of Eminent Philosophers* (2 vols., with English translation; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1925); H. S. Long, ed., *Diogenes Laertii: Vitae Philosophorum* (2 vols.; 2nd ed.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966); and Miroslav Marcovich and Hans Gärtner, *Diogenes Laertii: Vitae Philosophorum* (3 vols.; Stuttgart: Teubner, 2002).

### Translations

Apart from this edition, the only widely available complete translation into English is included in Hicks's edition mentioned above. Readers of French will wish to consult *Diogène Laërce: Vies et doctrines des philosophes illustres* (Paris: Le Livre de Poche, 1999), a translation prepared under the direction of Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé. It includes a general introduction, separate introductions and bibliographies for each book, and extensive notes with references to other ancient sources and to modern scholarly literature. Finally, readers of Italian will find Marcello Gigante's translation useful: *Diogene Laerzio: Vite dei filosofi* (2 vols; 3rd ed.; Bari: Laterza, 1987).

## SECONDARY LITERATURE

Little is known about the author of *Lives*; scholars have even disagreed over whether his name should properly be rendered Diogenes Laertius or Laertius Diogenes (though most now accept the former). On the basis of circumstantial evidence, including the figures he does (and does not) mention in *Lives*, scholars generally agree in dating him to the third century AD: see the "Notizia Bibliografica" in Gigante's edition.

Much scholarly work on *Lives* has taken the form of attempts to clarify the manuscript tradition and to establish a definitive text. The most complete account of this work can be found in the introduction to Dorandi's edition. Readers of Italian will have access to Dorandi's further reflections in his *Laertiana: Capitoli sulla tradizione manoscritta e sulla storia del testo delle "Vite dei filosofi" di Diogene Laerzio* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2009), which deals in depth with issues in the paleography of *Lives*. A related project is the attempt to track down all of Diogenes' sources. An important pioneer in this area was a young German philologist named Friedrich Nietzsche: see his "De Laertii Diogenis fontibus," "Analecta Laertiana," and *Beiträge zur Quellenkunde und Kritik des Laertius Diogenes*, all of which are collected in Fritz Bornmann and Mario Carpitella, eds., *Nietzsche Werke: Philologische Schriften* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1982). For recent reflections on Nietzsche's reading of *Lives*, see Gigante, "Gli studi di Nietzsche su Diogene Laerzio,"

## GUIDE TO FURTHER READING

in *Classico e mediazione: Contributi alla storia della filologia antica* (Rome: Nuova Italia Scientifica, 1989), 41–53; and Jonathan Barnes, “Nietzsche and Diogenes Laertius,” *Nietzsche-Studien* 15 (1986): 16–40.

Among the few attempts to provide a comprehensive interpretation of *Lives* as a literary and philosophical work is Richard Hope, *The Book of Diogenes Laertius: Its Spirit and Its Method* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1930). The journal *Elenchos* devoted a special issue (vol. 7, 1986) to *Lives*; entitled “Diogene Laertio storico del pensiero antico,” it includes some of the most noteworthy essays on Diogenes’ literary and philosophical style: see especially the contributions by Gigante, “Biografia e dossografia in Diogene Laertio,” and by J. F. Kindstrand, “Diogenes Laertius and the Chreia Tradition.” On Diogenes’ methods as a historiographer, see James Warren, “Diogenes Laërtius: Biographer of Philosophy,” in *Ordering Knowledge in the Roman Empire*, ed. Jason König and Tim Whitmarsh (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 133–49. On the role of death scenes in Diogenes’ biographies, see Sergi Grau, “How to Kill a Philosopher: The Narrating of Ancient Greek Philosophers’ Deaths in Relation to Their Way of Living,” *Ancient Philosophy* 30 (2010): 347–81. Kendra Eshleman’s “Affection and Affiliation: Social Networks and Conversion to Philosophy,” *Classical Journal* 103 (2007–2008): 129–41, reads *Lives* as a source of evidence regarding how ancient philosophical schools grew and recruited followers. On Diogenes’ place in the world of ancient writing about the history of philosophy, see Jørgen Mejer, *Diogenes Laertius and His Hellenistic Background* (Wiesbaden: Steiner, 1978) and “Diogenes Laertius and the Transmission of Greek Philosophy,” *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* II 36.5 (1992): 3556–602. For an introduction to the wider tradition of ancient Greek biographical writing, see Arnaldo Momigliano, *The Development of Greek Biography* (exp. ed.; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993).

### Introductions to Ancient Greek Philosophy

Readers who are just beginning to approach ancient philosophy should start by immersing themselves in a range of primary texts. Two anthologies that contain a representative selection in translation are: Julia Annas, ed., *Voices of Ancient Philosophy: An Introductory Reader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); and Nicholas D. Smith, Fritz Allhoff, and Anand Jayprakash Vaidya, eds., *Ancient Philosophy: Essential Readings with Commentary* (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2008). Scholars often group the Cynics, Stoics, Epicureans, and Pyrrhonian and Academic Sceptics together under the heading of “Hellenistic Philosophy.” For selections from the extant evidence regarding these schools, see A. A. Long and

David N. Sedley, eds., *The Hellenistic Philosophers* (2 vols.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), which includes texts in both the original languages and translation, along with notes and commentary. The same territory is covered more briefly and in translation only by Brad Inwood and L. P. Gerson, eds., *Hellenistic Philosophy: Introductory Readings* (2nd ed.; Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997).

A classic survey of ancient Greek philosophy in depth and breadth is W. K. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy* (6 vols.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1962–1981). Succinct modern introductions can be had from Julia Annas, *Ancient Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); and Anthony Kenny, *Ancient Philosophy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004). For introductions to the various ancient schools through their competing views of happiness, see Annas, *The Morality of Happiness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); and Martha Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994). Introductory works that focus on the “Hellenistic” schools include Annas, *Hellenistic Philosophy of Mind* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992); A. A. Long, *Hellenistic Philosophy: Stoics, Epicureans, Sceptics* (New York: Scribner, 1974); and R. W. Sharples, *Stoics, Epicureans and Sceptics: An Introduction to Hellenistic Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1998). Peter Adamson’s ambitious *History of Philosophy Without Any Gaps* series includes two volumes (both Oxford: Oxford University Press) that cover figures in *Lives: Classical Philosophy* (2014) focuses on the Pre-Socratics, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, while *Philosophy in the Hellenistic and Roman Worlds* (2015) covers the Cynics, Stoics, Epicureans, and Sceptics.

There has recently been a considerable revival of interest in the idea of philosophy as a way of life in antiquity and beyond. For treatments in this vein, see Pierre Hadot, *What Is Ancient Philosophy?*, trans. Michael Chase (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004); James Miller, *Examined Lives: From Socrates to Nietzsche* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 2011); and Alexander Nehamas, *The Art of Living: Socratic Reflections from Plato to Foucault* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998). More focused explorations of the cultural and political context around some of the figures discussed by Diogenes can be found in Fernanda Decliva Caizzi, “The Porch and the Garden: Early Hellenistic Images of the Philosophical Life,” in *Images and Ideologies: Self-Definition in the Hellenistic World*, ed. Anthony W. Bulloch, Erich S. Gruen, A. A. Long, and Andrew Stewart (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 303–29; and Christian Habicht, “Hellenistic Athens and Her Philosophers,” in his *Athen in Hellenistischer Zeit: Gesammelte Aufsätze* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1994), 231–47.

### Figures and Schools Described in *Lives*

This section is divided into eight subsections: (A) the Pre-Socratics; (B) Socrates and the early Socratics; (C) Plato and the Academy; (D) Aristotle and the Lyceum; (E) the Cynics; (F) the Stoics; (G) Pyrrhonian Sceptics; and (H) Epicurus and Epicureanism. In each case, I first mention editions and translations of primary works by the figure or school in question, and then secondary works by modern scholars. Readers should keep in mind that many of the writings of the thinkers described by Diogenes are nearly or entirely lost. In particular, this is true for many of the most intriguing and historically significant figures in *Lives*, such as Diogenes of Sinope, Zeno of Citium, and Epicurus. This profound loss makes it extraordinarily difficult for us to properly assess their thought today; it is also one of the reasons that Diogenes' biographies are such an important source for our knowledge of their works. In some cases, we possess works by later thinkers in antiquity who commented on or sought to develop the views of these predecessors, and so these are sometimes mentioned in the corresponding places, but always under the caveat that these later writers are engaged in their own original work and should not be regarded as merely transmitting what their predecessors thought.

Some of the divisions below correspond to Diogenes' organization of his biographies, some do not. B corresponds to Book 2 from Socrates onward, C to Books 3 and 4, D to Book 5, E to Book 6, F to Book 7 and H to Book 10. Pyrrho and his follower Timon are discussed by Diogenes in Book 9. The most difficult case has to do with the extremely broad group of "Pre-Socratics." This category, largely the invention of nineteenth- and twentieth-century philosophers and philologists, contains a wealth of diverse figures who were active in the sixth and fifth centuries BC. It typically includes these thinkers discussed by Diogenes: Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Anaxagoras, Archelaus, Pythagoras, Empedocles, Philolaus, Heraclitus, Xenophanes, Parmenides, Melissus, Zeno of Elea, Leucippus, Democritus, and Diogenes of Apollonia. Diogenes assigns these men to quite different parts of his work, according to his sense of their place in certain lines of intellectual affiliation and influence. Thus he places Thales, for example, in Book 1, Anaximander in Book 2, Empedocles in Book 8, and Heraclitus in Book 9. Rather than following Diogenes' arrangement, we will adopt modern convention here and treat the Pre-Socratics as a group.

### A. Pre-Socratics

#### *The Pre-Socratics in General*

The classic edition of the Greek texts (all of which are fragmentary) is Hermann Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, revised by Walther Kranz (6th ed.; Berlin: Weidmann, 1952). Its numbering of the fragments is

standard, although disputes continue about the precise readings of the texts. Two more recent collections of the fragments, both of which include English translations, are: G. S. Kirk, J. E. Raven, and Malcolm Schofield, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (2nd ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); and Daniel W. Graham, ed., *The Texts of Early Greek Philosophy: The Complete Fragments and Selected Testimonies of the Major Presocratics* (2 vols.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

A classic overview of Pre-Socratic thought is John Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy* (4th ed.; London: A. & C. Black, 1930). Other good introductions are Jonathan Barnes, *The Presocratic Philosophers* (London: Routledge & Paul, 1979), and Catherine Rowett, *Presocratic Philosophy: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004). An excellent collection of essays, containing investigations of various aspects of the Pre-Socratic thinkers, is D. J. Furley and R. E. Allen, eds., *Studies in Presocratic Philosophy* (2 vols.; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970–1975). Each chapter in Patricia Curd and Daniel W. Graham, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Presocratic Philosophy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), provides an orientation to current research on a major figure or topic in this area. For a recent study that compares the lives (and deaths) of three major Pre-Socratic philosophers, see Ava Chitwood, *Death by Philosophy: The Biographical Tradition in the Life and Death of the Archaic Philosophers Empedocles, Heraclitus and Democritus* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004).

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, several major figures in the German-speaking philosophical world sought to lay claim to the intellectual legacy of the Pre-Socratics. The reader should keep in mind that the interpretations in these works are more philosophical than historical. The trend arguably began with Nietzsche: see his writings posthumously published as *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks* (Marianne Cowan, trans.; Chicago: Regnery, 1962) and *Pre-Platonic Philosophers* (Greg Whitlock, ed. and trans.; Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001). It continued with Martin Heidegger's lecture courses *An Introduction to Metaphysics* (Gregory Fried and Richard Polt, trans.; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); *The Beginning of Western Philosophy: Interpretation of Anaximander and Parmenides* (Richard Rojcewicz, trans.; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015); *Parmenides* (André Schuwer and Richard Rojcewicz, trans.; Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992); and *Heraclitus* (Marnie Hanlon, trans.; London: Athlone, 2013). A third German philosopher who sought to align his intellectual project with the Pre-Socratics is Hans-Georg Gadamer: see the essays collected in his *The Beginning of Knowledge* (Rod Coltman, trans.; New York: Continuum, 2001). Finally, Karl Popper's *The World of Parmenides* (London: Routledge, 1998) is a collection of essays on the Pre-Socratics by a major figure in twentieth-century

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German-speaking philosophy with a philosophical sensibility of a rather different sort from that of the three mentioned above. Later in the twentieth century, there was another surge of interest in the Pre-Socratics, this time fueled by French thinkers who sought to approach this material through a lens influenced by anthropology: see Jean-Pierre Vernant, *The Origins of Greek Thought* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1982); and Marcel Detienne, *Masters of Truth in Archaic Greece* (Janet Lloyd, trans.; New York: Zone Books, 1996).

### **Pre-Socratic Figures and Movements**

Ionians (Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Xenophanes, Heraclitus, Anaxagoras)

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The fragments of Xenophanes, with translation and commentary, can be found in J. H. Lesher, *Xenophanes of Colophon* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992). For the fragments of Heraclitus, see Charles H. Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979). The fragments of Anaxagoras are collected in David Sider, *The Fragments of Anaxagoras* (2nd ed.; Sankt Augustin, Ger.: Academia Verlag, 2005); and Patricia Curd, *Anaxagoras of Clazomenae: Fragments and Testimonia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007). For interpretation of these fragments, see Malcolm Schofield, *An Essay on Anaxagoras* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980). Daniel W. Graham's *Explaining the Cosmos: The Ionian Tradition of Scientific Philosophy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2006) is a general introduction to this tradition, focusing on Anaximander, Anaximenes, and their intellectual heirs and critics.

### **Pythagoras and Pythagoreanism**

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*The Pythagorean Sourcebook and Library* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Phanes Press, 1987), compiled and translated by Kenneth Sylvan Guthrie, contains all the extant biographies of Pythagoras from antiquity, including the extensive life by Iamblichus, as well as fragments from Pythagoras and other Pythagorean authors. A classic study of Pythagoreanism is Walter Burkert, *Lore and Science in Ancient Pythagoreanism* (E. L. Minar, trans.; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972). See also J. A. Philip, *Pythagoras and Early Pythagoreanism* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966); Charles H. Kahn, "Pythagorean Philosophy Before Plato," in *The Presocratics: A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. A. P. D. Mourelatos (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1974), 161–86; and Charles H. Kahn, *Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans: A Brief History* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2001). On Philolaus, see Carl A. Huffman, *Philolaus of Croton, Pythagorean and Presocratic: A Commentary on the Fragments and Testimonia with Interpretive Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993). For texts and interpretations of later Pythagoreanism, see Holger Thesleff, *An Introduction*

*to the Pythagorean Writings of the Hellenistic Period* (Turku, Fin.: Åbo Akademi, 1961); and his *The Pythagorean Texts of the Hellenistic Period* (Turku, Fin.: Åbo Akademi, 1965).

