

Gorgias - Selections for WRIT 5775

THE OLDER SOPHISTS

EDITED BY
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A COMPLETE TRANSLATION
BY SEVERAL HANDS
OF THE FRAGMENTS IN
DIE FRAGMENTE
DER VORSOKRATIKER
EDITED BY DIELS-KRANZ
WITH A NEW EDITION OF
ANTIPHON AND OF *EUTHYDEMUS*

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82. GORGIAS

translated by GEORGE KENNEDY

Gorgias was born shortly before 480 B.C. in Leontini in Sicily and lived there for much of his life. He may have studied with Empedocles and certainly was familiar with the philosophy and rhetoric of the time. His only definite philosophical work, *On the Nonexistent or On Nature*, is to be dated to the late 440s. In 427, he was sent as an ambassador by Leontini to Athens, and subsequently he seems to have visited the city repeatedly or even to have settled there. His extant rhetorical pieces and fragments date from the late fifth and early fourth centuries. Sometime after 380, he removed to the court of Jason at Pherae in Thessaly, where he died at the age of at least one hundred and five.

A. LIFE AND TEACHINGS

1. PHILOSTRATUS *Lives of the Sophists* I 9, 1 Leontini in Sicily was the birthplace of Gorgias, a man to whom as to a father we think it right to refer the art of the sophists. For if we consider how much Aeschylus contributed to tragedy by adorning it with costume and the high buskin, and types of heroes, and messengers from abroad or from the house, and with the distinction between suitable onstage and offstage action, Gorgias would correspond to this in his contribution to his fellow artists. (2) For he was an example of forcefulness to the sophists and of unexpected expression and of inspiration and of the grand style for great subjects and of detached phrases and transitions, by which speech becomes sweeter than it has been and more impressive, and he also introduced poetic words for ornament and dignity. (3) It was said at the beginning of my discussion [A 1a]

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that he also improvised easily, and it is no wonder if he was admired by many when he spoke in Athens, although by then an old man, and I understand that he attracted the attention of the most admired men, Critias and Alcibiades who were young, and Thucydides and Pericles who were already old. Agathon too, the tragic poet, whom Comedy regards as wise and eloquent, often Gorgianizes in his iambic verse. (4) He was conspicuous also at the festivals of the Greeks, declaiming his *Pythian Speech* [B 9] from the altar at the temple of the Pythian god, where in addition a golden statue of himself was set up. His *Olympic Speech* [B 7, 8a] dealt with political matters of the greatest importance, for seeing Greece involved in civil dissension, he became a counselor of concord to her inhabitants, turning their attention against the barbarians and persuading them to regard as prizes to be won by their arms, not each other's cities, but the territory of the barbarians. (5) The *Funeral Oration* [B 6], which he delivered at Athens, was spoken over those who fell in the wars, whom the Athenians bury at public expense with eulogies, and it is composed with surpassing cleverness. For though inciting the Athenians against the Medes and Persians and contending for the same idea as in the *Olympic Speech*, he mentioned nothing about concord with the Greeks, since he was addressing the Athenians, who were eager for empire, which could not be obtained unless they adopted extremism, but he dwelt on praise of the victories over the Medes, showing them that victories over the barbarians require hymns of celebration, victories over the Greeks require laments [B 5b]. (6) It is said that Gorgias lived to the age of one hundred and eight years without suffering physical incapacity from old age but sound of body to the end and with the mind of a young man.

12. ——— 11 Gorgias of Leontini was the founder of the older type [i.e., of sophistry] in Thessaly. . . . Gorgias [seems] to have begun extemporaneous oratory. For coming into the theater of the Athenians he had the boldness to say "suggest a subject," and he was the first to proclaim himself willing to take this chance, showing apparently that he knew everything and would trust to the moment to speak on any subject.

2. SUIDAS Gorgias, son of Charmantides, of Leontini, orator, student of Empedocles, teacher of Polus of Acragas and Pericles and Isocrates and Alcidas of Elea, who also took over direction of his school. He was the brother of the physician Herodicus [A 2a].

Porphry places him in the eightieth Olympiad [460–457], but it is necessary to regard him as older.

He was the first to give to the rhetorical genre the verbal power and art of deliberate culture and employed tropes and metaphors and figurative language and hypallage and catachresis and hyperbaton and doublings of words and repetitions and apostrophes and clauses of equal length. He charged each of his students a hundred minas. He lived one hundred and nine years and wrote a great deal.

2a. PLATO *Gorgias* 448B If Gorgias happened to be acquainted with the art of his brother Herodicus, by what name would we appropriately call him?

3. DIOGENES LAERTIUS VIII 58, 59 Cf. DK 31 A 1 (58). [Empedocles] was both a physician and the finest orator. At least, Gorgias of Leontini was his student, and a man outstanding in rhetoric and the author of an Art. Satyrus [III fr. 12 p. 162] claims that he said he was with Empedocles when the latter played the wizard.

4. DIODORUS SICULUS XII 53, 1 [In the archonship of Eucles, 427 B.C.] At this time in Sicily the people of Leontini, who were colonists of the Chalcidians but relatives of the Athenians, happened to be involved in war with the Syracusans. Being hard pressed in the war and in danger of being forcibly overrun because of the numerical superiority of the Syracusans, they sent ambassadors to Athens, asking the democracy to come to their aid as quickly as possible and to rescue their city from its dangers. (2) The chief of the delegation was the orator Gorgias, in power of speech by far the most eminent of the men of his time. He was the first to invent rhetorical techniques and so surpassed others in sophistry that he received a fee of one hundred minas from students. (3) When he had arrived in Athens and been

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brought before the people, he addressed the Athenians on the subject of an alliance, and by the novelty of his style he amazed the Athenians, who were cultivated and fond of letters. (4) He was the first to use extravagant figures of speech marked by deliberate art: antithesis and clauses of exactly or approximately equal length and rhythm and others of such a sort, which at the time were thought worthy of acceptance because of the strangeness of the method, but now seem tiresome and often appear ridiculous and excessively contrived. (5) Finally, after persuading the Athenians to make an alliance with the Leontinians, and having himself won admiration in Athens for his rhetorical art, he returned home to Leontini. [Derived from Timaeus; cf. DIONYSIUS OF HALICARNASSUS *Lysias* 3.] Gorgias of Leontini illustrates this, making the style in many places very labored and bombastic and declaiming some passages "not unlike certain dithyrambos" [PLATO *Phaedrus* 238D], and among his associates those like Licymnius and Polus do the same. Poetic and figurative style captured the Athenian orators, according to Timaeus [fr. 95 FHG I 216], beginning when Gorgias on an embassy to Athens amazed his hearers in the assembly, but in truth it was always somewhat admired even earlier. Cf. *Prolegomenon Syllaloge Rhetores Graeci* xiv 27, 11ff. Rabe.

5. XENOPHON *Anabasis* II 6, 16ff. Proxenus of Boeotia, when he was just a lad, wanted to be a man who could do great things, and because of this desire he paid a fee to Gorgias of Leontini.

5a. ARISTOPHANES *Birds* 1694

There is in Phanae by the
Waterclock a rascally race
Of those who live by their tongues,
Who reap and sow
And gather in and play the sycophant
With tongues. They are
Barbarians by birth,
Gorgiases and Philips,
And when these Philips

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Who live by their tongues
Are sacrificed, everywhere in Attica
The tongue is cut from their bodies.

——— *Wasps* 420

By Heracles they have stings too. Don't
you see, O master?

——Stings by which in a lawsuit they killed
Philip, the offspring of Gorgias.

6. [PLUTARCH] *Lives of the Ten Orators* p. 832F [Antiphon of Rhamnus] was born during the Persian wars [that is, 480 B.C.] and about the time of Gorgias the sophist, but a little later than he. Cf. *DK* 41, 1a.

7. PAUSANIAS VI 17, 7ff. It is possible also to see the statue of Gorgias of Leontini. Eumolpus, a descendant in the third generation of Deicrates, who married Gorgias' sister, claims on the inscription that he dedicated the statue at Olympia. This Gorgias was the son of Charmantides and is said to have been the first to rescue care for speech, which had been generally neglected and had almost been forgotten among men. They say that Gorgias was famous for the speeches he gave at the Olympic games and when he came on an embassy to the Athenians with Tisias. . . . (9) But Gorgias acquired greater honor than the latter among the Athenians, and when Jason was ruling in Thessaly [\pm 380–370], though the school of Polycrates had acquired by no means little fame in Athens, he preferred Gorgias to Polycrates. They say that Gorgias lived five years beyond the century mark. x 18, 7 [Delphi] The golden statue, a dedication of Gorgias of Leontini, is Gorgias himself. Cf. ATHENAEUS XIX 505D; [DIO] 37, 28. CICERO *On the orator* III 32, 129 For whom [Gorgias] so great honor was held by Greece that to him alone of all those at Delphi not a gilded but a golden statue was erected. PLINY *Natural History* xxxiii 83 Gorgias of Leontini was the first man to dedicate a solid gold statue of himself, which he did around Olympiad LXX [?] in the

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temple at Delphi. So great was the profit from teaching the art of oratory.

8. EPIGRAMMATA GRAECA 875a [p. 534 Kaibel] [Beginning of the fourth century, found in 1876 in Olympia]

Charmantides' son, Gorgias of Leontini.

a. Deicrates married the sister of Gorgias.

And from her was born to him Hippocrates.

Hippocrates' son was Eumolpus, who dedicated this statue

For two reasons, learning and love.

b. No one of mortals before discovered a finer art

Than Gorgias to arm the soul for contests of excellence;

His statue stands as well in the vale of Apollo

Not as a show of wealth, but of the piety of his character.

8a. PLATO *Apology* 19E It seems to me [Socrates] a good thing, however, if someone be able to educate men as can Gorgias of Leontini and Prodicus of Ceos and Hippias of Elis.

9. AELIAN *Miscellaneous History* XII 32 The story is forgotten that Hippias and Gorgias appeared in purple clothes.

10. APOLLODORUS [FGrHist 244 F 33; see DK 31 A 1 (58).] He lived nine years past the century mark. PORPHYRIUS (See above A 2.) OLYMPIODORUS on PLATO *Gorgias* [*Neue Jahrbuch* Supplement 14 (1848) ed. A. Jahn, p. 112] Secondly, we shall say that they flourished at the same time: Socrates in the third year of the seventy-seventh Olympiad [470-469], and Empedocles the Pythagorean, the teacher of Gorgias, studied with him.¹ It is well known also that Gorgias wrote a fine treatise *On Nature* in the eighty-fourth Olympiad [444-441]. So that Socrates was earlier by twenty-four years or a little more. Moreover, Plato says in the *Theaetetus* [183E; cf. 28 A 5], "When I [Socrates] was quite young I met Parmenides, who was very old, and found him a most profound man." This Parmenides was the teacher of Emped-

¹ Or, adopting the conjecture of Cousin, "with Parmenides."

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ocles, the teacher of Gorgias. And Gorgias was rather old; for, as has been said, he died at the age of one hundred and nine. Thus they lived about the same time. Cf. 82 B 2.

11. ATHENAEUS XII 548CD Gorgias of Leontini, about whom the same Clearchus says in book eight of his *Lives* [fr. 15 FHG II 308] that because he lived sensibly he survived with all his faculties for nearly eighty [?] years. And when someone asked him what regimen he observed to live such a great length of time so pleasantly and with perception he said, "By never doing anything for the sake of pleasure." Demetrius of Byzantium in the fourth book *On Poems* says "Gorgias of Leontini, when asked what was the cause of his living more than a hundred years, said 'Never doing anything for the sake of anybody else. [?]' "

12. CICERO *Cato* 5, 12 His [Isocrates'] teacher Gorgias of Leontini lived a hundred and seven years and never relaxed in his effort and labor. When he was asked why he wanted to remain alive so long he said, "I have no cause for complaint against old age."

13. PLINY *Natural History* VII 156 It is beyond doubt that Gorgias of Sicily lived a hundred and eight years. [LUCIAN] *Long-Lived Men* 23 Among the orators, Gorgias, whom some call a sophist, lived a hundred and eight years and died by abstaining from food. They say that when he was asked the reason for his prolonged old age and health with all his faculties he said it was because he never attended other people's parties. Cf. CENSORINUS 15, 3; see 68 A 6.

14. QUINTILIAN III 1, 8ff. The earliest writers of Arts were the Sicilians, Corax and Tisias. They were followed by a man from the same island, named Gorgias of Leontini, said to have been a pupil of Empedocles. Because of his very long life (for he lived one hundred and nine years) he had many different contemporaries and thus was both a rival of those of whom I spoke above and outlived Socrates.

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15. AELIAN *Miscellaneous History* II 35 Gorgias of Leontini at the end of his life and in advanced old age, overtaken by a feeling of weakness, lay down and was gradually slipping off into sleep. When one of his friends came over to see him and asked what he was doing, Gorgias answered, "Sleep already begins to hand me over to his brother Death."

15a. ATHENAEUS XI 505D It is said that also Gorgias himself, having read the dialogue which bears his name, said to his friends, "How well Plato knows how to satirize!"

16. QUINTILIAN III 1, 13 Many followed them, but the most famous of the students of Gorgias was Isocrates. Although authorities do not agree about his teacher, we follow the view of Aristotle [fr. 139 Rose]. Cf. A 12.

17. [PLUTARCH] *Lives of the Ten Orators* p. 838D [Tomb of Isocrates as described by the guidebook writer Heliodorus] Near it was a tablet showing poets and his teachers, among whom is Gorgias looking at an astronomical globe and Isocrates himself standing by.

18. ISOCRATES 15, 155 Of the sophists whom we call to mind, Gorgias of Leontini acquired the most money. After spending his time in the neighborhood of Thessaly when its inhabitants were the most prosperous of the Greeks and after living a very long life and being engaged in the making of money (156) and since he did not inhabit any one city steadily, not spending money for public benefits nor being required to pay a tax, moreover neither marrying a wife nor begetting children but being free of this continual and most expensive demand, after having all these advantages in acquiring more than other men, he left behind him only a thousand staters.

19. PLATO *Meno* 70AB O Meno, in the past, Thessalians were fortunate among the Greeks and were admired for their horsemanship and wealth, but now, it seems to me, also for their wisdom, and not the

least admired are the Larisians, the fellow citizens of your companion Aristippus. You can thank Gorgias for this. For after arriving in the city he made the leading Aleuadae, of whom your lover Aristippus is one, and the other Thessalians into lovers of wisdom. And moreover, he has accustomed you to the custom of answering fearlessly and haughtily if someone asks something, as is right for those who know, just as he makes himself available to any of the Greeks to ask anything he wishes and there is no one he does not answer. ARISTOTLE *Politics* III 1, 1275b26 [Definition of civic rights] Gorgias of Leontini, partly at a loss what to say, partly in irony, said that just as things made by mortar-makers are mortars, so also Larisians are those made by public servants, for they are a group of Larisofiers.

20. PLATO *Gorgias* 447C I wish to learn from the man [Gorgias] what is the function of his art and what it is he proclaims and teaches: let him postpone other demonstration to another time, as you say. — There is nothing like asking him, O Socrates. For this was part of the demonstration. At least he urged those inside the house to ask what anyone wanted and said he would answer all questions. 449C [Gorgias speaks] And again this is one point of those that I am making, that no one speaks the same things in fewer words than I do. — This is what we need, O Gorgias. Make me a demonstration of this thing, that is, of speaking briefly, and of speaking extensively on another occasion.