### **Eleatics (Parmenides, Melissus, Zeno of Elea)**

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For the fragments of Parmenides, see A. H. Coxon, *The Fragments of Parmenides* (Assen, Neth.: Van Gorcum, 1986), which also includes testimonia, translation, and commentary. The fragments of Zeno of Elea can be found in H. D. P. Lee, *Zeno of Elea* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1936). For philosophical interpretation of the Parmenides fragments, see A. P. D. Mourelatos, *The Route of Parmenides* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970). Parmenides' philosophical influence is discussed in Patricia Curd, *The Legacy of Parmenides: Eleatic Monism and Later Presocratic Thought* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1998). Detailed and influential investigations concerning Zeno's paradoxes can be found in several essays by Gregory Vlastos collected in D. J. Furley and R. E. Allen, eds., *Studies in Presocratic Philosophy*, vol. 2 (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975).

### **Empedocles**

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The most current edition of the text of Empedocles, incorporating new material from recently discovered papyri, is Brad Inwood, *The Poem of Empedocles* (rev. ed.; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2001). For an attempt to reconstruct one of Empedocles' major arguments, see Denis O'Brien, *Empedocles's Cosmic Cycle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969). A reading that takes the new evidence into account can be found in Simon Trépanier, *Empedocles: An Interpretation* (London: Routledge, 2004).

### **Atomists (Leucippus, Democritus)**

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The best edition of the fragments of Democritus is *Democrito: Raccolta dei frammenti* (Milan: Bompiani, 2007), published under the direction of Giuseppe Gergenti, and based on *Demokrit*, a Russian edition by Salomon Luria (Leningrad: Nauka, 1970). For an edition with English translations, see C. C. W. Taylor, *The Atomists: Leucippus and Democritus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999). An ambitious attempt to reconstruct Democritus' thought in its original scope is Walter Leszl, "Democritus' Works: From Their Titles to Their Contents," in *Democritus: Science, the Arts and the Care of the Soul*, ed. Aldo Brancacci and Pierre-Marie Morel (Leiden: Brill, 2007), 11–76. For in-depth discussions of specific aspects of Democritus' views, see C. C. W. Taylor, "Pleasure, Knowledge, and Sensation in Democritus," *Phronesis* 12 (1967): 6–27; and Gregory Vlastos, "Ethics and Physics in Democritus," in D. J. Furley and R. E. Allen, eds., *Studies*

in *Presocratic Philosophy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975), 2:381–408. (Works treating the relationship between the early Greek atomists and Epicurus can be found in the section on Epicurus.)

### B. Socrates and the Early Socratics

The standard edition of the fragments and testimonia concerning Socrates and his followers is Gabriele Giannantoni, ed., *Socratis et Socraticorum Reliquiae* (4 vols.; Naples: Bibliopolis, 1990). Xenophon's extant writings are available in five volumes in the Oxford Classical Texts series (various editors; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1922–1985), and in six volumes, with facing English translation, in the Loeb Classical Library (various editors; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1914–2013). For the texts of Aristippus and the Cyrenaics, see Erich Mannebach, *Aristippi et Cyrenaicorum Fragmenta* (Leiden: Brill, 1961).

Xenophon's writings are an important source of evidence concerning Socrates and his companions: see his *Memorabilia*, *Symposium*, and *Apology* (Xenophon's account of Socrates' defense at his trial). These texts are collected, with English translation, in E. C. Marchant, O. J. Todd, eds., Jeffrey Henderson, rev., *Xenophon: Memorabilia, Oeconomicus, Symposium, Apology* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2013). A number of other ancient sources shed light on the Socratic circle. For a comedic view of Socrates as a huckster and pedant, see Aristophanes' *Clouds*, in Jeffrey Henderson, ed. and trans., *Aristophanes: Clouds, Wasps, Peace* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998). The most influential representation of Socrates comes from Plato: see in particular his *Euthyphro*, *Apology*, and *Crito*, which depict his conduct just before, during, and after his trial. Plato's *Phaedo* represents Socrates during the last moments of his life in conversation with certain intimate members of his circle, although the views expressed by the character of Socrates in that dialogue are often thought to represent Platonic innovations. All of these Platonic texts can be found, with English translation, in Harold North Fowler, ed. and trans., *Plato: Euthyphro, Apology, Crito, Phaedo, Phaedrus* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1914). For collections of these materials in translation only, see Thomas G. West and Grace Starry West, trans., *Four Texts on Socrates* (rev. ed.; Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1998), which includes *Clouds*, *Euthyphro*, *Apology*, and *Crito*; and J. M. Cooper, ed., and G. M. A. Grube, trans., *Plato: Five Dialogues* (2nd ed.; Indianapolis: Hackett, 2002), which includes the three Platonic dialogues just mentioned, plus *Phaedo*, but not *Clouds*. Plutarch's life of Alcibiades is a primary source of evidence for our understanding of Socrates' relationship with this Athenian politician: see Bernadotte Perrin, ed. and trans., *Plutarch: Lives* (11 vols.; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1914–1926).

Since the secondary literature on Socrates is immense, we present only the briefest survey here. For

concise introductions to his life and thought, see A. E. Taylor, *Socrates* (Boston: Beacon, 1952); C. C. W. Taylor, *Socrates: A Very Short Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); and George Rudebusch, *Socrates* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009). Perhaps the single most important writer about Socrates in the last half century is Gregory Vlastos: see his *Socrates: Ironist and Moral Philosopher* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1991), and *Socratic Studies* (Myles Burnyeat, ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994). Discussion of Socrates' trial and death can be found in Myles Burnyeat, "The Impiety of Socrates," *Ancient Philosophy* 17 (1997): 1–12; and C. D. C. Reeve, *Socrates in the "Apology": An Essay on Plato's Apology of Socrates* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1989). For a study of visual representations of Socrates and other ancient thinkers, see Paul Zanker, *The Mask of Socrates: The Image of the Intellectual in Antiquity* (Alan Shapiro, trans.; Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996). On the role of Socrates as an exemplar for many later philosophers, especially the Stoics, see A. A. Long, "Socrates in Hellenistic Philosophy," in *Stoic Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 1–34. Overviews of current topics in the scholarly literature can be found in: Sara Ahbel-Rappe and Rachana Kamtekar, eds., *A Companion to Socrates* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005); John Bussanich and Nicholas D. Smith, eds., *The Bloomsbury Companion to Socrates* (London: Bloomsbury, 2013); and Donald R. Morrison, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Socrates* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

During the nineteenth century, a reconsideration of Socrates became an important part of the intellectual movement we now call "existentialism": see in particular the following pseudonymous works of Søren Kierkegaard, all of which are translated by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong and published by Princeton University Press: *The Concept of Irony with Continual Reference to Socrates* (1989), *The Sickness unto Death* (1980), and *Philosophical Fragments* (1987). Socrates is also a recurring concern in the writings of Nietzsche, especially *The Birth of Tragedy* (Walter Kaufmann, trans.; New York: Penguin, 1967), and *Twilight of the Idols* (Duncan Large, trans.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998).

On the other members of the Socratic circle, see George Grote, *Plato: And Other Companions of Sokrates* (London: J. Murray, 1867); and Deborah Nails, *People of Plato: A Prosopography of Plato and Other Socratics* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2002). Among the most significant Socratic thinkers was Aristippus, who went on to found the Cyrenaic school. On Aristippus and his school, see Voula Tsouna-McKirahan, "The Cyrenaic Theory of Knowledge," *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 10 (1992): 161–92; André Laks, "Plaisirs cyrénaïques: Pour une logique de l'évolution interne à l'école," in *Hédonismes*, ed. L. Boulégué and C. Lévy (Villeneuve d'Ascq, Fr.: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 2007), 17–46; Klaus Döring, "Der Sokratesschüler Aristipp und

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die Kyrenaiker,” in *Kleine Schriften zur antiken Philosophie und ihrer Nachwirkung* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2010), 77–139; and Kurt Lampe, *The Birth of Hedonism: The Cyrenaic Philosophers and Pleasure as a Way of Life* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2015).

### C. Plato and the Academy

Plato is one of the few thinkers discussed in the *Lives* from whom we are fortunate enough to have a complete set of texts—indeed, we have too many, in the sense that several of the texts included in our Platonic corpus are now generally considered spurious. The standard edition of the Greek text is published by Clarendon/Oxford University Press in the Oxford Classical Texts series (various editors; 5 vols.; 1922–1995). A classic collection of Plato’s writings in translation is Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, eds., *The Collected Dialogues of Plato* (New York: Pantheon, 1961). It has now been essentially superseded by John M. Cooper and D. S. Hutchinson, eds., *The Complete Works of Plato* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997), which includes the full corpus and contains more up-to-date translations.

The reader first coming to Plato should be aware that scholars today usually group his dialogues into three “periods” of composition, early, middle, and late. The assignment of dialogues to these periods is largely based on internal evidence of style and doctrine, and it continues to be a matter of dispute. The “early” dialogues, such as *Euthyphro*, *Apology*, *Gorgias*, and *Crito*, are often thought to present a picture of Socrates that is closer to historical reality. The “middle” and “later” dialogues, such as *Phaedo*, *Republic*, *Timaeus*, *Symposium*, and *Theaetetus*, are supposed to represent the more original development of Plato’s own thought, albeit often expressed in the voice of his character “Socrates.”

Beyond Diogenes’ biography, there are a number of other ancient sources regarding Plato’s life. The letters in the Platonic corpus are generally considered to be one important source, but they may not all be genuine; of them, the seventh is the most substantive (particularly in its details about Plato’s Sicilian connections) and is today widely thought to be authentic. Alice Swift Riginos provides an overview of many of the other ancient sources for Plato’s biography in *Platonica: The Anecdotes Concerning the Life and Writings of Plato* (Leiden: Brill, 1976). For ancient biographies of two powerful politicians connected to Plato, see Plutarch’s lives of Dion and of Phocion. Both can be found in Bernadotte Perrin, ed. and trans., *Plutarch: Lives* (11 vols.; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1914–1926). On the cult of Plato after his death, see the later Neoplatonic *Prolegomena to Platonic Philosophy*, edited and translated by L. G. Westerlink (Amsterdam: North-Holland Publishing, 1962).

The situation with regard to primary texts from

the post-Platonic Academic figures whom Diogenes describes in Book 4 is not good: some of them made a point of writing nothing at all, and of those who did write, none of their writings survives complete. Collections of fragments have been published for only three of the men discussed in Book 4: Leonardo Tarán, ed., *Speusippus of Athens* (Leiden: Brill, 1981; this edition includes commentary but no translation); Richard Heinze, *Xenocrates* (Stuttgart: Teubner, 1892); and J. F. Kindstrand, *Bion of Borysthene* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1976). In the absence of primary texts from the Academics, attempts to reconstruct their views tend to rely on later testimonia, such as those found in Cicero (see his *Academica* in volume 11 of the Loeb edition of his works, edited and translated by Harris Rackham, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1933) and in Clement of Alexandria (see his *Stromata*, edited by Otto Stählin, Ludwig Früchtel, and Ursula Treu, 4th ed., Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1985).

As with Socrates, the literature on Plato is enormous, so here again we will have to be extremely selective. A concise and accessible introduction is Julia Annas, *Plato* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003). Richer and far more ambitious is Paul Friedländer, *Plato: An Introduction*, trans. Hans Meyerhoff (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2015). On Plato’s cultural and intellectual milieu, see George Grote, *Plato: And Other Companions of Sokrates* (London: J. Murray, 1867); Deborah Nails, *People of Plato: A Prosopography of Plato and Other Socratics* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2002); and G. C. Field, *Plato and His Contemporaries* (London: Methuen, 1967).

Perhaps the central issue in interpreting Plato’s writings concerns the significance of his use of the dialogue form. For various approaches to this issue, see Julia Annas, “Plato the Sceptic,” in *Methods of Interpreting Plato and His Dialogues*, ed. James C. Klaage and Nicholas D. Smith (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 43–72; Michael Frede, “Plato’s Arguments and the Dialogue Form,” in *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy*, supplementary volume 1992, 201–20; Charles H. Kahn, *Plato and the Socratic Dialogue: The Philosophical Use of a Literary Form* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); and C. J. Rowe, *Plato and the Art of Philosophical Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007). A collection of classic essays that have shaped the field of Plato studies over the past half century is Gail Fine, ed., *Plato* (2 vols.; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999). For overviews of main topics in current scholarship, see Richard Kraut, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Plato* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Gail Fine, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Plato* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); and Hugh Benson, ed., *A Companion to Plato* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006).

For major treatments of the post-Platonic Academy, see John Dillon, *The Heirs of Plato: A Study of the*

*Old Academy (347–274 BC)* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003); and John Dillon, *The Platonic Heritage* (Farnham, Eng.: Ashgate-Variorum, 2012). In-depth studies of specific figures in the Academy include: David Whitehead, “Xenocrates the Metic,” *Rheinisches Museum* 124 (1981): 233–44; and John M. Cooper, “Arcesilaus: Socratic and Sceptic,” in *Knowledge, Nature and the Good* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2004), 81–103. For a study of the debate between the Academics and the Stoics that shaped the career of Carneades, see Gisela Striker, “Sceptical Strategies,” in *Doubt and Dogmatism: Studies in Hellenistic Epistemology*, ed. Malcolm Schofield, Myles Burnyeat, and Jonathan Barnes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 54–83. On the nature of Academic Skepticism, and its relation to the other major form of ancient Skepticism, Pyrrhonism, see the essays in Richard Bett, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Skepticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010). On the development of the Academy and its internal struggles after Plato’s death, see E. J. Watts, “Creating the Academy: Historical Discourse and the Shape of Community in the Old Academy,” *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 127 (2007): 106–22.

#### D. Aristotle and the Lyceum

All the works Aristotle published in his lifetime are now known to us only in fragments. The vast Aristotelian corpus that we think of as representing his intellectual legacy was assembled by later scholars in antiquity from lecture notes or drafts. The standard edition of the Greek text is published in thirteen volumes in the Oxford Classical Texts series (various editors; 1920–1981). The complete Oxford edition is published in translation in Jonathan Barnes, ed., *The Complete Works of Aristotle* (2 vols.; Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984). Barnes’s edition is comprehensive but unwieldy. More useful for students are two smaller, though still ample selections: *The Basic Works of Aristotle*, edited by Richard McKeon and revised by C. D. C. Reeve (New York: Random House, 2001); and J. L. Ackrill, *A New Aristotle Reader* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1987).

The other major Peripatetic figure from whom we possess significant works is Theophrastus, including his *Characters*, a collection of short sketches of various character types, as well as two works on botany, *On the Causes of Plants* and *Enquiry into Plants*. They are published in seven volumes, with English translation, by the Loeb Classical Library (various editors; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1916–2003). No works survive from the other Peripatetic figures described by Diogenes, but the series Rutgers University Studies in Classical Humanities (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers) has published several volumes containing their extant fragments: see Marie-Laurence Desclos and William W. Fortenbaugh, eds., *Strato of Lampsacus* (2011);

William W. Fortenbaugh and Stephen A. White, eds., *Lycos of Troas and Hieronymus of Rhodes* (2004); William W. Fortenbaugh and Eckart Schütrumpf, eds., *Demetrius of Phalerum* (2000); and Eckart Schütrumpf, ed., *Heraclides of Pontus* (2008). Primary texts in translation illustrating the development of the Lyceum can be found in R. W. Sharples, ed. and trans., *Peripatetic Philosophy, 200 BC to 200 AD: An Introduction and Collection of Sources in Translation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

The ancient sources for Aristotle’s life are collected in Ingemar Düring, *Aristotle in the Ancient Biographical Tradition* (Göteborg: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1957). Evidence regarding Aristotle’s connection with the Macedonian court can be found in Plutarch’s life of Alexander, in Bernadotte Perrin, ed. and trans., *Plutarch: Lives* (11 vols.; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1914–1926). For a collection of the extant evidence regarding Theophrastus’ life and views, see R. W. Sharples, *Theophrastus of Eresus: Sources for His Life, Writings, Thought and Influence* (Leiden: Brill, 1995).

As with Socrates and Plato, the secondary literature on Aristotle is massive and we will give only a small sample here. The most complete, up-to-date account of Aristotle’s biography and of the Lyceum during his lifetime is Carlo Natali, *Aristotle: His Life and School*, ed. D. S. Hutchinson (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2013). Brief introductions to his thought can be had from W. D. Ross, *Aristotle* (London: Methuen, 1923); Marjorie Grene, *A Portrait of Aristotle* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963); and, more recently, Jonathan Lear, *Aristotle: The Desire to Understand* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); and Christopher Shields, *Aristotle* (London: Routledge, 2007). A classic (though controversial) overview of Aristotle’s life and work is Werner Jaeger, *Aristotle: Fundamentals of the History of His Development*, trans. Richard Robinson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1948). One influential attempt to formulate and defend Aristotle’s overall philosophical methodology is T. H. Irwin, *Aristotle’s First Principles* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988). On the organization of the Lyceum as an institution, see John Patrick Lynch, *Aristotle’s School: A Study of a Greek Educational Institution* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972). Many of the most formative essays for recent scholarship can be found in Jonathan Barnes, Richard Sorabji, and Malcolm Schofield, eds., *Articles on Aristotle* (4 vols.; London: Duckworth, 1975–1979). For a survey of current topics in the secondary literature, see Jonathan Barnes, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

On Theophrastus, see two books by W. W. Fortenbaugh: *Theophrastus of Eresus: On His Life and Work* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1985), and *Theophrastean Studies* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1988). More focused on his *Characters* is

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Paul Millet, *Theophrastus and His World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

### E. Cynics

Few writings from the ancient Cynic movement survive. The literary remains of the early Cynics can be found in vol. 2 of Gabriele Giannantoni, ed., *Socratis et Socraticorum Reliquiae* (Naples: Bibliopolis, 1990). But interest in Cynicism persisted for centuries and a variety of later ancient authors provide some of our best remaining evidence about the movement, in the form of praise, censure, or satire of the Cynics: see Dio Chrysostom, *Discourses 1–11*, trans. J. W. Cohoon (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1932), especially discourses 6 and 8; and the satires of Lucian, translated by A. M. Harmon, K. Kilburn, and M. D. MacLeod, and published in eight volumes by Harvard University Press (Cambridge, Mass.: 1913–1967), especially *Philosophies for Sale* (in vol. 2), *The Passing of Peregrinus* (vol. 5), and Pseudo-Lucian, *The Cynic* (vol. 8). There are also many references to the Cynics, some more approving than others, in the works of the Roman Stoics: see Seneca, *Epistles*, trans. Richard M. Gummere (3 vols.; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996–2001), especially letters 29 and 90; and Epictetus, *Discourses*, trans. W. A. Oldfather (2 vols.; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1925–1928), especially 3.22. Finally, evidence for the long persistence of some form of Cynic activity comes from the fourth-century AD emperor Julian, who criticizes contemporary Cynics, while praising the original movement, in his Oration 7 and 9: see *The Works of the Emperor Julian*, trans. Wilmer Cave Wright (3 vols.; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1913–1923). An important piece of evidence for Antisthenes' proto-Cynic views is a speech attributed to him in Xenophon's *Symposium*. For a complete collection of the textual remains of Antisthenes, see Susan Hukill Prince, *Antisthenes of Athens: Texts, Translations and Commentary* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2015). On the Diogenes–Alexander relationship, see Plutarch's life of Alexander in Bernadotte Perrin, ed. and trans., *Plutarch: Lives* (11 vols.; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1914–1926). A useful collection of the ancient sources in English translation is Robert Dobbin, ed. and trans., *The Cynic Philosophers from Diogenes to Julian* (London: Penguin, 2012).

The secondary literature on the Cynics is not large, although it is growing. A classic study of the Cynics is Donald R. Dudley, *A History of Cynicism: From Diogenes to the Sixth Century AD* (London: Methuen, 1937). In the past twenty-five years, interest has picked up, as is shown by four recent monographs: Luis E. Navia, *Classical Cynicism* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1996); W. D. Desmond, *The Greek Praise of Poverty: The Origins of Ancient Cynicism* (South Bend, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2006); W. D. Desmond, *Cyn-*

*ics* (Berkeley: University of California, 2008); and Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé, *L'Ascèse cynique: Un Commentaire de Diogène Laërce VI, 70–71* (2nd ed.; Paris: Vrin, 2001).

Two fine collections of essays give a sense of the range of work currently being done in the field: Richard Goulet and Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé, eds., *Le Cynisme ancien et ses prolongements* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1993); and R. Bracht Branham and Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé, eds., *The Cynics: The Cynic Movement in Antiquity and Its Legacy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996). In the former collection, of special interest is Dmitri Gutas's "Sayings by Diogenes Preserved in Arabic," which provides an overview of sources for the life of Diogenes not included in most classical scholarship. Especially recommended from the latter collection is John L. Moles, "Cynic Cosmopolitanism."

On the Stoic–Cynic relationship, see Marie-Odile Goulet-Cazé, *Les "Kynica" du Stoïcisme* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2003); and R. Bracht Branham, "School for Scandal: The Cynic Origins of Stoicism," *Ancient Philosophy* 26 (2004): 443–47. In two books, F. Gerald Downing has argued for important connections between Cynic asceticism and early Christianity: *The Cynics and Christian Origins* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1992), and *Christ and the Cynics: Jesus and Other Radical Preachers in the First Century Tradition* (Sheffield, Eng.: JSOT Press, 1988).

In recent years, new impetus has been given to the study of the Cynics through the publication of two posthumous works by Michel Foucault: *Fearless Speech*, ed. Joseph Pearson (Los Angeles: Semiotext[e], 2001), and *The Courage of Truth*, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011). Several contemporary authors have tried to reconstruct the legacy of Cynicism in modernity and to clarify the relationship between the ancient philosophical movement and the modern habit of thought we call "cynicism": Peter Sloterdijk, *Critique of Cynical Reason*, trans. Michael Eldred (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987); Heinrich Niehues-Pröbsting, *Der Kynismus des Diogenes und der Begriff des Zynismus* (Munich: Fink, 1979); and David Mazella, *The Making of Modern Cynicism* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007). Louisa Shea's *The Cynic Enlightenment: Diogenes in the Salon* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2010) argues for the influence of Cynicism on eighteenth-century thought, especially that of Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

### F. Stoics

No complete work from any of the early Stoics survives. The standard edition of the fragments is Hans von Arnim, ed., *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* (4 vols.; Leipzig: Teubner, 1903–1924). For editions with text and commentary on specific figures, see: A. C. Pearson, *The Fragments of Zeno and Cleanthes* (London: C. J. Clay, 1891); and William W. Fortenbaugh and Stephen A. White, eds., *Aristo of Ceos* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 2006). A more specialized collection that deals with the evidence for

Stoic logic in greater depth than von Arnim is Karlheinz Hülsler, *Die Fragmente zur Dialektik der Stoiker* (Stuttgart: Frommann-Holzboog Verlag, 1987–1988).

The Stoic movement continued to flourish and develop under the Roman Empire, and many of our best sources for Stoic thought come from later writers. (The references in this paragraph are all to volumes in the Loeb Classical Library, published in Cambridge, Mass., by Harvard University Press.) Cicero was not a Stoic, but he took an active interest in debating Stoic positions: see his *On the Nature of the Gods* (H. Rackham, trans.; 1933), which contains an account of Stoic cosmology and theology, as well as *On Ends* (H. Rackham, trans.; 1914) and *Tusculan Disputations* (J. E. King, trans.; 1927), both of which contain discussions of Stoic ethics. More evidence for Stoic doctrine comes from the critical reports of Plutarch: see especially his *Against the Stoics on Common Conceptions* and *On Stoic Self-Contradictions*, both in H. F. Cherniss, trans., *Plutarch: Moralia*, vol. 13. Three major Roman thinkers develop their own brands of Stoicism: see Seneca, *Epistles* and *Moral Essays* (3 vols.; John W. Basore, trans.; 1932); Epictetus, *Discourses* and *Encheiridion* (published in the second volume of the *Discourses*); and Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations* (C. R. Haines, trans.; 1916).

The best one-volume introduction to Stoicism is F. H. Sandbach, *The Stoics* (New York: Norton, 1975). Other recommended monographs are John M. Rist, *Stoic Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969); and Ludwig Edelstein, *The Meaning of Stoicism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966). For more specialized treatment of various specific topics within Stoicism, see the essays by A. A. Long collected in his *Stoic Studies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) and *From Epicurus to Epictetus* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006). An orientation to the main questions in current scholarship can be had from Brad Inwood, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003). Three classic collections contain many of the most influential essays for recent work on the Stoics: A. A. Long, ed., *Problems in Stoicism* (London: Athlone, 1971); John M. Rist, ed., *The Stoics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978); and Ronald H. Epp, ed., *Recovering the Stoics* (supplement 23 to the *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 1985). More recent essays can be found in Katerina Ierodiakonou, *Topics in Stoic Philosophy* (2nd ed.; New York: Oxford University Press, 2001); and Ricardo Salles, ed., *God and Cosmos in Stoicism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

On Zeno in particular, see: H. C. Baldry, “Zeno’s Ideal State,” *Journal of Hellenic Studies* 79 (1959): 3–15; H. A. K. Hunt, *A Physical Interpretation of the Universe: The Doctrines of Zeno the Stoic* (Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 1976); and John M. Rist, “Zeno and Stoic Consistency,” *Phronesis* 22 (1977): 161–74. For studies of other figures in the early Stoa, see Malcolm Schofield, “Ariston

of Chios and the Unity of Virtue,” *Ancient Philosophy* 4 (1984): 83–96; A. W. James, “The Zeus Hymns of Cleanthes and Aratus,” *Antichthon* 6 (1972): 28–38; and J. B. Gould, *The Philosophy of Chrysippus* (Leiden: Brill, 1970).

Much scholarly work on the Stoics takes the form of attempts to clarify or define a standard view for the school concerning major philosophical questions. On Stoic metaphysics, see two essays by David Sedley: “The Stoic Theory of Universals,” in Epp, ed., *Recovering the Stoics*, 87–92; and “The Stoic Criterion of Identity,” *Phronesis* 27 (1982): 255–75. On Stoic logic, see Benson Mates, *Stoic Logic* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1953); and Ian Mueller, “An Introduction to Stoic Logic,” in Rist, ed., *The Stoics*, 1–26. On Stoic epistemology, see Gerard Watson, *The Stoic Theory of Knowledge* (Belfast: Queen’s University, 1966). For a study of the debate between the Stoics and Academics, see Gisela Striker, “Sceptical Strategies,” in *Doubt and Dogmatism: Studies in Hellenistic Epistemology*, ed. Malcolm Schofield, Myles Burnyeat, and Jonathan Barnes (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 54–83. On Stoic physics, see David E. Hahm, *The Origins of Stoic Cosmology* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1977). Attempts to reconstruct Stoic philosophy of mind can be found in A. A. Long, “Body and Soul in Stoicism,” *Phronesis* 27 (1982): 34–57; and Brad Inwood, *Ethics and Human Action in Early Stoicism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985). For an introduction to Stoic ethics, see Gisela Striker, “Following Nature: A Study in Stoic Ethics,” *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 9 (1991): 1–73; and Tad Brennan, *The Stoic Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005). On Stoic political thought, see Andrew Erskine, *The Hellenistic Stoa: Political Thought and Action* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1990); and Malcolm Schofield, *The Stoic Idea of the City* (2nd ed.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). Regarding the difficult but central Stoic concept of the sage, see René Brouwer, “Sagehood and the Stoics,” *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 23 (2002): 181–224. (For works discussing the relationship between Cynicism and Stoicism, see the section on the Cynics.)

### G. Pyrrhonian Scepticism

Pyrrho left behind no writings, and those of Timon exist only in fragments. The standard edition of the testimonies regarding Pyrrho is Fernanda Decleva Caizzi, *Pyrrone testimoniazze* (Naples: Bibliopolis, 1981). For the fragments of Timon, see Hugh Lloyd-Jones and Peter Parsons, *Supplementum Hellenisticum: Texte und Kommentar* 11, ed. Heinz-Günther Nesselrath (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1983). This edition was supplemented by new material in Hugh Lloyd-Jones, *Supplementum supplementi hellenistici: Texte und Kommentar* 26, ed. Marius Skempis (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2005). For an English translation of sources dealing with both Pyrrho and Timon, see A. A. Long and David N. Sedley, eds., *The Hellenistic Philosophers* (2 vols.;

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Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987). The most substantial writings we possess by a Pyrrhonist are those of Sextus Empiricus, but he lived several centuries after Pyrrho and the relation between his work and Pyrrho's thought remains a matter of dispute. His two surviving works are *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* and *Against the Mathematicians*; they were edited, with English translation, by R. G. Bury (4 vols.; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1955). A more up-to-date translation of Sextus' *Outlines* can be found in Julia Annas and Jonathan Barnes, eds. and trans., *Sextus Empiricus: Outlines of Scepticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000). Despite its name, *Against the Mathematicians* contains detailed critiques of many forms of specialized disciplinary learning, including physics, ethics, and logic. Some of these various parts of Sextus' polemic have recently been published separately in excellent translations by Richard Bett: *Sextus Empiricus: Against the Ethicists* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); and *Sextus Empiricus: Against the Logicians* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

The most extensive recent attempt to reconstruct Pyrrho's thought can be found in Richard Bett, *Pyrrho, His Antecedents and His Legacy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). For other attempts, see T. Corey Brennan, "Pyrrho on the Criterion," *Ancient Philosophy* 18 (1998): 417–34; and Jacques Brunschwig, "Pyrrho," in *The Cambridge History of Hellenistic Philosophy*, ed. Keimpe Algra et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 241–50. On Timon, see A. A. Long, "Timon of Phlius: Pyrrhonist and Satirist," in *From Epicurus to Epictetus* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 70–95. On Pyrrhonism more generally, see Julia Annas and Jonathan Barnes, *The Modes of Scepticism: Ancient Texts and Modern Interpretations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985); and R. J. Hankinson, *The Sceptics* (London: Routledge, 1995). For a focused treatment of Sextus Empiricus, see Barnes, *The Toils of Scepticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990). On the central question of whether and in what sense the Pyrrhonian Skeptic can have beliefs, see the essays collected in Myles Burnyeat and Michael Frede, eds., *The Original Sceptics: A Controversy* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997). Several of the contributions to Myles Burnyeat, ed., *The Sceptical Tradition* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983) take up another vexed question, namely the relation between Scepticism in antiquity and the central trope in modern philosophy that goes by the same name. On the notion of tranquillity in early Pyrrhonism, see Myles Burnyeat, "Tranquility Without a Stop: Timon Frag. 68," *Classical Quarterly* 30 (1980): 86–93. The question of Pyrrho's possible indebtedness to Indian thought is discussed in Everard Flintoff, "Pyrrho and India," *Phronesis* 25 (1980): 88–108. The chapters in Richard Bett, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Ancient Scepticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) deal with both Pyrrhonian and Academic Scepticism. On the relationship

between the two, Gisela Striker's essay in Bett's volume, "Academics Versus Pyrrhonists, Reconsidered," is especially recommended.