21. ——— *Meno* 95C I most admire Gorgias for this, O Socrates, that one never heard him promising this [i.e., to be a teacher of excellence], but he even laughs at others when he hears them so promising. Rather he thinks it is his duty to make clever speakers.

22. ——— *Gorgias* 456B It has often happened that I [Gorgias] have gone with my brother [A 2, 2a] with other physicians to the bedside of a sick man who was unwilling to drink medicine or allow the doctor to cut or cauterize him, and though the doctor could not persuade him, I did persuade by means of no other art than rhetoric.

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23. ARISTOTLE *Rhetoric* III 3, 1406b14 The remark of Gorgias to the swallow, when it flew over him and let go its droppings, is in the best tragic style. He said, "Shame on you, Philomela." If a bird did it there was no disgrace, but it was shameful for a girl. His reproach was clever, therefore, since he called the bird what it was rather than what it is.

24. PHILOSTRATUS *Lives of the Sophists* p. 4, 4 Kayser Gorgias, laughing at Prodicus for speaking what was old-fashioned and had often been said before, turned his own attention to what was timely. Yet he did not escape spite. For there was a certain Chaerephon at Athens. . . . This Chaerephon, carping at Gorgias' seriousness, said, "Why, Gorgias, do beans inflate the belly but do not fan the fire?" Gorgias was not disturbed by the question and said, "I leave this to you to consider; for my part I have long known that the earth produces reeds for such ends."²

25. PLATO *Phaedrus* 267A [See DK 80 A 26.] CICERO *Brutus* 12, 47 *Commonplaces* [80 B 6] [They say] that Gorgias did the same in that he wrote passages of praise and blame of individual things because he believed the most characteristic task of the orator was to be able to amplify a subject by praise and, on the other hand, to deflate it by vituperation.

26. PLATO *Philebus* 58A I often heard Gorgias say that the art of rhetoric differs from all other arts. Under its influence all things are willingly but not forcibly made slaves. CICERO *On invention* 5, 2 Gorgias of Leontini, almost the earliest rhetorician, thought that an orator ought to be able to speak best on all subjects.

27. PLATO *Gorgias* 450B [Gorgias is speaking] In the case of the other arts, knowledge is, so to speak, concerned with handicrafts and similar activities, but there is no such handiwork of rhetoric, but all

² I.e., as blowpipes for fires and as rods to beat the insolent.

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activity and effect comes through words. For this reason I think the art of rhetoric is concerned with words, defining it correctly as I claim. OLYMPIODORUS on this passage p. 131 Jahn [Jahn's *Archiv Supplement* 14, 131] Those clever about words criticize the two words "handiwork" and "effect" as not in good usage, for in truth they are not found. We conclude, therefore, that since it is Gorgias who says them, Plato is borrowing from him words which are localisms, for Gorgias came from Leontini.

28. PLATO *Gorgias* 453A If I understand at all, you [Gorgias] are saying that rhetoric is the artificer of persuasion and all its business and its real essence is directed toward this goal. 455A Rhetoric is then, as it seems, the artificer of persuasion which is credible but not instructive, concerned with the just and the unjust.

29. ARISTOTLE *Rhetoric* III 1, 1404a24 Since, though speaking absurdities, the poets seemed to have acquired their present fame through their style, for this reason prose style was in the first instance poetic, like that of Gorgias. And even now, many uneducated people think such stylists express themselves best. SYRIANUS *On Hermogenes* I II, 20 Rabe [DIONYSIUS OF HALICARNASSUS *On Imitation* 8 p. 31, 13 Usener] Gorgias transferred poetic expression to civic discourse because he did not think it right for the orator to be like private citizens. But Lysias did the opposite, etc. [Similarly I 10, 13 Rabe; 7 p. 30, 20 Usener]

30. CICERO *Orator* 12, 39 They say that Thrasymachus of Chalcedon [85 A 2, 3] and Gorgias of Leontini were the first to have tried these figures [antithesis, parison, etc.], and after them Theodorus of Byzantium and many others whom Socrates in the *Phaedrus* calls "skilled in tricking out a speech." Cf. 80 A 26 [266 E].

31. ———— 49, 165 We have learned that Gorgias was the leader in pursuit of this concinnity.

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32. ——— ——— 52, 175 [Of rhythm] the first discoverer was Thrasy-machus, all of whose almost too rhythmical writings survive. For Gorgias was the first to employ like joined to like with similar endings and, conversely, opposites balanced with opposites, phrases which usually come out rhythmically even if one does nothing to make them do so, but he uses them excessively. . . . (176) Gorgias, however, is rather partial to this sort of thing and immoderately abuses these "festive decorations," as he regards them. Isocrates managed them with greater restraint, although in Thessaly when a young man he had been a student of the already aged Gorgias. DIONYSIUS OF HALICARNASSUS *Isaicus* 19 But keeping in mind that no one was better than Isocrates in this poetical style and elevated and pompous way of speaking, I have intentionally omitted those whom I knew to be less successful in these particular forms, regarding Gorgias of Leontini as one who departed from traditional usage and became repeatedly puerile.

33. ATHENAEUS V 220D His [Antisthenes'] dialogue *The Statesman* contains an attack on all the demagogues at Athens, and his *Archelaus* an attack on Gorgias the orator.

34. CLEMENT *Miscellanies* VI 26 [II 443, 4 Stählin] Gorgias of Leontini and Eudemus of Naxos [FHG II 20], the historians, and, in addition to these, Bion of Proconnesus [FHG II 19], stole from Melesagorus [FHG II 21].

35. PHILOSTRATUS *Epistle* 73 [II 257, 2d Teubner edition] The admirers of Gorgias were noble and numerous: first, the Greeks in Thessaly, among whom "to be an orator" acquired the synonym "to Gorgianize," and secondly, all Greece, in whose presence at the Olympic games he denounced the barbarians, speaking from the race-course belonging to the temple. Aspasia of Miletus is said to have sharpened the tongue of Pericles in imitation of Gorgias, and Critias and Thucydides are known to have acquired from him glory and pride, converting it into their own work, the one by careful choice

of word and the other by vigor. Aeschines the Socratic, in whom you [Julia is being addressed] were recently interested on the ground that he was clearly criticizing dialogues, did not hesitate to Gorgianize in the speech for Thargelia. For at one point he says [fr. 22 Dittmar; cf. Münscher in *Philologus*, Supplement x 536], "Thargelia the Milesian, coming to Thessaly, lived with Antiochus the Thessalian, who was king of all Thessaly." The digressions and transitions of Gorgias' speeches became the fashion in many circles and especially among the epic poets.

B. FRAGMENTS

GORGIAS' ON THE NONEXISTENT OR ON NATURE

1. ISOCRATES 10, 3 For how could one outdo Gorgias who dared to say that of existing things none exists or Zeno who tried to prove the same things to be possible and again impossible? 15, 268 . . . the theories of the early sophists, of whom one said the number of existing things is limitless . . . but Parmenides and Melissus said it is one and Gorgias none at all.
2. OLYMPIODORUS ON PLATO *Gorgias* p. 112 Jahn [See A 10.] Of course Gorgias, too, wrote an elegant treatise *On Nature* in the eighty-fourth Olympiad [444-441].
3. SEXTUS *Against the Schoolmasters* VII 65 Gorgias of Leontini began from the same position as those who have abolished the criterion, but did not follow the same line of attack as the school of Protagoras. In what is entitled *On the Nonexistent or On Nature* he proposes three successive headings: first and foremost, that nothing exists; second, that even if it exists it is inapprehensible to man; third, that even if it is apprehensible, still it is without a doubt incapable of being expressed or explained to the next man.

**Paraphrase of
G's treatise,
read to bottom
of p. 46**

(66) Now he concludes in the following way that nothing exists: If <anything> exists, either the existent exists or the nonexistent or both the existent exists and the nonexistent. But, as he will establish, neither does the existent exist nor the nonexistent, as he will make clear, nor the existent and <the> nonexistent, as he will also teach. It is not the case then that anything exists. (67) More specifically, the nonexistent does not exist; for if the nonexistent exists, it will both exist and not exist at the same time, for insofar as it is understood as nonexistent, it will not exist, but insofar as it *is* nonexistent it will, on the other hand, exist. It would, however, be entirely absurd for something to exist and at the same time not to exist. The nonexistent, therefore, does not exist. And to state another argument, if the nonexistent exists, the existent will not exist, for these are opposites to each other, and if existence is an attribute of the nonexistent, non-existence will be an attribute of the existent. But it is not, in fact, true that the existent does not exist. <Accordingly>, neither will the nonexistent exist. (68) Moreover, the existent does not exist either. For if the existent exists, it is either eternal or generated, or at the same time eternal and generated. But it is neither eternal nor generated nor both, as we shall show. The existent therefore does not exist. For if the existent is eternal (one must begin with this point) it does not have any beginning. (69) For everything which is generated has some beginning, but the eternal, being ungenerated, did not have a beginning. And not having a beginning it is without limit. And if it is without limit it is nowhere. For if it is somewhere, that in which it is, is something other than it, and thus if the existent is contained in something it will no longer be without limit. For the container is greater than the contained, but nothing is greater than the unlimited, so that the unlimited cannot exist anywhere. (70) Moreover, it is not contained in itself. For in that case container and contained will be the same, and the existent will become two things, place and body (place is the container, body the contained). But this is absurd. Accordingly, existence is not contained in itself. So that if the existent is eternal it is unlimited, and if it is unlimited it is nowhere, and if it is nowhere it does not exist. Accordingly, if the existent is eternal, it is

not existent at all. (71) Moreover, neither can the existent be generated. For if it has come into being, it has come either from the existent or the nonexistent. But it has not come from the existent. For if it is existent, it has not come to be, but already exists. Nor from the nonexistent. For the nonexistent cannot generate anything, because what is generative of something of necessity ought to partake of positive existence. It is not true either, therefore, that the existent is generated. (72) In the same way it is not jointly at the same time eternal and generated. For these qualities are mutually exclusive of each other, and if the existent is eternal it has not been generated, and if it has been generated it is not eternal. Accordingly, if the existent is neither eternal nor generated nor both at once, the existent should not exist. (73) And to use another argument, if it exists, it is either one or many. But it is neither one nor many, as will be set forth. Therefore, the existent does not exist. For if it is one, it is an existent or a continuum or a magnitude or a body. But whatever of these it is, it is not one, since whatever has extent will be divided, and what is a continuum will be cut. And similarly, what is conceived as a magnitude will not be indivisible. And if it is by chance a body it will be three-dimensional, for it will have length, and breadth and depth. But it is absurd to say that the existent is none of these things. Therefore, the existent is not one. (74) And moreover it is not many. For if it is not one, it is not many either, since the many is a composite of separate entities and thus, when the possibility that it is one was refuted, the possibility that it is many was refuted as well. Now it is clear from this that neither does the existent exist nor does the nonexistent exist. (75) It is easy to conclude that both the existent and the nonexistent do not exist either. For if the nonexistent exists and the existent exists, the nonexistent will be the same thing as the existent as far as existence is concerned. And for this reason neither of them exists. For it is agreed that the nonexistent does not exist, and the existent has been shown to be the same as the nonexistent and it accordingly will not exist. (76) Of course, if the existent is the same as the nonexistent, it is not possible for both to exist. For if both exist, they are not the same, and if the same, both do not exist. To which the conclusion follows that nothing

B. Fragments 3

exists. For if neither the existent exists nor the nonexistent nor both, and if no additional possibility is conceivable, nothing exists.

(77) Next it must be shown that even if anything exists, it is unknowable and incomprehensible to man. For, says Gorgias, if things considered in the mind are not existent, the existent is not considered. And that is logical. For if "white" were a possible attribute of what is considered, "being considered" would also have been a possible attribute of what is white; similarly, if "not to be existent" were a possible attribute of what is being considered, necessarily "not to be considered" will be a possible attribute of what is existent. (78) As a result, the statement "if things considered are not existent, the existent is not considered" is sound and logically follows. But things considered (for this must be our starting point) are not existent, as we shall show. The existent is not therefore considered. And moreover, it is clear that things considered are not existent. (79) For if things considered are existent, all things considered exist, and in whatever way anyone considers them. Which is absurd. For if one considers a man flying or chariots racing in the sea, a man does not straightway fly nor a chariot race in the sea. So that things considered are not existent. (80) In addition, if things considered in the mind are existent, nonexistent things will not be considered. For opposites are attributes of opposites, and the nonexistent is opposed to the existent. For this reason it is quite evident that if "being considered in the mind" is an attribute of the existent, "not being considered in the mind" will be an attribute of the nonexistent. But this is absurd. For Scylla and Chimaera and many other nonexistent things are considered in the mind. Therefore, the existent is not considered in the mind. (81) Just as objects of sight are said to be visible for the reason that they are seen, and objects of hearing are said to be audible for the reason that they are heard, and we do not reject visible things on the grounds that they are not heard, nor dismiss audible things because they are not seen (since each object ought to be judged by its own sense, but not by another), so, too, things considered in the mind will exist even if they should not be seen by the sight nor heard by the hearing, because they are perceived by their own criterion. (82) If, therefore, someone

considered in the mind that chariots race in the sea, even if he does not see them, he should believe that there are chariots racing in the sea. But this is absurd. Therefore, the existent is not an object of consideration and is not apprehended.

(83) But even if it should be apprehended, it would be incapable of being conveyed to another. For if existent things are visible and audible and generally perceptible, which means that they are external substances, and of these the things which are visible are perceived by the sight, those that are audible by the hearing, and not contrariwise, how can these things be revealed to another person? (84) For that by which we reveal is *logos*, but *logos* is not substances and existing things. Therefore we do not reveal existing things to our neighbors, but *logos*, which is something other than substances. Thus, just as the visible would not become audible, and vice versa, similarly, when external reality is involved, it would not become our *logos*, (85) and not being *logos*, it would not have been revealed to another. It is clear, he says, that *logos* arises from external things impinging upon us, that is, from perceptible things. From encounter with a flavor, *logos* is expressed by us about that quality, and from encounter with a color, an expression of color. But if this is the case, *logos* is not evocative of the external, but the external becomes the revealer of *logos*. (86) And surely it is not possible to say that *logos* has substance in the way visible and audible things have, so that substantial and existent things can be revealed from its substance and existence. For, he says, even if *logos* has substance, still it differs from all the other substances, and visible bodies are to the greatest degree different from words. What is visible is comprehended by one organ, *logos* by another. *Logos* does not, therefore, manifest the majority of substances, just as they do not manifest the nature of each other.

(87) Such being, in Gorgias' view, the problems, insofar as they are valid, the criterion is destroyed. For there would be no criterion if nature neither exists nor can be understood nor conveyed to another. Similar summary in [ARISTOTLE] *Melissus, Xenophanes, and Gorgias* 5, 6, 979a11-980b21. Aristotle himself wrote a monograph *In Reply to the Opinions of Gorgias*. See DIOGENES LAERTIUS V 25.