## H. Epicurus and Epicureanism

Very little of Epicurus' writing comes down to us; all that survives are a few letters, collections of maxims, and fragments. The classic collection of these materials is Hermann Usener, ed., *Epicurea* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1887). More up-to-date is Graziano Arrighetti, ed., *Epicuro: Opere* (2nd ed.; Turin: Einaudi, 1973). For an edition with English translations, see Cyril B. Bailey, *Epicurus: The Extant Remains* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926). A convenient selection of the extant texts and testimonia in translation is Brad Inwood and L. P. Gerson, eds. and trans., *The Epicurus Reader* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994).

In the past thirty years, papyrus scrolls from Herculaneum containing previously unavailable portions of Epicurus' treatise *On Nature* have been deciphered: see Graziano Arrighetti and Marcello Gigante, "Frammenti del libro undicesimo *Della Natura* di Epicuro (PHerc. 1042)," *Cronache Ercolanesi* 7 (1977): 5–8; Simon Laursen, "The Early Parts of Epicurus, *On Nature*, 25th Book," *Cronache Ercolanesi* 25 (1995): 5–109; and Laursen, "The Later Parts of Epicurus, *On Nature*, 25th Book," *Cronache Ercolanesi* 27 (1997): 5–83; see also Giuliana Leone, "Epicuro, *Della Natura*, Libro XIV," *Cronache Ercolanesi* 14 (1984): 17–107; and Giuliana Leone, ed. and trans., *Epicuro "Sulla Natura" Libro II* (Naples: Bibliopolis, 2012).

In the absence of many of Epicurus' works, readers have long relied on the writings of major followers to reconstruct Epicureanism. The most important of these is the first-century BC Roman poet Lucretius, whose epic poem *De Rerum Natura* (*On the Nature of Things*) presents his version of Epicurean doctrine: see *On the Nature of Things*, ed. M. F. Smith, with a prose translation by W. H. D. Rouse (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992). Other evidence from antiquity comes from the writings of another follower, Philodemus: see in particular Philip Howard De Lacey and Estelle Allen De Lacey, eds., *Philodemus on Methods of Inference* (2nd ed.; Naples: Bibliopolis, 1978); Dirk Obbink, ed., *Philodemus: On Piety, Book 1* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); and David Konstan, ed., *Philodemus: On Frank Criticism* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998). Finally, scholars have also traditionally seen the writings of Cicero as an important source of evidence for Epicurean views, in particular *On the Nature of the Gods*, which contains an account of Epicurean theology, as well as *On Ends* and *Tusculan Disputations*, both of which deal with Epicurean ethics.

Good introductions to Epicurus and his school can be found in Tim O'Keefe, *Epicureanism* (Durham, Eng.: Acumen, 2010); and John Rist, *Epicurus: An*

*Introduction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972). David J. Furley's *Two Studies in the Greek Atomists* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1967) is an in-depth investigation of two key ideas in Epicurus: that of indivisible magnitudes or "atoms," and the idea of a "swerve" in the atoms as the explanation for human voluntary action. An introduction to current topics in scholarship can be found in James Warren, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Epicureanism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

On aspects of Epicurus' biography, see David N. Sedley, "Epicurus and His Professional Rivals," in *Études sur l'épicurisme antique: Cahiers de philologie*, ed. Jean Bollack and André Laks (Villeneuve d'Ascq, Fr.: Presses Universitaires du Septentrion, 1976), 1:119–59. For debates about the precise location and nature of his philosophical retreat, see R. E. Wycherley, "The Garden of Epicurus," *Phoenix* 13 (1959): 73–77; M. L. Clarke, "The Garden of Epicurus," *Phoenix* 27 (1973): 386–87; and Diskin Clay, "The Athenian Garden," in Warren, *The Cambridge Companion to Epicureanism*, 9–28.

On the "swerve" and Epicurean accounts of human action, see David N. Sedley, "Epicurus' Refutation of Determinism" in *Suzētēsis: Studi sull'epicureismo greco e romano offerti a Marcello Gigante* (2 vols.; Naples: G. Macchiaroli, 1983), 11–51; Walter G. Englert, *Epicurus on the Swerve and Voluntary Action* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1987); and Julia Annas, "Epicurus on Agency," in Jacques Brunschwig and Martha Nussbaum, eds., *Passions and Perceptions: Studies in Hellenistic Philosophy of Mind* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 53–71.

On Epicurean metaphysics, epistemology, and philosophy of language, see A.A. Long, "Aisthēsis, prolepsis and linguistic theory in Epicurus," *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 18 (1971): 114–33; Elizabeth Asmis, *Epicurus' Scientific Method* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1984); Gisela Striker, "κρῆσιον τῆς ἀληθείας," in *Essays on Hellenistic Epistemology and Ethics*

(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 22–76; and Alexander Verlinsky, "Epicurus and His Predecessors on the Origin of Language," in *Language and Learning: Philosophy of Language in the Hellenistic Age*, eds. Dorothea Frede and Brad Inwood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 56–100.

For accounts of Epicurean ethics and political philosophy, see Philip Mitsis, *Epicurus' Ethical Theory: The Pleasures of Invulnerability* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1988); Gisela Striker, "Epicurean Hedonism" in Brunschwig and Nussbaum, eds., *Passions and Perceptions*, 3–17; Antonina M. Alberti, "The Epicurean Theory of Law and Justice," in André Laks and Malcolm Schofield, eds., *Justice and Generosity: Studies in Hellenistic Social and Political Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 161–90; John M. Cooper, "Pleasure and Desire in Epicurus," in *Reason and Emotion: Essays on Ancient Moral Psychology and Ethical Theory* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999), 485–514; and A. A. Long, "Pleasure and Social Utility—The Virtues of Being an Epicurean," in *From Epicurus to Epictetus* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 178–201.

A classic treatment of Epicurus' relationship to the earlier Greek atomists Leucippus and Democritus is Cyril Bailey's *The Greek Atomists and Epicurus* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1928). For differing accounts of the Epicurus–Lucretius relationship, see Diskin Clay, *Lucretius and Epicurus* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1983); and David Sedley, *Lucretius and the Transformation of Greek Wisdom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998). On Epicurus' reception and influence, see Howard Jones, *The Epicurean Tradition* (London: Routledge, 1989). A good cross-section of recent work on the Epicurean school after Epicurus can be found in the essays collected in Jeffrey Fish and Kirk R. Sanders, eds., *Epicurus and the Epicurean Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

# GLOSSARY OF ANCIENT SOURCES

Joseph M. Lemelin

**Achaeus of Eretria** (b. c. 484 BC): Tragic poet who lived in Athens. It is said that Euripides adapted from him the adage “in well-fed bodies, love resides.”

**Achaicus** (first century BC): Author of a treatise titled *Ethics*. Diogenes uses him as a source attesting that Menippus was a slave (see 6.99).

**Aenesidemus of Cnossus** (c. first century BC): Philosopher who sought to restore the Skeptical spirit to the Academy.

**Aeschines Socraticus** (c. 425–c. 350 BC): Follower of Socrates. Aeschines composed Socratic dialogues, only fragments of which are extant. While his dialogues were said to have been lacking in philosophical depth, they were lauded in antiquity for faithfully portraying Socrates’ character, wit, and conversational style. This Aeschines, also known as Aeschines of Sphettus, is not to be confused with the more well-known fourth-century orator of the same name. Diogenes discusses the life and views of this Aeschines at 2.60–64.

**Agrippa** (dates unknown): Skeptical philosopher who flourished after the time of Aenesidemus of Cnossus, which dates him at least later than the first century BC. He is known for introducing a set of five modes into Skeptical argumentation (see 9.88).

**Alcaeus** (b. c. 625–620 BC): One of the most admired ancient lyric poets. Only fragments of his works are extant. Alcaeus was born in Mytilene, on the island of Lesbos.

**Alcidamas** (fourth century BC): Rhetorician and pupil of Gorgias of

Leontini. Alcidamas advocated the importance of speaking extemporaneously on a wide range of topics, and is said to have had a florid and pompous manner of expression.

**Alcimus** (dates unknown): Sicilian rhetorician and historian. Alcimus composed a work on the mathematician Amyntas in which the former claims that Plato had stolen some of his ideas from Epicharmus (see 3.9).

**Alcmeon of Croton** (fifth century BC): Pythagorean philosopher who is said to have written a book on nature that Aristotle and Theophrastus consulted. He argued that the soul is immortal and travels along an endless cycle similar to that of the heavenly bodies. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 8.83.

**Alexander** (b. c. 105 BC): Greek scholar and historian whose enormous output earned him the nickname Polyhistor. His most famous work is a history of all the countries of the ancient world, but he also wrote a history of philosophers titled the *Successions*. Alexander is renowned for his productivity, but less so for originality or judgment. He died in a house fire.

**Alexis** (c. 375–c. 275 BC): Poet of Middle and New Comedy who lived and worked most of his life in Athens. Alexis was popular in his own time and is said to have tutored the more well-known comic poet Menander. Roman comic poets later imitated and adapted Alexis’s plays. This may be the same Alexis to whom Plato addressed his erotic epigram (see 3.31).

**Alexo of Myndus** (dates unknown): Undocumented outside of Diogenes’

reference to him (see 1.29). Myndus was a colony on the coast of Asia Minor known for its strong walls. Upon visiting Myndus, Diogenes the Cynic is said to have quipped about the mismatch between the greatness of the walls and the city that they enclosed.

**Ambryon** (dates unknown): Otherwise unknown. Ambryon apparently wrote a biography of Theocritus of Chios, who ridicules Aristotle in the fragment Diogenes quotes (5.11).

**Ameipsias** (fifth and fourth centuries BC): Athenian comic poet. He presented a caricature of Socrates in his play *Connos* similar to that in Aristophanes’ *Clouds* (see 2.28). In 423 BC the two poets competed against each other at the City Dionysia, with Ameipsias taking second place and Aristophanes third.

**Amphicrates of Athens** (first century AD): Possibly the rhetorician who was exiled from Athens to Seleucia, where he refused to open a school of rhetoric because he claimed the city’s people were beneath him. Diogenes reports that Amphicrates wrote a book titled *On Illustrious Men* (2.101).

**Amphis** (c. fourth century BC): Comic poet of Middle Comedy. His plays survive only in fragments, which display an interest in ordinary dealings of everyday life. While Amphis’s precise dates are unknown, a reference to Plato in an extant fragment of his work shows that he could not have been writing before the latter was active.

**Anacharsis** (sixth century BC): Scythian prince who took on legendary status among the Greeks. He was known for

his wisdom and was counted as one of the Seven Sages. Anacharsis was often portrayed as the archetypal wise barbarian. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 1.101–5.

**Anaxandrides** (fourth century BC): Poet of Middle Comedy who won several dramatic competitions in the Lenaea and the City Dionysia.

**Anaxilaides** (dates unknown): Undocumented outside of Diogenes' text. In his lost book *On Philosophy*, Anaxilaides reputedly described the relations between Plato's parents that eventually led to the philosopher's birth (see 3.2).

**Anaxilas** (mid-fourth century BC): Middle Comedy poet whose plays are preserved only in fragments. Nineteen titles have been handed down to us. Diogenes reports that Anaxilas pokes fun at Plato in his plays *Botrylion*, *Circe*, and *Wealthy Women* (3.28).

**Anaxilaus** (dates unknown): Historian of whom little is known. Diogenes mentions him in the life of Myson (1.107).

**Anaximenes of Lampsacus** (c. 380–320 BC): Rhetorician and historian. Among the titles attributed to him are the manual of rhetoric *Rhetorica ad Alexandrum* and the histories *Philippica* and *Hellenica*. Anaximenes was a student of the Cynic philosopher Zoilus, who was known for his caustic criticisms of Plato and Homer.

**Andron of Ephesus** (dates unknown): Author of a work titled *Tripod* that discusses the Seven Sages. Andron's work has not survived.

**Antagoras of Rhodes** (third century BC): Poet who composed epigrams as well as works titled *Hymn to Love* and *Thebais*. Diogenes reports that he was a vibrant presence at the drinking parties of Menedemus and that he wrote a poem about the tangled love affair between Crates and Polemon (see 2.133 and 4.21).

**Anticlides of Athens** (fl. third century BC): Author known for a history of Alexander and a work on mythology. Scholars note a Peripatetic approach in the fragments of his works. He reputedly added romantic flourishes to his account of the Trojan War and wrote alternative versions of ancient legends.

**Antidorus**: It is unclear which Antidorus Diogenes is referencing. Antidorus is given the epithet *Sannidorus*, perhaps a play on his name derived from the verb *sainein* ("to fawn") and *dōron* ("gift")—i.e., "Gift-Bearing Fawner." Diogenes also tells us that a certain Antidorus the Epicurean wrote a work against Heraclides. The name appears three times (see 5.92, 10.8, and 10.28).

**Antigonus of Carystus** (fl. 240 BC): Writer and celebrated bronze worker who was active in Athens. He is said to have been an associate of the Academics. Antigonus also wrote biographies, and Diogenes often draws upon his *Lives of Philosophers*.

**Antileon** (dates unknown): Author of a work titled *On Dates*. Antileon is unknown outside of Diogenes' reference to him in the life of Plato (3.3).

**Antiochus of Laodicea** (dates unknown): Philosopher whom Diogenes mentions in the life of Pyrrho (9.106).

**Antipater of Tarsus** (second century BC): Stoic philosopher, teacher of Panaetius, and head of the Stoa at Athens after Diogenes of Babylon.

**Antipater of Tyre** (first century BC): Philosopher who wrote a treatise *On the Cosmos*. He is said to have introduced Cato to Stoic philosophy.

**Antiphon**: The author of *On Men of Exceptional Virtue* is either Antiphon of Athens (fifth century BC), a sophist and dream interpreter, or his namesake, an Attic orator (c. 480–411 BC). Scholars are divided

about whether these two are the same person. Fragments survive of a work *On Truth* attributed to the former; in it, the author discusses the distinction between convention (*nomos*) and nature (*physis*).