B. Fragments 3-5

4. PLATO *Meno* 76A ff. [Meno and Socrates are speaking] How do you define color, Socrates? — You really are a troublemaker, Meno. You impose on an old man the troublesomeness of answering, but you yourself don't want to remember and tell what Gorgias says virtue to be. . . .
c Do you want me to answer you in the manner of Gorgias, in a way that you could most easily follow? — Yes, of course. — Then you two [Meno and Gorgias] following Empedocles, say, don't you, that existing things have some effluences? — Certainly. — And pores into which and through which the effluences are carried? — Yes. — And some of the effluences fit some of the pores, but some are smaller or larger? — That is so. — Isn't there also something you call sight? — Yes. — From these premises "grasp what I say," in Pindar's words [fr. 105/6 Schroeder 3d ed.]. Color is an effluence of things commensurate and perceptible to sight. — You seem to have spoken this answer very well, Socrates. — Probably it was spoken in accordance with your expectation. And I suppose you understand also that you could define what voice is, as well, in this way and smell and many other similar things? — Certainly. — The answer, Meno, is in the grand style.

5. THEOPHRASTUS *On Fire* 73 p. 20 Gercke (*Progr. Gryph.* 1896) And that they³ kindle the light from the sun by reflection from smooth surfaces (and the fuel mingles together), but they do not kindle the light from a fire, the reason is the existence of small particles in the former case and the fact that the light becomes dense the more it is reflected, but the other light cannot become dense because it consists of dissimilar elements. Thus the one, melting into fuel by means of condensation and smoothness, is able to catch fire, but the other, lacking these characteristics, is not able to. Combustion from a mirror and from bronze and silver surfaces polished in some way does not take place, as Gorgias says and some others believe, "by means of the fire passing away through the pores."

³ I.e., burning glasses or mirrors.

FUNERAL ORATION Cf. A 1 (5); B 27.

5a. ATHANASIUS *Introduction to Hermogenes, Rb.Gr.* xiv 180, 9 Rabe [I call] the third kind of rhetoric that which is concerned with something ridiculous, awakening the guffaws of the young and being basically a shameless flattery. The circle of Thrasy-machus and Gorgias practiced this in style and in their invalid arguments, making use of many equal clauses and failing to understand when this figure is appropriate. Many also have displayed it in figures of thought and tropes, but especially Gorgias, since he was the most affected; during the course of the very narrative in his *Funeral Oration*, not venturing to say “vultures” he spoke of “animate tombs.” In the thought he falls below what is necessary, as Isocrates also testifies when he says, “For how could one. . .” [B 1] [LONGINUS] *On the Sublime* 3, 2 In this way also the writings of Gorgias of Leontini are laughed at, since he called Xerxes “the Persians’ Zeus” and vultures “living tombs.”

5b. PHILOSTRATUS *Lives of the Sophists* 1 9, 5 [See above A 1 (5).] “Victories over the barbarians require hymns of celebration, over the Greeks laments.”

6. PLANUDES ON HERMOGENES *Rb.Gr.* v 548 Walz · Dionysius the elder in the second book *On Kinds of Style*, speaking of Gorgias, says as follows: “I have not met with judicial speeches by him, but with a few deliberative speeches of a sort and technical treatises and numerous epideictic speeches. The following is an example of the style of his speeches (he is praising those of the Athenians who were distinguished for their bravery in war): ‘What was absent to these men of that which should be present to men; and too, what was present of that which should not be present? Would that I can speak what I wish and would that I wish to speak what I should, avoiding divine displeasure and escaping human envy. For these men attained an excellence which is divine and a mortality which is human, often preferring gentle fairness to inflexible justice, often straightness of speech to exactness of law, believing that the most godlike and universal law was this: in time of

**Read quotation of
G's Funeral Oration,
this paragraph**

B. Fragments 5a-8a

duty dutifully to speak and to leave unspoken, to act (and to leave undone), cultivating two needed qualities especially, judgment (and strength), one for deliberating, the other for accomplishing, giving help to those unjustly afflicted and punishment to those unjustly flourishing, determined in regard to the expedient, gentle in regard to the fitting, by the prudence of the mind checking the irrationality (of the body), insolent with the insolent, decent with the decent, fearless with the fearless, terrible among terrors. As evidence of these qualities they set up a trophy over their enemies, an honor to Zeus, an ornament to themselves; not inexperienced were they in native valor or legitimate passions or armed strife or honorable peace, reverent to the gods by means of justice, respectful to parents by means of care, just to fellow citizens by equality, loyal to friends by faithfulness. Wherefore, though they have died, desire for them has not died, but lives on immortal among bodies not immortal, though they do not live.' ”

SPEECH AT THE OLYMPIC GAMES Cf. A 1.

7. ARISTOTLE *Rhetoric* III 14, 1414b29 The source of prooemia in epideictic speeches is praise or blame, as for example, Gorgias in the Olympic speech: “They deserve to be admired by many, O men of Greece.” For he praises those who create the national assemblies.

8. CLEMENT *Miscellanies* I 51 [II 33, 18 Stählin] According to Gorgias of Leontini, “A contest such as we have requires two kinds of excellence, daring and skill; daring is needed to withstand danger, and skill to understand how to trip the opponent [?]. For surely speech, like the summons at the Olympic games, calls him who will, but crowns him who can.”

8a. PLUTARCH *Advice to Bride and Groom* 43 p. 144BC When Gorgias the orator read a speech at Olympia about concord among the Greeks, Melanthius said: “This fellow advises us about concord, though he has not persuaded himself and his wife and his maid, only three in

number, to live in private concord." For it seems that Gorgias had a passion for the little maid and his wife was jealous. Cf., however, A 20.

SPEECH AT THE PYTHIAN GAMES

9. PHILOSTRATUS *Lives of the Sophists* I 9, 4 [See A 1 (4).]

ENCOMIUM FOR THE PEOPLE OF ELIS

10. ARISTOTLE *Rhetoric* III 14, 1416a1 Gorgias' *Encomium for the People of Elis* is of this sort. For without any preliminary skirmishing or prelude he begins immediately, "Elis, happy city."

GORGIAS' ENCOMIUM OF HELEN

11. (1) What is becoming to a city is manpower, to a body beauty, to a soul wisdom, to an action virtue, to a speech truth, and the opposites of these are unbecoming. Man and woman and speech and deed and city and object should be honored with praise if praiseworthy and incur blame if unworthy, for it is an equal error and mistake to blame the praisable and to praise the blamable. (2) It is the duty of one and the same man both to speak the needful rightly and to refute (the unrightfully spoken. Thus it is right to refute)⁴ those who rebuke Helen, a woman about whom the testimony of inspired poets has become univocal and unanimous as had the ill omen of her name, which has become a reminder of misfortunes. For my part, by introducing some reasoning into my speech, I wish to free the accused of blame and, having reproved her detractors as prevaricators and proved the truth, to free her from their ignorance.

(3) Now it is not unclear, not even to a few, that in nature and in blood the woman who is the subject of this speech is preeminent

⁴ Accepting Diels's "sense" as given in the *apparatus criticus*.

**Read G's "Helen",
to p. 54**

B. Fragments 8a-11

among preeminent men and women. For it is clear that her mother was Leda, and her father was in fact a god, Zeus, but allegedly a mortal, Tyndareus, of whom the former was shown to be her father because he was and the latter was disproved because he was said to be, and the one was the most powerful of men and the other the lord of all.

(4) Born from such stock, she had godlike beauty, which taking and not mistaking, she kept. In many did she work much desire for her love, and her one body was the cause of bringing together many bodies of men thinking great thoughts for great goals, of whom some had greatness of wealth, some the glory of ancient nobility, some the vigor of personal agility, some command of acquired knowledge. And all came because of a passion which loved to conquer and a love of honor which was unconquered. (5) Who it was and why and how he sailed away, taking Helen as his love, I shall not say. To tell the knowing what they know shows it is right but brings no delight. Having now gone beyond the time once set for my speech, I shall go on to the beginning of my future speech, and I shall set forth the causes through which it was likely that Helen's voyage to Troy should take place.

(6) For either by will of Fate and decision of the gods and vote of Necessity did she do what she did, or by force reduced or by words seduced (or by love possessed). Now if through the first, it is right for the responsible one to be held responsible; for god's predetermination cannot be hindered by human premeditation. For it is the nature of things, not for the strong to be hindered by the weak, but for the weaker to be ruled and drawn by the stronger, and for the stronger to lead and the weaker to follow. God is a stronger force than man in might and in wit and in other ways. If then one must place blame on Fate and on a god, one must free Helen from disgrace.

(7) But if she was raped by violence and illegally assaulted and unjustly insulted, it is clear that the raper, as the insulter, did the wronging, and the raped, as the insulted, did the suffering. It is right then for the barbarian who undertook a barbaric undertaking in word and law and deed to meet with blame in word, exclusion in law, and punishment in deed. And surely it is proper for a woman raped and

robbed of her country and deprived of her friends to be pitied rather than pilloried. He did the dread deeds; she suffered them. It is just therefore to pity her but to hate him.

(8) But if it was speech which persuaded her and deceived her heart, not even to this is it difficult to make an answer and to banish blame as follows. Speech is a powerful lord, which by means of the finest and most invisible body effects the divinest works: it can stop fear and banish grief and create joy and nurture pity. I shall show how this is the case, since (9) it is necessary to offer proof to the opinion of my hearers: I both deem and define all poetry as speech with meter. Fearful shuddering and tearful pity and grievous longing come upon its hearers, and at the actions and physical sufferings of others in good fortunes and in evil fortunes, through the agency of words, the soul is wont to experience a suffering of its own. But come, I shall turn from one argument to another. (10) Sacred incantations sung with words are bearers of pleasure and banishers of pain, for, merging with opinion in the soul, the power of the incantation is wont to beguile it and persuade it and alter it by witchcraft. There have been discovered two arts of witchcraft and magic: one consists of errors of soul and the other of deceptions of opinion. (11) All who have and do persuade people of things do so by molding a false argument. For if all men on all subjects had <both> memory of things past and <awareness> of things present and foreknowledge of the future, speech would not be similarly similar, since as things are now it is not easy for them to recall the past nor to consider the present nor to predict the future. So that on most subjects most men take opinion as counselor to their soul, but since opinion is slippery and insecure it casts those employing it into slippery and insecure successes. (12) What cause then prevents the conclusion that Helen similarly, against her will, might have come under the influence of speech, just as if ravished by the force of the mighty? For it was possible to see how the force of persuasion prevails; persuasion has the form of necessity, but it does not have the same power.⁵ For speech constrained the soul, persuading

⁵ Accepting Diels's "sencse" as given in the *apparatus criticus*.

B. Fragments 11

it which it persuaded, both to believe the things said and to approve the things done. The persuader, like a constringer, does the wrong and the persuaded, like the constringed, in speech is wrongly charged. (13) To understand that persuasion, when added to speech, is wont also to impress the soul as it wishes, one must study: first, the words of astronomers who, substituting opinion for opinion, taking away one but creating another, make what is incredible and unclear seem true to the eyes of opinion; then, second, logically necessary debates in which a single speech, written with art but not spoken with truth, bends a great crowd and persuades; <and> third, the verbal disputes of philosophers in which the swiftness of thought is also shown making the belief in an opinion subject to easy change. (14) The effect of speech upon the condition of the soul is comparable to the power of drugs over the nature of bodies. For just as different drugs dispel different secretions from the body, and some bring an end to disease and others to life, so also in the case of speeches, some distress, others delight, some cause fear, others make the hearers bold, and some drug and bewitch the soul with a kind of evil persuasion.

(15) It has been explained that if she was persuaded by speech she did not do wrong but was unfortunate. I shall discuss the fourth cause in a fourth passage. For if it was love which did all these things, there will be no difficulty in escaping the charge of the sin which is alleged to have taken place. For the things we see do not have the nature which we wish them to have, but the nature which each actually has. Through sight the soul receives an impression even in its inner features. (16) When belligerents in war buckle on their warlike accouterments of bronze and steel, some designed for defense, others for offense, if the sight sees this, immediately it is alarmed and it alarms the soul, so that often men flee, panic-stricken, from future danger <as though it were> present. For strong as is the habit of obedience to the law, it is ejected by fear resulting from sight, which coming to a man causes him to be indifferent both to what is judged honorable because of the law and to the advantage to be derived from victory. (17) It has happened that people, after having seen frightening sights, have also lost presence of mind for the present moment;

in this way fear extinguishes and excludes thought. And many have fallen victim to useless labor and dread diseases and hardly curable madneses. In this way the sight engraves upon the mind images of things which have been seen. And many frightening impressions linger, and what lingers is exactly analogous to <what is> spoken. (18) Moreover, whenever pictures perfectly create a single figure and form from many colors and figures, they delight the sight, while the creation of statues and the production of works of art furnish a pleasant sight to the eyes. Thus it is natural for the sight to grieve for some things and to long for others, and much love and desire for many objects and figures is engraved in many men. (19) If, therefore, the eye of Helen, pleased by the figure of Alexander, presented to her soul eager desire and contest of love, what wonder? If, <being> a god, <love has> the divine power of the gods, how could a lesser being reject and refuse it? But if it is a disease of human origin and a fault of the soul, it should not be blamed as a sin, but regarded as an affliction. For she came, as she did come, caught in the net of Fate, not by the plans of the mind, and by the constraints of love, not by the devices of art.

(20) How then can one regard blame of Helen as just, since she is utterly acquitted of all charge, whether she did what she did through falling in love or persuaded by speech or ravished by force or constrained by divine constraint?

(21) I have by means of speech removed disgrace from a woman; I have observed the procedure which I set up at the beginning of the speech; I have tried to end the injustice of blame and the ignorance of opinion; I wished to write a speech which would be a praise of Helen and a diversion to myself.

A DEFENSE ON BEHALF OF PALAMEDES
BY THE SAME AUTHOR

**G's "Palamedes".
OPTIONAL**

11a. (1) Prosecution and defense are not a means of judging about death; for Nature, with a vote which is clear, casts a vote of death against every mortal on the day on which he is born. The danger

B. Fragments II-IIIa

relates to dishonor and honor, whether I must die justly or whether I must die roughly with the greatest reproaches and most shameful accusation. (2) There are the two alternatives; you have the second within your power, I the first; justice is up to me, roughness is up to you. You will easily be able to kill me if you wish, for you have power over these matters, over which as it happens I have no power. (3) If then the accuser, Odysseus, made his accusation through good will toward Greece, either clearly knowing that I was betraying Greece to the barbarians or imagining somehow that this was the case, he would be best of men. For this would of course⁶ be true of one who saves his homeland, his parents, and all Greece, and in addition punishes a wrongdoer. But if he has put together this allegation out of envy or conspiracy or knavery, just as in the former case he would be the finest of men, so in this he would be the worst of men. (4) Where shall I start to speak about these matters? What shall I say first? To what part of the defense shall I turn my attention? For an unsupported allegation creates evident perplexity, and because of the perplexity it follows that I am at a loss in my speech, unless I discover something out of the truth itself and out of the present necessity, having met with teachers more dangerous than inventive. (5) Now I clearly know that my accuser accuses me without <knowing> the matter clearly; for I know in my heart clearly that I have done no such thing; and I do not know how anyone could know what did not happen. But in case he made the accusation thinking it to be so, I shall show you in two ways that he is not speaking the truth. For I could not if I wished, nor would I if I could, put my hand to such works as these.