**Antiphon of Sidon**: Since two of the known Antiphons were associated primarily with Athens and the third died before Zeno's time, it is unclear which of them Diogenes is referring to in his life of Zeno (see 7.29).

**Antisthenes of Athens** (c. 445–c. 365 BC): Athenian teacher who wrote on many subjects. He was a friend of Socrates and was supposed to have been present at the latter's trial. Diogenes credits him with establishing the Cynic way of life. Antisthenes wrote Socratic dialogues and was said to have had a rivalry with Plato. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 6.1–19.

**Antisthenes of Rhodes** (fl. c. 200 BC): Historian who wrote a work titled *Successions of Philosophers* as well as a history of Rhodes. Diogenes cites his work in the life of Heraclitus. This Antisthenes is not to be confused with the philosopher of the same name whom Diogenes writes about at 6.1–19.

**Apellas** (dates unknown): Author of a work called *Agrippa* in which he discusses Agrippa's five modes of Skepticism. Diogenes references this work at 9.106.

**Apollodorus the Arithmetician** (dates unknown): Known as one of Diogenes' sources in the accounts of Thales (1.25) and Pythagoras (8.12).

**Apollodorus of Athens** (c. 180–after 120 BC): Scholar who wrote on a variety of topics including chronology, mythology, theology, geography, and etymology.

**Apollodorus of Cyzicus** (dates uncertain): Little is known about this Apollodorus. Diogenes uses him as

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a source who states that Democritus studied with Philolaus (9.38). It is thought that Apollodorus may have been a follower of Democritus, which would place him in the early fourth century BC.

**Apollodorus Ephelus** (first century BC): Stoic philosopher thought to have lived during the time of Posidonius. Diogenes reports that he wrote a work titled *Introduction to the Doctrines* that divided philosophy into physics, ethics, and logic (see 7.39). See also Apollodorus of Seleucia.

**Apollodorus of Seleucia** (first century BC): Thought to be the same as Apollodorus Ephelus. Book 7, which gives accounts of the lives of Stoics, is incomplete as it has been handed down to us. Ancient sources state that Diogenes had included lives of other Stoics, including Apollodorus of Seleucia, in the full version.

**Apollonides of Nicaea** (first century AD): Pupil of the Skeptical philosopher Pyrrho. Apollonides was an associate of the Roman emperor Tiberius and dedicated his commentary on the *Lampoons* of Timon of Phlius to him. Among his other works (all lost) are a commentary on the orations of Demosthenes, and a work on the tragic poet Ion.

**Apollonius Molon** (first century BC): Orator said to have lectured in Rhodes and tutored Cicero in Rome. Sources state he was talented in the art of pleading.

**Apollonius of Tyre** (fl. c. 50 BC): Author of a text on the philosophers of Zeno's school and their works, as Strabo attests. Diogenes uses his book *On Zeno* as a source throughout Book 7.

**Apollonophanes** (fl. c. 250 BC): Stoic philosopher born in Antioch and an intimate of Ariston of Chios. He is said to have written two works,

*Ariston* (about his friend) and *On Natural Philosophy*.

**Arcesilaus** (316/15–242/41 BC): Pupil of Theophrastus at the Lyceum who later became head of the Academy (c. 268 BC). He is known for bringing a Skeptical spirit to Plato's school and for founding what came to be known as the Middle Academy. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 4.28–45.

**Archdemus of Tarsus** (fl. c. 140 BC): Stoic philosopher and supposed student of Diogenes of Babylon. Diogenes reports that he wrote *On Voice* (7.55) and *On Elements* (7.134).

**Archetimus of Syracuse** (c. sixth century BC): Diogenes states that Archetimus was a witness to an alleged meeting between Thales and the Sages (1.40).

**Archilochus** (seventh century BC): Lyric poet from Paros. He was notorious for his biting wit, which he directed at friends and foes alike. A few complete poems of his, and many fragments, survive; some of these describe his love affair with a girl named Neoboule.

**Archytas the Architect** (dates unknown): Author of a work titled *On Mechanism*. Vitruvius alludes to an Archytas, but scholars are unsure whether he confuses Archytas the Architect and Archytas of Tarentum. Diogenes for his part attempts to make a distinction between them (see 8.82).

**Archytas of Tarentum** (fl. c. 400–350 BC): Pythagorean philosopher, mathematician, and political leader. It was Archytas who arranged Plato's rescue from Dionysius II in Syracuse (361 BC). He is also credited with solving the problem of the duplication of the cube. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 8.79–83.

**Aristagoras of Miletus** (fl. c. 505–496 BC): Tyrant of Miletus who led

the failed Ionian Revolt against Persian rule. Seeking refuge, he moved to Thrace and later died there during a confrontation with some native Thracians.

**Aristippus** (or Pseudo-Aristippus) (dates unknown): Author of *On the Luxuriousness of the Ancients*, which spread erotic gossip about various philosophers. Diogenes uses this work as a source attesting that Periander took pleasure in sleeping with his mother. This Aristippus is not the hedonist philosopher Aristippus of Cyrene whose life Diogenes discusses in Book 2, but a later author who took on that name, presumably to give his work greater credibility.

**Aristippus of Cyrene:** It is uncertain whether Diogenes is referring to the founder of the Cyrenaic school (c. 435–350 BC; see 2.65–104) or his grandson of the same name. Aristippus the elder was a friend of Socrates and a teacher of rhetoric. Aristippus the younger was a follower of the Cyrenaic school and was associated with the doctrine that only the present moment contains reality.

**Ariston of Ceos** (fl. c. 225 BC): Peripatetic who wrote biographical sketches of philosophers. He is thought to have been head of the Lyceum after Lyco.

**Ariston of Chios** (c. 320–c. 250 BC): Stoic philosopher who was a student of Zeno of Citium. At the height of his influence, he was one of the most widely known philosophers in Athens. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 7.160–64.

**Aristophanes** (c. 450–c. 386 BC): One of the greatest comic poets of Old Attic Comedy. Of at least forty plays, eleven have survived to our time. Along with that of Plato and Xenophon, his surviving work gives us characterizations of Socrates. In his play *Clouds*, Aristophanes famously caricatures Socrates as a corrupt teacher of rhetoric skilled

at making the weaker argument the stronger one.

**Aristophanes the Grammarian** (c. 257–180 BC): Scholar credited with implementing the use of Greek accents. He served as head of the Alexandrian Library (c. 194 BC), succeeding Eratosthenes. According to Diogenes, he proposed an ill-fated grouping of Plato's dialogues into trilogies (3.61).

**Aristophon** (dates unknown): Otherwise unknown author of *Pythagoras's Disciples*, in which the Pythagoreans are characterized as being vegetarian and lacking in basic hygiene (see 8.38).

**Aristotle** (384–322 BC): Philosopher, scientist, and teacher of Alexander the Great. Aristotle was a student of Plato and one of his most infamous critics. He was born in the city of Stagira, which earned him the nickname the Stagirite. Aristotle's works exerted immense authority in philosophy and science until the rise of Newtonianism in the seventeenth century. To medieval philosophers before that time, Aristotle was known simply as the Philosopher. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 5.1–35.

**Aristoxenus** (b. c. 370 BC): Philosopher, musical theorist, and student of Aristotle at the Lyceum. Of his works, only an incomplete treatise classifying Greek music and melody has survived. He is known for challenging his elders and he claimed that Plato plagiarized much of the *Republic* from Protagoras.

**Artemidorus the Dialectician** (third century BC): Author of a treatise titled *A Reply to Chrysippus*. He attests to the notion that Protagoras was the first to demonstrate that any proposition can be criticized (see 9.53).

**Ascanius of Abdera** (dates unknown): Otherwise unknown. Diogenes appeals to Ascanius as a

source for the conjecture that Pyrrho had adopted agnosticism and the suspension of judgment through the influence of the Naked Sages and the Magi (9.61).

**Athenaeus** (dates unknown): Epigrammatist whom Diogenes uses as a source in the lives of Antisthenes (6.14), Epicurus (10.11), and Zeno (7.30). Athenaeus is otherwise unknown.

**Athenodorus the Stoic** (first century BC): Head of the library at Pergamon and an associate of Cato Uticensis, great-grandson and namesake of the Roman politician and historian. Diogenes reports that this Athenodorus was thought to have redacted passages from Zeno's works deemed unacceptable (7.34).

**Athenodorus of Tarsus** (fl. 44 BC): Stoic philosopher who served as adviser to the emperor Augustus. He published a number of works, including a refutation of Aristotle's *Categories*.

**Bias of Priene** (fl. sixth century BC): Widely regarded as one of the Seven Sages and known for his strength of character. Even the disdainful Heraclitus is said to have extolled his incorruptible nature. Bias's maxim was: Most men are bad. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 1.82–88.

**Bion of Borysthenes** (c. 335–c. 245 BC): Philosopher known for his wit and theatricality who eventually became court philosopher of Antigonus II Gonatas, king of Macedonia. He claimed to have been the son of a salt-fish dealer and a former prostitute. Bion famously quipped that the road to Hades was so easy to navigate that people traveled it with their eyes closed. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 4.46–58.

**Boethus of Sidon** (second century BC): Stoic philosopher and student of Diogenes of Babylon. His principal interests were astronomy and meteorology. This Boethus of Sidon

is not the commentator on Aristotle of the same name who lived during the time of Augustus.

**Callias** (fifth century BC): Athenian comic poet who was active until around 430 BC. In 446 he won first place at the City Dionysia for one of his comedies. Diogenes quotes from his play *Captives* in the life of Socrates (see 2.18).

**Callimachus of Cyrene** (fl. 279–245 BC): Greek poet and scholar who was renowned for writing the *Pinakes*, a list of all the texts in the Library of Alexandria, alphabetized by author. This work was probably the first library catalogue. He once said that “a big book is a big evil.”

**Carneades of Cyrene** (214/13–129/28 BC): Skeptical philosopher credited with having founded the New Academy. Diogenes reports that he was often so engrossed in his studies that he neglected personal hygiene and declined social invitations. Carneades had an excitable lecture style, and was known for his boisterous voice. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 4.62–66.

**Cassius the Skeptic** (dates unknown): Otherwise unknown philosopher. Diogenes reports that he was a staunch critic of Zeno (7.32).

**Cercidas of Megalópolis** (fl. 225 BC): Poet, philosopher, and disciple of Diogenes the Cynic. He devised laws for his native city of Megalópolis. A papyrus containing fragments from some of his Cynic poems was discovered in 1906.

**Chamaeleon** (c. 350–after 281 BC): Peripatetic writer of books on ancient poets, comedy, and morality. He is said to have written philosophical works in the style of Aristotle, including a treatise *On Drunkenness*.

**Chilon** (sixth century BC): Spartan who was counted among the Seven Sages. He was known for his laconic

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character, and was elected a Spartan ephor in 556 BC. Chilon is said to have died of joy upon his son's boxing victory at the Olympic games. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 1.68–73.

**Choerilus:** Three ancient poets bear this name: a tragic poet from Athens (sixth century BC), an epic poet from Samos (late fifth century BC), and an epic poet who traveled with Alexander the Great (fourth century BC). It is unclear which one Diogenes is referencing.

**Chrysippus** (c. 280–207 BC): One of the most prominent Stoic philosophers after Zeno. He succeeded Cleanthes as head of the Stoa. Chrysippus is said to have written 705 books, none of which are extant. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 7.179–202.

**Claudius Thrasylus of Alexandria** (d. AD 36): Author and astrologer whom the Roman emperor Tiberius greatly admired. His works include treatises on philosophy and music. Thrasylus was also credited with establishing the canonic form of Plato's corpus, organizing his written works into groups of four ostensibly related texts (known as tetralogies).

**Cleanthes of Assos** (331–232 BC): Stoic philosopher and successor of Zeno as head of the Stoa. Cleanthes was deeply interested in physics and expanded his predecessors' doctrines on the nature of the cosmos. His *Hymn to Zeus* survives, and some scholars note his incorporation of Heraclitean ideas into Stoic doctrines. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 7.168–76.

**Clearchus of Soli** (fourth and third centuries BC): Polymath who wrote paradoxes, erotica, zoological texts, and mystical works. Clearchus was a student and follower of Aristotle.

**Cleobulus** (fl. sixth century BC): Greek poet counted among the Seven

Sages. According to legend, he was a descendant of Heracles and known for his strength and beauty. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 1.89–93.

**Cleomenes** (dates unknown): Likely a disciple of the Cynic philosopher Crates. Diogenes uses his work *On Pedagogy* as a source at 6.75.

**Clitarchus** (fl. c. 310 BC): Historian who wrote about the life of Alexander the Great in a work consisting of twelve books. He is said to have emphasized episodes of human suffering and slaughter in his accounts. His work survives only in fragments.

**Clitomachus** (187/86–110/09 BC): Philosopher of Carthaginian birth whose original given name was Hasdrubal. He was a student of Carneades, the second-century philosopher and founder of the New Academy. After a brief time leading his own school, Clitomachus succeeded Carneades as the head of the Academy in 127 BC. Sextus Empiricus reports that Clitomachus was notoriously long-winded. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 4.67.

**Crates** (dates unknown): According to Croton, Crates introduced Heraclitus' work to Greece (see 9.12). Not much else is known about him. This is not Crates of Thebes, who lived in the fourth and third centuries, after Heraclitus' reputation had already been well established.

**Crates of Thebes** (c. 368/65–288/85 BC): Philosopher, poet, and follower of Diogenes the Cynic. Among the fragments of his work that survive are reformulations of Homer and Solon in a Cynic idiom. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 6.85–93.

**Cratinus** (fifth century BC): Comic poet who competed in festivals with Aristophanes. His works spanned the genres of Old and Middle Comedy. Cratinus was an infamous drunkard who occasionally included

comical representations of himself in his plays. Only fragments of his works remain.

**Cratinus the Younger** (fourth century BC): Poet of Middle Comedy. Diogenes uses his *The False Changeling* (3.28), *The Tarantines* (8.37), and *The Woman Who Followed Pythagoras* (8.37) as sources. Diogenes also appeals to Cratinus' *Archilochoi* as evidence that the ancient wise men were referred to as sophists (see 1.12).

**Croton** (dates unknown): Otherwise unknown author of a work titled *The Diver*, in which he reports that a certain Crates introduced Heraclitus' book to Greece (see 9.12).

**Daimachus the Platonist** (dates unknown): Some have proposed changing "the Platonist" to "of Plat-aea" in order to make the Daimachus quoted in the life of Thales (1.30) the same as Daimachus the Boeotian. Otherwise, this Daimachus is unknown outside of Diogenes' text.

**Damon of Cyrene** (dates unknown): Author of a work titled *On the Philosophers*. Diogenes makes reference to this work in the life of Thales (1.40).

**Demetrius of Byzantium** (fourth century BC): Peripatetic philosopher and supposed pupil of Crito. Not much is known about this Demetrius.