(6) I come first to this argument, that I lack the capability of performing the action charged. There must have been some first beginning to the treason, and the beginning would have been speech, for before any future deeds it is necessary first for there to be discussions. But how could there be discussions unless there had been some meeting? And how could there have been a meeting unless the opponent

⁶ Without the emendation of Stephanus-Blass, the meaning would be "of course not."

sent to me or <someone> went from me to him? For no message arrives in writing without a bearer. (7) But this can take place by speech. And suppose he is with me and I am with him—how does it take place? Who is with whom? Greek with barbarian. How do we listen and how talk to each other? By ourselves? But we do not know each other's language. With an interpreter then? A third person is added as a witness to things which need to be hidden. (8) But assume that this too has taken place, even though it has not. Next it was necessary to give and receive a pledge. What would the pledge be? An oath? Who was apt to trust me, the traitor? Perhaps there were hostages? Who? For instance, I might have given my brother (for I had no one else), and the barbarian might have given one of his sons; in this way the pledge would have been most secure to me from him and to him from me. But these things, if they happened, would have been clear to you all. (9) Someone will say that we made the contract for money, he giving it, I taking it. Was it for little? But it is not probable that a man would take a little money for a great service. For much money? Who was the go-between? How could one person bring it? Perhaps there were many? If many brought it, there would have been many witnesses of the plot, but if one brought it, what was brought would not have been anything much. (10) Did they bring it by day or by night? But the guards are many and closely placed and it is not possible to escape their notice. But by day? Certainly the light militates against such things. Well then. Did I go out and get it or did the opponent come bringing it? For both are impossible. If I had in fact taken it, how would I have hidden it both from those in the camp and from those outside it? Where would I have put it? How would I have protected it? If I made use of it, I would have been conspicuous; if I didn't, what advantage would I have gotten from it? (11) Still, assume that what did not happen has happened. We met, we talked, we reached an understanding, I took money from them, I was not detected after taking it, I hid it. It was then necessary to perform that for the sake of which these arrangements were made. Now this is still stranger than what has been discussed. For in doing it, I acted by myself or with others. But the action was not the work

B. Fragments 11a

of one man. But was it with others? Who? Clearly my associates. Were they free men or slaves? My free associates are you. Who then among you was aware? Let him speak. How is it credible that I would use slaves? For they bring charges <both> in hopes of their freedom and out of necessity when hard pressed. (12) As for the action, how <would> it have taken place? Clearly enemy forces outnumbering you had to be brought in, which was impossible. How could I have brought them in? Through the gates? But it was not my job to shut or open them, but the commanders were in charge of these. But it was over the walls <by> a ladder? Wouldn't <I have been seen?> The whole place was full of guards. But it was through a hole made in the wall? It would then have been clear to all. Life under arms is carried on outdoors (for this is a camp!), in which <everybody> sees everything and everybody is seen by everybody. Altogether then and in every way it was impossible for me to do all these things.

(13) Consider among yourselves the following point as well. What reason was there to wish to do these things, assuming that I had a special capability? For no one wishes to run the greatest dangers without reward nor to be most wicked in the greatest wickedness. But what reason was there? (For again I revert to this point.) For the sake of rul<ing>? Over you or over the barbarians? But over you it would be impossible for me to rule, considering your numbers and nature and the fact that you have all manner of great resources: nobility of family, wealth of money, fame, strength of heart, the thrones of cities. (14) But over the <barbarians>? Who is going to betray them? By means of what power shall I, a Greek, take over the barbarians, when I am one and they are many? Persuading or constraining them? For they would not wish to be persuaded and I would not be able to constrain. But possibly there are those willing to betray them to a willing receiver by giving money in return for the surrender? But both to believe and accept this is very foolish. For who would choose slavery instead of sovereignty, the worst instead of the best? (15) Someone might say that I ventured on this out of a desire for wealth and money. But I have a moderate amount of money, and I have no need for much. Those who spend much money need much,

not those who are continent of the pleasures of nature, but those who are slaves to pleasures and seek to acquire honors from wealth and show. None of this applies to me. I shall offer my past life as sure evidence that I am speaking the truth, and you be witnesses to the witness, for you are my companions and thus know these things. (16) Nor, moreover, would a man even moderately prudent put his hand to such work even for honor. Honors come from goodness, not from badness. How would there be honor for a man who is the betrayer of Greece? And in addition, as it happens, I am not without honor. For I am honored for the most honorable reason by the most honorable men, that is, by you for wisdom. (17) Nor, moreover, would anyone do these things for the sake of security. For the traitor is the enemy of all: the law, justice, the gods, the bulk of mankind. For he contravenes the law, negates justice, destroys the masses, and dishonors what is holy, and a man does not have security whose life <is> of this sort among the greatest dangers. (18) But was I anxious to assist friends or harm enemies? For someone might commit injustice for these reasons. But in my case everything was the opposite. I was harming my friends and helping foes. The action therefore involved no acquisition of goods, and there is no one who does wrong out of desire to suffer loss. (19) The remaining possibility is that I did it to escape some fear or labor or danger. But no one could say that these motives applied to me in any way. All men do all things in pursuit of these two goals: either seeking some profit or escaping some punishment, and whatever knavery is done for reasons other than these <is apt to involve the doer in great evils. That I would most>⁷ hurt myself in doing these things is not unclear. For in betraying Greece I was betraying myself, my parents, my friends, the dignity of my ancestors, the cults of my native land, the tombs of my family, and my great country of Greece. Those things which are all in all to all men, I would have entrusted to men who had been wronged.⁸ (20) But consider the following as well. Would not my life have been

⁷ The conjecture of Keil, which Diels approves in the *apparatus*.

⁸ Perhaps "had done wrong"(?), Diels.

B. Fragments 11a

unlivable if I had done these things? Where must I have turned for help? To Greece? Shall I make amends to those who have been wronged? Who of those who suffered could keep his hands off me? Or must I remain among the barbarians? Abandoning everything important, deprived of the noblest honor, passing my life in shameful disgrace, throwing away the labors labored for virtue of my past life? And this of my own accord, although to fail through his own doing is most shameful for a man. (21) Moreover, not even among the barbarians would I be trusted. How could I be, if they knew that I had done something most untrustworthy, had betrayed my friends to my enemies? But life is not livable for a man who has lost the confidence of others. The man who loses his money <or> who falls from power or who is exiled from his country might get on his feet again, but he who throws away good faith would not any more acquire it. Therefore, that I would not <if I could, nor could if I would>, betray Greece has been demonstrated by what has been said.

(22) I wish next to address the accuser. What in the world do you trust when, being what you are, you accuse such a one as me? It is worth examining the kind of man you are who says the kind of things you do, like the worthless attacking the worthless. Do you accuse me, knowing accurately what you say, or imagining it? If it is with knowledge, you know either from seeing or participating or learning from someone <who was participating>. If then you saw, tell these judges <the manner>, the place, the time, when, where, how you saw. If you participated, you are liable to the same accusations. And if you heard from someone who participated, who is he? Let him come forward; let him appear; let him bear witness. For if it is witnessed in this way, the accusation will be more credible, since as it is, neither of us is furnishing a witness. (23) You will say perhaps that it is equitable for you not to furnish witnesses of what you allege to have happened, but that I should furnish witnesses of what has not happened. But this is not equitable. For it is quite impossible for what has not happened to be testified to by witnesses, but on the subject of what has happened, not only is it not impossible, but it is even easy, and not only is it easy, but <even necessary. But> for you it was not possible, <not> only to

find witnesses, but even to find false witnesses, and for me it was possible to find neither of these. (24) Therefore, it is clear that you do not have knowledge of the things about which you make accusation. It follows that since you do <not> have knowledge, you have an opinion. Do you then, O most daring of all men, trusting in opinion, a most untrustworthy thing, not knowing the truth, dare to bring a capital charge against a man? Why do you share knowledge that he has done such a deed? But surely it is open to all men to have opinions on all subjects, and in this you are no wiser than others. But it is not right to trust those with an opinion instead of those who know, nor to think opinion more trustworthy than truth, but rather truth than opinion.