**Demetrius of Magnesia** (fl. 50 BC): Author who wrote on towns and prominent figures that shared the same name, as well as a work on concord. Diogenes often references one of his works, known variously as *On Poets and Writers of the Same Name* and *Men of the Same Name*.

**Demetrius of Phalerum** (b. c. 350 BC): Athenian politician, orator, and Peripatetic philosopher who studied under Theophrastus. He is the author of *Lists of Archons* and *On Old Age*. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 5.75–85.

**Demetrius of Troezen** (dates unknown): Author of a work on philosophers titled *Against the Sophists*. The passage that Diogenes quotes is adapted from *Odyssey* 11.278 (see 8.74). Odysseus there describes the death of Epicaste (more commonly, Jocasta), the mother of Oedipus, who killed herself when she discovered she had married her son.

**Democritus of Abdera** (b. 460/57 BC): Philosopher known for introducing an atomistic view of reality. His doctrines are often reported along with those of Leucippus. His theories were vehemently rejected by Aristotle, but developed further by Epicurus and Lucretius. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 9.34–49.

**Demodicus of Leros** (fl. c. sixth century BC): Ancient poet. Diogenes quotes one of his verses, which alludes to Bias's renowned ability to plead a case (1.84).

**Diagoras of Melos** (fl. late fifth century BC): Lyric poet and infamous atheist. While extant fragments of his work do not express his atheist views, Sextus Empiricus attests that the deathblow to Diagoras's faith was an episode in which the gods failed to punish a man who went back on an oath. Diagoras was condemned to death for his impiety but fled before the sentence could be carried out. It has been suggested that he might have authored the Dervéni papyrus discovered in 1962.

**Dicaearchus of Messana** (fl. c. 320–300 BC): Polymath who wrote about culture, geography, philosophy, and literary history. He was a contemporary of Theophrastus and a student of Aristotle. His philosophical works include a treatise on how humans cause more harm to themselves than do natural disasters.

**Didymus** (first century BC): Alexandrian grammarian and scholar, who supposedly wrote thirty-five hundred

to four thousand works. His nickname was Bibliolathas (the Book-Forgetting), which he earned because he was so prolific that he often forgot what he had written in earlier books and would occasionally contradict himself.

**Diexchidas of Megara** (fourth century BC): Author who wrote a history of his native city. Diogenes cites his *Megarian History* in the life of Solon (1.57).

**Dinarchus** (c. 360–c. 290 BC): Student of Theophrastus and the last of the so-called Ten Orators. He made his living in Athens as a speechwriter for prominent Athenians. While his famous speech against Xenophon is not extant, his prosecutions of Demosthenes, Philocles, and Aristogeiton are.

**Dinon of Colophon** (fourth century BC): Greek historian who wrote a history of Persia and was the father of Clitarchus. Diogenes cites him in the life of Protagoras (9.50).

**Diocles of Magnesia** (b. c. 75 BC): Author of *Compendium of the Philosophers* and *Lives of the Philosophers*. In his early philological studies of Diogenes Laertius, Friedrich Nietzsche claimed that Diogenes' *Lives* was merely an epitome of Diocles' original *Compendium*.

**Diodorus** (dates unknown): Author of *Reminiscences* that Diogenes cites in the life of Speusippus (see 4.2). There were a number of ancient authors named Diodorus who might have written this work; it is unclear to which of them Diogenes is referring.

**Diodorus of Ephesus** (dates unknown): Author who wrote about Anaximander and Empedocles. This Diodorus is unknown apart from Diogenes' mention of him (see 8.70).

**Diodotus** (dates unknown): Presumably, the Diodotus that Diogenes quotes in the life of Heraclitus (9.12) is the grammarian and commentator who claimed that the

latter's work was not about physics but about politics (see 9.15).

**Diogenes of Apollonia** (fl. 425 BC): Generally considered to be the last of the Pre-Socratic philosophers. He is known for his claim that air is the source of all being, and his ideas may bear the influence of Anaxagoras. Aristophanes parodies Diogenes in his *Clouds*. Some scholars believe that Diogenes Laertius (or his source) confused Diogenes of Apollonia with Diogenes of Smyrna. Diogenes discusses the life and views of Diogenes of Apollonia at 9.57–59.

**Diogenes of Babylon** (c. 240–152 BC): Pupil of Chrysippus and successor of Zeno of Tarsus as head of the Stoa. In 156 BC he traveled to Rome, where he helped to stimulate interest in Stoicism. Diogenes Laertius refers to him when he distinguishes Diogenes the Cynic (Diogenes of Sinope) from other philosophers with the same name (see 6.81).

**Diogenes of Ptolemais** (dates unknown): Otherwise unknown Stoic philosopher. Diogenes Laertius reports that he thought philosophical education should begin with ethics (see 7.41).

**Diogenes of Tarsus** (dates unknown): Epicurean philosopher who wrote *Epitome of Epicurus' Ethical Doctrines*. Little is known about this Diogenes.

**Dionysius** (c. 328–248 BC): Student of Zeno the Stoic. He is referred to as Dionysius the Turncoat and Dionysius of Heraclea in Diogenes' text. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 7.166–67.

**Dionysius of Chalcedon** (fl. 320 BC): Philosopher of the Megarian school. He was the first to call its followers Dialecticians, thereby earning the epithet for himself.

**Dionysius of Halicarnassus** (c. 60–after 7 BC): Greek historian and

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rhetorician. It is thought that this Dionysius is the author of *Critical Writings* (1.38). He is known for his love of Rome, where he lived and taught for much of his adult life. Among his more well-known works is a chronicle of Roman culture and history titled *Roman Antiquities*, much of which has survived.

**Dionysodorus** (dates unknown): Otherwise unknown. Diogenes appeals to him as an authority in the life of Socrates (2.42).

**Dioscurides** (dates unknown): Author whose *Memoirs* survive only in fragments, which present brief notes about various eminent Athenians at least up to the time of Plato.

**Diotimus the Stoic** (fourth and third century BC): Reputed enemy of Epicurus (see 10.3). In an attempt to stain Epicurus' reputation, Diotimus cited fifty letters of an unsavory nature allegedly written by the tranquil philosopher.

**Duris** (c. 340–c. 260 BC): Historian, student of Theophrastus, and tyrant of Samos. He was a sensationalist who sought to excite the emotions of his readers.

**Eleusis** (dates unknown): Author of a work titled *On Achilles* (see 1.29). Eleusis was also the name of a town in Attica, known for its celebration of the mysteries of Demeter and Persephone.

**Empedocles of Agrigentum** (c. 492–c. 432 BC): Pre-Socratic philosopher influenced by Pythagoreanism. He posits six principles: the four material elements (earth, fire, air, and water) and two cosmic forces, Love and Strife. According to legend, Empedocles died by casting himself down into the volcanic belly of Mt. Etna. His death was later the subject of an unfinished drama by the German romantic poet Friedrich Hölderlin. The English poet Matthew Arnold also wrote a dramatic poem called "Empedocles on Etna."

Diogenes discusses Empedocles' life and views at 8.51–77.

**Ephorus of Cyme** (c. 405–330 BC): Student of Isocrates and author of a work on universal history.

**Epicharmus** (fl. early fifth century BC): Sicilian comic poet. He is mentioned in Plato's *Gorgias* and *Theaetetus*. By the early fourth century BC, a number of philosophical works attributed to Epicharmus were regarded as forgeries. Diogenes reports that Alcimus accused Plato of stealing a number of his ideas from Epicharmus (3.9).

**Epictetus** (mid-first to second century AD): Stoic philosopher who was a slave of Epaphroditus in Rome. His writings had a major influence on the Roman emperor Marcus Aurelius, and he remains one of our principal sources for Stoic thought. Diogenes reports that Epictetus found Epicurus' writings most distasteful (see 10.6). Despite Epictetus' being a major Stoic figure, Diogenes did not produce a life of him.

**Epicurus of Samos** (341–270 BC): One of the most influential philosophers of antiquity. He opened his school in Athens on purchased land that became known as the Garden, and for that reason he became known as the Philosopher of the Garden. Epicurus espoused an empiricist theory of knowledge and an atomistic account of nature. He placed friendship above all other relationships and is best known for claiming that pleasure is the beginning and end of the happy life. Diogenes discusses his life and views in Book 10.

**Epimenides of Crete** (sixth century BC): Religious teacher who accumulated many stories to his name, such as his sleeping for fifty-seven years and living to be nearly three hundred years old. In Plato's *Laws* (642d), it is stated that Epimenides visited Athens ten years before the Greco-Persian wars,

and there he performed religious rites and made prognostications. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 1.109–15.

**Eratosthenes of Cyrene** (c. 285–194 BC): Greek mathematician, astronomer, philosopher, and literary critic who succeeded Apollonius of Rhodes as head of the Library of Alexandria. Before becoming royal tutor and head of the Library, Eratosthenes studied with Arcesilaus and Ariston in Athens. He calculated the circumference of the earth to a high degree of accuracy. He also created the first classical map of the known world, which later served as the paradigm for the *mappae mundi* of the Middle Ages.

**Euanthes of Miletus** (dates unknown): Otherwise unknown. Diogenes reports that Euanthes discussed the wisdom of Thales (1.29).

**Eubulides of Miletus** (fl. fourth century BC): Philosopher and dialectician of the Megarian school who taught in Athens. He is reputed to have taught Demosthenes and was well-known for identifying logical paradoxes. Aristotle discussed the philosophy of the Megarians in Book 9 of his *Metaphysics*, and Eubulides wrote a satire of Aristotle.

**Eubulus**: There was a renowned Athenian statesman of this name, as well as an Athenian writer of comedies, but it is not known to which, if either, Diogenes is referring when he cites *The Sale of Diogenes* by Eubulus (6.30).

**Eudemos of Rhodes** (second half of the fourth century BC): Friend and student of Aristotle who compiled histories of arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and theology. Eudemos is thought to have been Theophrastus' rival as potential head of the Lyceum after Aristotle.

**Eudoxus of Cnidus** (c. 390–c. 340 BC): Gifted mathematician whose

contributions include the theory of proportions as outlined in Book 5 of Euclid's *Elements*. He traveled to Athens to join Socrates' circle and later became an associate of Plato and the Academics. Eudoxus also wrote detailed descriptions of the risings and settings of constellations, as well as books on geography.

**Eudoxus of Cyzicus** (second century BC): Mariner and navigator who was determined to find the route to India. He was convinced that he could sail around Africa and that this path would lead him to his desired destination. After numerous famed voyages, Eudoxus sailed down the coast of West Africa, never to be seen again.

**Eudromus** (dates unknown): Stoic philosopher of whom little is known. He is the author of *Elements of Ethics*, which Diogenes references in the life of Zeno (see 7.39–40).

**Eumelus** (dates unknown): Unknown apart from Diogenes' reference to him in the life of Aristotle (5.6). Given that Diogenes cites him as a source reporting the life (and death) of Aristotle, this Eumelus cannot be the Corinthian poet of the same name who lived centuries before the Stagirate.

**Euphantus** (fourth century BC): Scholar, Megarian philosopher, and native of the city of Olynthus. He wrote histories and a number of tragedies. His works include *On Kingship*, a treatise that he dedicated to his pupil King Antigonus II.

**Euphorion of Chalcis** (b. 275 BC): Poet, historian, and grammarian who studied philosophy in Athens. Later in his life he was invited to the court of Antiochus III, the king of Persia, and became head of the royal library at Antioch. Euphorion devotes a number of his poems to wishing ill to his detractors and those perceived to have committed wrongs against him.

**Eupolis** (fifth century BC): One of the most renowned poets of Old

Comedy. His works survive only in fragments; among the titles of his plays that have been handed down to us are *Flatterers* and *Cities*.

**Euripides** (c. 480–c. 406 BC): The youngest of the three great tragedians of classical Athens. Ten out of some ninety of his plays have survived, many of which are still performed today. He was known as a stylistic innovator in his own time, often emphasizing the inner conflicts of his characters and incorporating new philosophical ideas into his plays. Euripides was apparently not as successful as the other tragedians while alive, but his plays soon became among the most influential after his death.

**Euthyphro** (fourth and third centuries BC): Son of Heraclides Ponticus, whose father was also named Euthyphro. Diogenes uses Euthyphro as a source attesting that Epimenides was from Crete (see 1.107).

**Favorinus of Arles** (c. AD 85–155): Philosophically inclined orator and teacher of rhetoric. He is said to have been a congenital eunuch. In Rome he enjoyed influence as a member of the inner circle of the emperor Hadrian until he was exiled to the island of Chios around AD 130. He later regained favor with the emperor Antoninus Pius and was welcomed back to Rome.

**Glaucus of Rhegium** (late fifth century BC): Author of a work titled *On the Ancient Poets and Musicians*, which was influential for stirring interest in the history of lyric poetry. Some have conjectured that Glaucus was a nom de plume of the political theorist Antiphon.

**Hecataeus of Abdera** (c. 360–290 BC): Historian who popularized the notion that civilization began in Egypt.

**Hecataeus of Miletus** (sixth to fifth century BC): Often thought of as the first recognized historian, he wrote a genealogy and a guide to journeying

around the world. His works had significant influence on later historians such as Herodotus and Hellanicus. Hecataeus traveled widely in Asia and Egypt and is said to have produced a map of the known world. His book the *Periegesis* is a guide to this map, and it chronicles the countries and peoples he met during his travels.

**Hecaton of Rhodes** (late second century BC): Stoic philosopher and pupil of Panaetius. Hecaton held great influence in the middle Stoic school. He wrote primarily on ethics and combined Platonic theories with Stoic doctrines. Diogenes cites his works throughout Book 7.

**Heraclides Lembus** (second century BC): Biographer and historian who wrote epitomes of the *Lives* of Sartyrus and the *Successions* of Sotion. Diogenes draws upon both collections.

**Heraclides Ponticus** (fourth century BC): Philosopher who was a student of both Speusippus and Aristotle. He is best known for his hypothesis that the earth rotates on its axis. His writings, which survive only in fragments, display a wide range of interest, including ethics, physics, and politics. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 5.86–94.

**Heraclides of Tarsus** (fl. c. 125 BC): Stoic philosopher and friend of Antipater. Diogenes discussed his life and views in the last, lost section of Book 7.

**Heraclitus of Ephesus** (fl. c. 500 BC): Pre-Socratic philosopher known for his melancholic temperament, aphorisms, and doctrine that everything is in flux. Like his philosophical contemporaries, he studied the natural world, but he also emphasized questions about self-knowledge. Heraclitus' surviving fragments were much examined among nineteenth-century German philosophers such as Hegel and Nietzsche. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 9.1–17.

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**Hermarchus of Mytilene** (fourth and third centuries BC): Philosopher and student of Epicurus, whom he succeeded as the head of the Epicurean school in 271 BC. He wrote polemical works such as *Against Plato*, *Against Aristotle*, and *Against Empedocles*.

**Hermippus of Smyrna** (fl. late third century BC): Peripatetic philosopher and author of a large volume of lives, including accounts of famous orators, poets, lawgivers, and philosophers. In his biographies, Hermippus tended to emphasize episodes of death and dying, and he had a liking for the sensational.

**Hermodorus of Syracuse** (fourth century BC): Platonist whose texts on Plato and mathematics are no longer extant. He is said to have sold and distributed Plato's works in Sicily.

**Herodotus** (c. 484–c. 425 BC): One of the most famous Greek historians. His *Histories* presents an account of the Greco-Persian wars.

**Herodotus the Epicurean** (fourth and third centuries BC): Likely the recipient of Epicurus' epitome on natural science, which has come to be known as the *Letter to Herodotus* (see 10.35–83). This letter presents a comprehensive account of Epicurean physical theory, and it is one of three letters on Epicurean philosophy that Diogenes preserves.

**Hesiod** (c. eighth and seventh centuries BC): One of the earliest known epic poets. The two main works ascribed to him are the *Theogony*, a genealogy of the gods, and *Works and Days*, which provides moral and practical counsel on living an honest life. Diogenes reports that Zeno adapted lines from *Works and Days* for his own purposes (see 7.25).

**Hieronymus of Rhodes** (fl. c. 290–230 BC): Philosopher and historian of

literature who was active in Athens. He was a member of the Peripatetic school until he became dissatisfied with the leadership of Lyco. The surviving fragments of his works report literary gossip of the day.

**Hipparchus** (c. fifth and fourth centuries BC): Associate of Democritus who was likely present at the latter's death. Diogenes reports that Democritus persevered in his final days through the salutary effects of the fragrance of fresh bread, and Hipparchus affirmed that Democritus died peacefully after three days of this aromatherapy (see 9.43).

**Hippias of Elis** (fifth century BC): Sophist, orator, and polymath who traveled throughout Greece. He was a contemporary of Protagoras and enjoyed a comfortable life as a well-known teacher. Hippias claimed expert knowledge across a range of subjects such as grammar, poetry, music, and astronomy. He is an interlocutor in two Platonic dialogues, *Hippias Major* and *Hippias Minor*.

**Hippobotus** (fl. early second century BC): Greek writer whose work *On the Philosophical Schools* explains the theories of the various schools and provides biographies of their adherents. Diogenes frequently cites Hippobotus as a source.

**Hipponax** (late sixth century BC): Iambic poet who wrote satirical, colloquial verse. He was said to have invented parody and was much admired for his creative obscenity.

**Homer** (sixth century BC): Ancient bard and legendary author of the epic poems *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Since at least Cicero's time, there has been debate about whether Homer was the sole author of both epics or whether the name Homer represents a collective of poets. It is now widely accepted that the Homeric poems reflect a long oral tradition.

**Idomeneus of Lampsacus** (c. 325–c. 270 BC): Biographer, politician, and friend of Epicurus. He was notorious for spreading salacious gossip about various rivals.

**Ion of Chios** (b. c. 480 BC): Poet, playwright, and theorist whose works survive only in fragments. Upon winning first prize for tragedy and dithyramb at the City Dionysia, he celebrated by providing wine from his native Chios to every Athenian citizen.

**Isidorus of Pergamon** (dates unknown): Orator who attested to Athenodorus' excision of passages from Zeno's works deemed unacceptable (see 7.34). Pergamon, a naturally fortified city near the western coast of Asia Minor, served as the capital of the Attalid kings.

**Istrus** (dates unknown): Greek historian who wrote about a number of different cities, including Athens, Argos, and the Egyptian colonies. Diogenes refers to him in the life of Xenophon (2.59).

**Justus of Tiberias** (first century AD): Jewish historian known for his chronicle of Jewish kings from Moses to Herod. He was a close associate of Agrippa II, king of Chalcis, serving as his secretary. Justus had a long-standing feud with rival historian Josephus, who accused him of gross historical inaccuracies.

**Laeandrius** (dates unknown): Author of a history of Miletus. Diogenes reports that Laeandrius gave an alternative account of the Sages. This man is also possibly known under the name Maeandrius.

**Linus**: Famous mythological musician whom Diogenes describes as being the son of Hermes and Urania, but whose birth and lineage varies in different traditions. Linus was said to have composed works on the origin of the

cosmos, and Diogenes references a line from a poem attributed to him at 1.4.

**Lobon of Argos** (c. third century BC): Literary forger who attributed his own verses and turns of phrase to the Seven Sages and poets such as Pindar.

**Lycophron of Chalcis** (early third century BC): Tragic poet and grammarian who also wrote glosses of ancient comedies. Diogenes quotes from his satirical drama *Menedemus* (see 2.140).

**Lysanias** (c. third century BC): Grammarian and poet who at some point may have been a follower of Diogenes the Cynic. Diogenes Laertius reports that this Lysanias was the son of a certain Aeschrio.

**Lysias** (459/58–c. 380 BC): Athenian orator renowned in antiquity for his mastery of colloquial language. In Plato's *Phaedrus*, Socrates and Phaedrus discuss a purported speech of Lysias concerning the exchange of sexual favors between an older man and a younger one. Lysias was the son of Cephalus and brother of Polemarchus, both of whom are characters in Plato's *Republic*.

**Lysis of Tarentum** (c. fifth century BC): Pythagorean philosopher and teacher of Epaminondas in Thebes. In the life of Pythagoras, Diogenes quotes a letter to Hippasus attributed to Lysis (see 8.42).

**Manetho** (fl. 280 BC): Egyptian historian and high priest in Heliopolis during the rule of Ptolemy I and Ptolemy II. He was the first Egyptian to write in Greek about his country's culture, religion, and history. Christian and Jewish writers often appealed to Manetho's history in order to codify an authoritative biblical chronology.

**Melanthius** (fourth century BC): Painter of the Sicyonian school who

wrote *On Painting*, in which he claims that an artwork, just like one's character, should express willfulness and austerity. He was known for using a palette of only four colors in his paintings. Diogenes cites his work at 4.18.

**Meleager of Gadara** (fl. 100 BC): Poet and writer of satirical works on philosophy. Meleager's writings were said to demonstrate his fluency in Greek, Syrian, and Phoenician. His best-known work is *Garland*, a collection of epigrams.

**Menander** (c. 344/43–292/91 BC): Poet of New Comedy. Immensely popular both during his life and for centuries afterward, he was a major influence on the comic poets who followed him, especially Plautus and Terence. His plays were so observant that Aristophanes the Grammarian famously asked, "O Menander and life, which of you took the other as your model?" One complete play has survived, as have fragments of six others.

**Menippus** (first half of third century BC): Cynic philosopher known for his humorous style. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 6.99–101.

**Menodotus of Nicomedia** (fl. c. AD 120): One of the first physicians to be described as an empiric doctor, one who was guided by experience rather than theory. His thinking reflects the influence of the Skeptics. The physician Galen often makes reference to Menodotus in his writings.

**Metrocles** (late fourth century BC): Student of the Peripatetic philosopher Theophrastus. After an embarrassing incident during a long-winded speech, Metrocles left Theophrastus and went to study with the Cynic Crates, who consoled the young pupil by airing his own views on the situation. Diogenes discusses Metrocles' life and views at 6.94–95.

**Metrodorus of Chios** (fourth century BC): Student of Democritus who incorporated Eleatic doctrines into his approach to atomism. In addition to philosophic texts, he composed works on history, astronomy, and meteorology.

**Metrodorus of Lampsacus** (c. 331–278 BC): Follower of Epicurus and one of the four founders of the Epicurean school. Epicurus dedicated some of his writings to Metrodorus, and he reputedly set down an order that he and his cherished student be honored and commemorated on the twentieth of each month. Numerous fragments of this Metrodorus' works survive.

**Mimnermus** (seventh century BC): Elegiac poet and musician believed to be from Smyrna. He was known in antiquity for his poems extolling the pleasures of love and youth. Diogenes reports that Solon wrote verses in opposition to Mimnermus (1.60).

**Minyas** (dates unknown): Perhaps a prominent resident of Miletus. Diogenes refers to him in the life of Thales (1.27), but other than that he is unknown.

**Mnesimachus** (fl. c. 360 BC): Middle Comedy poet whose plays emphasized everyday life and mythological burlesque. Diogenes quotes from his *Alcmeon* (8.37).

**Mnesistratus of Thason** (dates unknown): Author of a work titled *Collected Meditations*. He is otherwise unknown.

**Myronianus of Amastris** (dates unknown): Greek biographer whose *Chapters on Historical Parallels* Diogenes often cites.

**Nausiphanes of Teos** (b. c. 360 BC): Follower of Democritus who became Epicurus' teacher around 324 BC. He passed on Democritus' physics

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and theory of knowledge to Epicurus. Diogenes cites Nausiphanes' report that Pyrrho was so revered that his native city honored him by exempting all local philosophers from paying taxes (see 9.64).

**Neanthes of Cyzicus** (third century BC): Historian who wrote a six-volume history of Greece, two works about Cyzicus, and a series of biographies. He was a student of Philiscus of Miletus.

**Nicolaus of Damascus** (b. c. 64 BC): Writer of tragedies, comedies, and histories, as well as works on philosophy and natural science. Nicolaus was a close friend of Herod the Great. He wrote a handbook on Aristotle's philosophy that became an important source for the reception of Aristotelianism in the Arab world.

**Nicomachus** (fourth century BC): Son of Aristotle. Tradition has it that Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* is named in his honor, either because he edited the work or because Aristotle expressly dedicated it to him. Diogenes cites Nicomachus' testimony in the life of Eudoxus (8.88).

**Numenius**: It is possible that Diogenes is referring to Numenius of Apamea, a second-century BC Platonist and Neo-Pythagorean who wrote a treatise titled *On the Difference between the Academics and Plato*. However, he could also be referring to the disciple of Pyrrho of the same name (see 9.102).

**Olympiodorus**: Theophrastus' will mentions an Olympiodorus, who is one of the will's holders and witnesses (see 5.57). This may be the Athenian commander (fl. 307–280 BC) who resisted Macedonian aggression.

**Onetor** (dates unknown): Diogenes reports that Onetor wrote an essay on the topic of whether the wise man will make money (3.9).

**Pamphila of Epidauros** (first cen-

tury AD): Scholar and historian of literature who lived in Rome during the reign of Nero. Pamphila is known for having written a historical work consisting of thirty-three books. We have fragments of her work thanks to Diogenes' quotations; Aulus Gellius also preserves fragments of it.

**Panaetius of Rhodes** (c. 185–109 BC): Stoic philosopher who succeeded Antipater as head of the Stoa. Sometime around 140 BC he took up residence in Rome and became an associate of the Roman consul Cornelius Scipio Aemilianus. He frequently traveled between Rome and Athens, where he died.

**Parmenides** (fl. early fifth century BC): Philosopher who founded the Eleatic school and was one of the most controversial and influential early Greek thinkers. In his poem *On Nature*, much of which is extant, Parmenides made the claim that being is one, ungenerated, and unchangeable. Plato portrays the aging Parmenides in a dialogue of the same name. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 9.21–23.

**Periander** (c. 627–587 BC): Tyrant of Corinth whom some count among the Seven Sages. There are conflicting stories about Periander and his legacy. Some sources report that Periander killed his wife and made love to her corpse, while others emphasize his just character and hatred of wickedness. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 1.94–100.

**Peistratus of Ephesus** (dates unknown): Greek literary critic who questioned the authenticity of works attributed to Aeschines. Some scholars suggest the figure mentioned at 2.60 is properly named Pisistratus.

**Persaeus of Citium** (c. 306–c. 243 BC): Disciple of Zeno who became a teacher of Stoic philosophy. He was sent to the court of Antigonus II Gonatas, king of Macedonia, in place of Zeno. While there, Persaeus

educated Antigonus' son and exerted great political influence. But after commanding a military campaign and being defeated, Persaeus took his own life out of shame.

**Phanias** (second century BC): Student of Posidonius who wrote a work titled *Lectures of Posidonius* (see 7.41). Diogenes attests that in this work Posidonius recommended that the philosophical education begin with physics.

**Phanias of Eresus** (fl. 320 BC): Follower of Aristotle and the Peripatetics who wrote works in every branch of philosophy, as well as in natural history, history, and literature.

**Phanodicus** (dates unknown): It is unknown when he lived and wrote, but a statue dedicated to him was inscribed during the period of Augustus and Tiberius (c. 27 BC–AD 37).

**Philemon** (368/60–267/63 BC): Poet of New Comedy who lived much of his life in Athens. Apuleius writes of Philemon's wit and lucidity. In the second century AD, the Athenians erected a statue in his honor.

**Philip the Megarian**: Diogenes may be referring to the Philip he elsewhere lists among the philosophers who did not write anything themselves (see 1.16).

**Philiscus of Aegina** (fourth centuries BC): Friend of Diogenes the Cynic who reputedly wrote tragedies. Some sources state that tragedies ascribed to Diogenes were actually written by Philiscus (see 6.73 and 80).

**Philo of Athens** (fourth century BC): Architect best known for constructing the naval arsenal at Piraeus. Also known as Philo of Eleusis, he wrote a book describing the arsenal, as well as others on the proportions of sacred buildings. None of his written works have survived.

**Philochorus** (c. 340–260 BC): Renowned Athenian scholar who wrote on the history and myths of Attica. He was known for his exceptional piety and was declared a prophet and diviner while still in his midthirties. Philochorus' life came to an end when Antigonas II Gonatas, king of Macedonia, ordered his death in response to Philochorus' support of Ptolemy II Philadelphus, king of Egypt.

**Philodemus of Gadara** (c. 110–c. 40 BC): Poet and popularizer of Greek philosophy who was widely known among Romans. He was a follower of Epicurean philosophy and wrote on a range of topics including poetics, ethics, and physics. He most likely died in the ancient town of Herculaneum; some of his works are preserved in the Herculaneum papyri.

**Philolaus of Croton** (c. 470–390 BC): Pythagorean philosopher and contemporary of Socrates. Sometimes referred to as Philolaus of Tarentum, he was the first to publicly disseminate Pythagorean doctrines in written form. Plato is said to have bought Philolaus' books for the hefty sum of one hundred minas, and there was a rumor that Plato plagiarized his dialogue *Timaeus* from one of them. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 8.84–85.

**Phlegon of Tralles** (second century AD): Author of a history of the Olympic games from 776 BC to AD 140 and a work titled *On Longevity*, a catalogue of individuals who lived beyond the age of one hundred.

**Phrynichus** (fl. 434 BC): Athenian comic poet. Among the eleven titles of his plays that have come down to us, two (*Connus* and *Revellers*) are thought to have been the work of Ameipsias. Phrynichus earned accolades at the Lenaea and the City Dionysia, and was a contemporary of Aristophanes and Eupolis.

**Phylarchus** (third century BC): Greek historian whose major work, *Histories*,

covered the period between 272 and 219 BC. He was often criticized for digressions and sensationalism. Only sixty fragments of his work remain.

**Pisistratus** (fl. 559 BC): Tyrant of Athens. Though ousted twice from power, he returned both times, supported by the Athenian poor who benefited from his programs. Diogenes quotes his letter to Solon, in which Pisistratus vows to do no harm to the exiled Solon if he returns to Athens (1.53–54).

**Pittacus** (c. 650–570 BC): Statesman and sage from Mytilene. He enacted a law that doubled the penalty if a perpetrator was drunk when committing the crime in question. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 1.74–81.

**Plato** (c. 429–347 BC): Founder of the Academy, follower of Socrates, and famed philosopher. His published writings were literary dialogues, in all but three of which Socrates appears as a character. He reputedly gave one unpublished but public lecture outside of the Academy, *On the Good*. The twentieth-century philosopher Alfred North Whitehead once said that the history of European philosophy is just a series of footnotes to Plato. Diogenes devotes all of Book 3 to Plato's life and views.

**Plutarch of Chaeronea** (before AD 50–after AD 120): Philosopher and biographer. Many of his works survive, preserved largely by Byzantine scholars, including the *Parallel Lives* of Greek and Roman statesmen and the philosophical and literary treatises collected under the title *Moralia*.

**Polemon** (fl. 314–270 BC): Head of the Academy from about 314 to 269 BC and teacher of Zeno. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 4.16–20.

**Polycritus of Mende** (dates unknown): Author of a work titled *On*

*Dionysius*, which Diogenes cites in the life of Aeschines (2.63). Aristotle makes reference to a work of Polycritus regarding Sicilian affairs, which may be *On Dionysius*.

**Polyeuctus** (fourth century BC): Orator and contemporary of Demosthenes. According to Theophrastus, Polyeuctus claimed that Demosthenes was the greatest among orators, but Phocion was the most elegant, since he could express more in fewer words.

**Posidippus** (fl. c. 290 BC): New Comedy poet who is credited with introducing slave-cooks as characters. The trope of the clever servant who sets in motion a complicated plot is now considered a typical feature of the New Comedy genre. Diogenes reports that some in antiquity attributed Philemon's comedy *Philosophers* to Posidippus (7.27).

**Posidonius of Apamea** (c. 135–c. 51 BC): Historian, philosopher, and famous polymath who was educated in Athens. He founded a school in Rhodes that eventually became a center for Stoicism. He became influential in natural philosophy for his theory that tidal movements are based on lunar cycles.

**Potamon of Alexandria** (first century BC): Philosopher who attempted to combine Platonic, Peripatetic, and Stoic doctrines. He started the Eclectic school, but it is unclear whether he had any followers.

**Praxiphanes** (late fourth to mid-third century BC): Peripatetic philosopher who is regarded as one of the founders of the study of grammar. He was a student of Theophrastus; Epicurus is said to have been one of his pupils.

**Protagoras of Abdera** (c. 490–420 BC): A renowned sophist and teacher of rhetoric. Protagoras traveled throughout the Hellenic world. He is famous for his saying that man is the

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measure of all things, a dictum that later acquired new meaning during the Renaissance. Plato offers a literary depiction of him in an eponymous dialogue. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 9.50–56.

**Pseudo-Aristippus:** See Aristippus (or Pseudo-Aristippus).

**Pythagoras of Samos** (fl. c. 530 BC): Philosopher and mathematician. He is credited with the discovery of harmonic ratios, as well as with the proof that Euclid presents at *Elements* 1.47, still known today as the Pythagorean theorem. The earliest surviving sources of ancient Pythagoreanism are the fragments of Philolaus. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 8.1–50.

**Sabinus** (first century AD): Scholar who wrote a commentary on Thucydides.

**Satyrus** (fl. third century BC): Peripatetic biographer and historian who wrote many accounts of kings, philosophers, and orators. He expanded the practice of biography to include celebrities of all types and was fond of highlighting their quirks.

**Scythinus of Teos** (fourth century BC): Author who wrote poetry and prose, including a history of Heracles' deeds.

**Seleucus of Alexandria** (fl. first half of first century AD): Likely the Seleucus who wrote commentaries on a wide range of Greek poets, as well as works on Greek language and style. Diogenes refers to Seleucus as the author of a work titled *On Philosophy* (3.109).

**Sextus Empiricus** (fl. late second century AD): Pyrrhonist Skeptic philosopher and medical doctor. Sextus is one of the major sources for our understanding of ancient Skepticism, Stoic logic, and Hellenistic theories of knowledge. His two extant works are *Outlines of Pyrrhonism* and *Against the Mathematicians*.

**Silenus** (fl. third century BC): Scholar who wrote histories of Sicily and Rome that Cicero and Pliny later consulted. Hannibal of Carthage employed Silenus in the role of official historian during the Second Punic War with Rome.

**Simonides** (c. 556–468 BC): A Greek lyric poet famous for his elegiac verses, hymns, and victory odes. Memorial verses attributed to him were erected over the Greeks who died in the great battles of the Persian wars, including a celebrated couplet for the three hundred Spartans who fell at Thermopylae. Originally from Ceos, he lived at Athens during the Persian invasions and later immigrated to Sicily.

**Socrates** (469–399 BC): Athenian philosopher who attracted a following among young aristocratic men. His most famous admirer was Plato, who later composed dialogues in which Socrates was the main character. Socrates was indicted on charges of impiety (corrupting the youth and introducing new deities), and sentenced to death by hemlock poisoning. He is said to not have written anything, but Diogenes reports that while awaiting execution Socrates wrote a paean that began, "Hail Apollo of Delos, and Artemis, renowned siblings!" (see 2.42). Diogenes discusses his life and views at 2.18–47.

**Solon** (fl. c. 600 BC): Athenian politician and poet often counted among the Seven Sages. He implemented a new set of laws and organized Athenian citizens into four property-holding classes. His maxim was: Nothing in excess. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 1.45–67.

**Sophilus the Comic** (c. fourth century BC): Middle Comedy poet who wrote for the Attic theater. Nine titles of his plays have come down to us. Diogenes quotes from his *Wedding* (2.120).

**Sophocles** (c. 497–c. 406 BC): Athenian tragic poet. He wrote over

120 plays, seven of which are extant. In his last competition at the City Dionysia in 406 BC, he outfitted his chorus and actors in mourning dress to honor the recent death of fellow tragedian Euripides. Among his most famous plays are *Oedipus the King* and *Antigone*. Diogenes quotes lines from one of his lost plays in the life of Aristippus (2.82).

**Sosibius the Laconian** (fl. mid-third century BC): Grammarian conversant with Homeric problems and the history of Sparta.

**Sosicrates of Rhodes** (fl. mid-second century BC): Historian who wrote several biographies of philosophers as well as a history of Crete. In his biographies he highlighted the relationships between teachers and students.

**Sositheus** (third century BC): One of seven tragic poets from Alexandria known as the *Pleiad*. Little of his work has survived.

**Sotion of Alexandria** (second century BC): Peripatetic historian of philosophy. He wrote a thirteen-volume work called *The Succession of the Philosophers*. Sotion's work served as a major source for Diogenes, as well as for the Christian theologians Theodoretus and Eusebius.

**Speusippus** (c. 407–339 BC): Philosopher who succeeded Plato, his uncle, as head of the Academy. Diogenes discusses Speusippus' life and views at 4.1–5.

**Sphaerus of Borysthene** (third century BC): Stoic philosopher who was a student of Zeno and Cleanthes. According to Cicero, he was particularly admired for his definitions. None of his works have survived. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 7.177–78.

**Stesiclides of Athens** (dates unknown): Author of *List of Archons and Olympic Victors*, which Diogenes cites in the life of Xenophon (2.56).

**Telauges** (fifth century BC): Son of Pythagoras who is said to have written a *Letter to Philolaus*. Though Diogenes has reason to suspect it is apocryphal, he mentions this letter more than once (8.53, 8.55, and 8.74). Even if it is a forgery, the letter documents a significant effort to associate Empedocles with Pythagoreanism.

**Teleclides** (fl. c. 445 BC): Athenian comic poet who won three victories at the City Dionysia. In his life of Socrates (2.18), Diogenes attributes lines to Aristophanes' *Clouds* that do not actually appear in the play as we know it; it is thought that these lines may instead be from Teleclides' *Clouds*.

**Thales of Miletus** (fl. 585 BC): Early natural philosopher traditionally counted among the Seven Sages. Aristotle deems him the first natural philosopher. He is known for the idea that water is the principle of all things, as well as for having predicted a solar eclipse. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 1.22–44.

**Theaetetus** (dates unknown): Greek poet. Six of his epigrams survive. Diogenes refers to him at 4.25 and 8.48. As far as is known, this is not the mathematician of the same name (who is mentioned at 2.29).

**Theocritus of Chios** (fourth century BC): Orator trained by Isocrates and renowned for his caustic wit. He traded insults with both Alexander the Great and Antigonos I, and was eventually executed by the latter. Ambryon is said to have written a work about him, *On Theocritus* (see 5.11).

**Theodorus** (dates unknown): Author of a treatise called *On the Philosophic Schools* (2.65). This Theodorus is not to be confused with the Cyrenaic philosopher whom Diogenes mentions in the life of Aristippus (see 2.98–104).

**Theodorus the Atheist** (c. 340–c. 250 BC): Student of Aristippus the Younger who later earned the ironic nickname

God due to his well-known rejection of the deities. Although aware of the ironic nickname, Diogenes often refers to him as “the Godless.” Diogenes cites Theodorus' *Against Epicurus* (10.5), but Epicurus is said to have derived his own views on deities from Theodorus' book *On the Gods* (2.97).

**Theodosius** (dates unknown): Author of *Skeptical Chapters*, in which he attempts to argue for a distinction between Skepticism proper and Pyrrhonism (see 9.70).

**Theognis** (b. 550/40 BC): Elegiac poet from Megara. Over a thousand lines of verse are preserved under his name, though some seem to be by other hands. Many of his verses deal with the pleasures of the symposium or his love for a boy named Cyrnus. Theognis is quoted in Epicurus' *Letter to Menoeceus* (10.126).

**Theophanes** (dates unknown): Author of a work titled *On Painting*. Diogenes cites this work as attesting that there was an Ephesian painter named Theodorus (2.104).

**Theophrastus** (c. 372/70–c. 288/86 BC): Peripatetic philosopher and Aristotle's successor as head of the Lyceum. It is thought that Aristotle assigned Theophrastus botanical investigations. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 5.36–57.

**Theopompus** (fl. 410–370 BC): Athenian comic poet. Ancient sources ascribe twenty-four plays to him. His work survives only in fragments.

**Theopompus of Chios** (b. c. 378 BC): Rhetorician and historian who wrote a history of Philip II of Macedon. He was a student of Isocrates and was known for his admiration of Sparta. Theopompus was exiled for his Spartan sympathies but was later restored by Alexander.

**Thrasylbulus of Miletus** (seventh century BC): Tyrant of Miletus and friend of Periander. Diogenes quotes

a letter of his in the life of Periander (1.100).

**Thrasylus**: See Claudius Thrasylus.

**Timaeus of Tauromenium** (c. 350–260 BC): Historian and rhetorician best known for *The Histories*, a work in thirty-eight books mainly concerned with Sicily. Around 315 BC he was exiled from his native island by the tyrant Agathocles, and later traveled to Athens where he studied with Philiscus of Miletus. This is not the Timaeus who appears in Plato's dialogue of the same name.

**Timocrates of Lampsacus** (third century BC): Brother of the prominent Epicurean Metrodorus and himself a pupil of Epicurus for a brief time. He eventually renounced Epicurus' teachings and criticized his way of life (see 10.6–8).

**Timon of Phlius** (c. 320–230 BC): Philosopher, tragedian, and student of Pyrrho the Skeptic. After living in poverty and working as a dancer, he sought out a philosophical life. His most famous work, the *Lampoons*, was a series of verses deriding individual philosophers. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 9.109–16.

**Timonides** (fourth century BC): Friend of Dion who supported the latter in the war waged to seize power from Dionysius II, tyrant of Syracuse. Diogenes reports that Timonides dedicated his chronicle of Dion and Bion's adventures to Speusippus (see 4.5).

**Timotheus the Athenian** (dates unknown): Reputed author of a work called *On Lives* and unknown apart from Diogenes' references to him. Diogenes cites Timotheus for his descriptions of various philosophers' distinctive features, such as Zeno's crooked neck, Aristotle's lisp, and Speusippus' decaying body.

**Timotheus of Miletus** (c. 450–357 BC): Dithyrambic poet and musi-

## GLOSSARY OF ANCIENT SOURCES

cal innovator. He was criticized for adding strings to the traditional Greek lyre. Diogenes quotes a passage from his *Niobe* in the life of Zeno (7.28).

**Xanthus the Lydian** (fifth century BC): Author from Sardis who composed a history of Lydia. He flourished during the same period as Herodotus, and ancient sources imply that Herodotus may have used Xanthus as a source for his own writings. Xanthus' history of Lydia survives only in fragments.

**Xenocrates** (fourth century BC): Student of Plato who was head of the Academy from 339 to 314 BC. He was said to have been a man of kind and dignified character, and he served as ambassador to Antipater of Macedonia in 322 BC. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 4.6–15.

**Xenophanes of Colophon** (c. 570–c. 475 BC): Natural philosopher, poet, and theologian. He is noted for his critiques of Greek popular religion and the anthropomorphic conception of deities. Xenophanes is said to have

composed the first satirical verses (*Lampoons*). His work survives only in fragments. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 9.18–20.

**Xenophon of Erchia** (c. 430–c. 354 BC): Greek historian and writer, and an associate of Socrates. Along with Plato and Aristophanes, Xenophon provides a contemporary account of Socrates. Among his most famous works are *Anabasis*, *Symposium*, and *Memorabilia*. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 2.48–59.

**Zeno of Citium** (335–263 BC): Founder of the Stoic school of philosophy, which received its name from the Painted Stoa (Stoa Poikile), where Zeno held his lectures. Diogenes discusses his life and views at 7.1–160.

**Zeno of Elea** (fl. early fifth century BC): Philosopher and companion of Parmenides. He is best known for putting forward a set of paradoxes about motion, such as one in which the swift-footed Achilles can never overtake a tortoise in a footrace due to his inability to traverse an

infinite number of points. Aristotle considered him the father of dialectic, and Plato portrays him in his dialogue *Parmenides*.

**Zeno of Tarsus** (late third and second centuries BC): Stoic philosopher and Chrysippus' successor as head of the Stoa in 204 BC. An inspiring teacher with a large following, he was not a prolific writer.

**Zenodotus the Stoic** (c. fourth century BC): Stoic philosopher and student of Diogenes the Cynic. Diogenes quotes from him in the life of Zeno (7.30).

**Zeuxis** (first century BC): Skeptical philosopher, author of *On Two-Sided Arguments*, and friend of Aenesidemus. This is not the ancient painter of the same name who engaged in a storied competition with the artist Parhassius.

**Zoilus of Perga** (dates unknown): Known only through Diogenes Laertius' reference in the life of Diogenes the Cynic (6.37).

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