(25) You accused me through spoken words of two directly opposed things, wisdom and madness, which the same man cannot have. Where you say that I am artful and clever and resourceful, you accuse me of wisdom, and where you say that I was betraying Greece, you accuse me of madness. For it is madness to undertake tasks which are impossible, inexpedient, and shameful, which will harm his friends, help his enemies, and make his own life disgraceful and perilous. Yet how can one trust a man of the sort who in a single speech says to the same man the most inconsistent things about the same subjects? (26) I would like to ask you whether you think wise men are witless or intelligent. If witless, your speech is novel, but not true; if intelligent, surely it is not right for intelligent men to make the worst mistakes and to prefer evils to present goods. If therefore I am wise, I have not erred; if I have erred, I am not wise. Thus in both cases you would be wrong.

(27) I do not want to introduce in reply the many enormities, both old and new, which you have committed, though I could. For <I wish> to escape this charge by means of my own virtues, not by means of your vices. So much, therefore, to you.

(28) To you, O judges, I wish to say something invidious, but true about myself, not appropriate to one who has <not> been accused, but fitting to one who has been accused. For I am now undergoing scrutiny and furnishing an account of my past life. I therefore beg of you, if I

remind you of some of the fine things done by me, that no one be annoyed at what is said, but think it necessary for one who is dreadfully and falsely accused to say as well some true things among you who know them. This is the most pleasant for me. (29) First, then, and second and greatest, in every respect from beginning to end my past life has been blameless, free from all blame. No one could truthfully speak any imputation of evil to you about me. For not even the accuser himself has provided any evidence of what he has said. Thus his speech has the impact of abuse lacking proof. (30) I might say, and saying it I would not lie nor would I be refuted, that I am not only blameless but also a great benefactor of you and the Greeks and all mankind, not only of those now alive but <also> of those to come. For who else would have made human life well provided instead of destitute and adorned instead of unadorned, by inventing military equipment of the greatest advantage and written laws, the guardians of justice, and letters, the tool of memory, and measures and weights, the convenient standards of commercial exchange, and number, the guardian of items, and very powerful beacons and very swift messengers, and draughts, the harmless game of leisure? Why do I remind you of these? (31) For the purpose of making it clear <on the one hand> that it is to this sort of thing that I apply myself, and on the other giving an indication of the fact that I abstain from shameful and wicked deeds. For it is impossible for one applying himself to the latter to apply himself to this sort of thing. And I think it right not to be harmed myself by you if I myself have done you no harm. (32) Nor am I, because of other activities, deserving of ill treatment at the hands of younger or older men. For I am inoffensive to the older, not unhelpful to the younger, not envious of the fortunate, but merciful to the unfortunate; not heedless of poverty nor valuing wealth ahead of virtue, but virtue ahead of wealth; neither useless in council nor lazy in war, doing what is assigned to me, obeying those in command. To be sure, it is not for me to praise myself, but the present occasion requires me to make my defense in every possible way since I have been accused of these things.

(33) For the rest, my speech is to you and about you; when I have

said this I shall end my defense. Appeals to pity and entreaties and the intercession of friends are useful when a trial takes place before a mob, but among you, the first of the Greeks and men of repute, it is not right to persuade you with the help of friends or entreaties or appeals to pity, but it is right for me to escape this charge by means of the clearest justice, explaining the truth, not deceiving. (34) And it is necessary for you to avoid paying more attention to words than to actions, and not to prejudge the bases of the defense nor to think a short time affords wiser judgment than a long time nor to believe that slander is more reliable than firsthand knowledge. For in all matters good men must take great care against erring, and more so in matters irremediable than in those remediable. For these lie within the control of those who have exercised foresight, but are uncorrectable by those with hindsight. And it is a matter of this sort whenever men judge a man on a capital charge, which is now the case before you. (35) If then, by means of words, it were possible for the truth of actions to become free of doubt <and> clear to hearers, judgment would now be easy from what has been said. But since this is not the case, protect my body, wait for a longer while, and make your decision with truth. For your danger is great that by seeming unjust you lose one reputation and acquire another. To good men death is preferable to a shameful reputation. For one is the end of life, and the other is disease in life. (36) If you kill me unjustly, it will be evident to many, for I am <not> unknown, and your wickedness will be known and clear to all Greeks. And you, rather than the accuser, will have a responsibility for the injustice which will be clear to all. For the outcome of the trial rests with you. But greater error than this could not exist. If you give an unjust verdict, you will make a mistake, not only in regard to me and my parents, but by your action you will make yourselves responsible for a dreadful, godless, unjust, unlawful deed, having killed a man who is your fellow soldier, useful to you, a benefactor of Greece, Greeks killing Greek, though convicting him of no clear injustice nor credible fault.

(37) My side of the case is spoken and I rest. For to recapitulate briefly what has been spoken at length is logical before bad judges,

B. Fragments 11a-14

but it is not appropriate to think that Greeks who are first of the first do not pay attention and do not remember what has been said.

Read: Reports on G.
having composed an
"Art" of rhetoric.

ART OF RHETORIC

Cf. SATYRUS A 3; DIODORUS SICULUS A 4 (2); SCHOLIA TO ISOCRATES 13, 19; SOPATER *Commentary on Hermogenes*, *Rh.Gr.* v 6ff. Walz.

12. ARISTOTLE *Rhetoric* III 18, 1419b3 Gorgias said that "the opposition's seriousness is to be demolished by laughter, and laughter by seriousness," in which statement he was correct.

13. DIONYSIUS OF HALICARNASSUS *On the Arrangement of Words* 12 p. 84 No orator or philosopher has up to this time defined the art of the "timely," not even Gorgias of Leontini, who first tried to write about it, nor did he write anything worth mentioning.

14. [To the *Art of Rhetoric* there probably belong also short models of defenses in the grand style like the *Helen* and the *Palamedes*.]⁹ ARISTOTLE *On Sophistical Refutations* xxxiii 183b36 The educational method of those earning money by teaching controversial argumentation was like the system of Gorgias. For some assigned rhetorical speeches and others question-and-answer discussions to be learned by heart. Each thought that each other's arguments were for the most part encompassed in these. As a result, the teaching was quick but unscientific for those learning from them. For they thought they were teaching, although presenting, not art, but the results of art, just as if someone claimed to present a science to prevent feet from hurting and then did not teach shoemaking, nor where it was possible to get such things, but offered many kinds of shoes of all sorts. Cf. PLATO *Phaedrus* 261B: [Phaedrus and Socrates are speaking] But most of what

⁹ Diels here confuses rhetorical handbooks with collections of model speeches or parts of speeches. Cf. George Kennedy, *The Art of Persuasion in Greece* (Princeton, 1963), pp. 61-63.

Here,
"the 'timely'" =
kairos

is spoken and written under the rules of an art is related to lawsuits, but there is use of an art also in deliberative assemblies; more than that I have not heard. — But surely then you have heard only of the *Arts of Speech* by Nestor and Odysseus which they composed when not busy at Troy, and you have been unaware of those by Palamedes? — Why, indeed, I am unaware of those by Nestor, too, unless by somebody named Nestor you are disguising Gorgias, or by an Odysseus, Thrasymachus and Theodorus.

FROM UNIDENTIFIED WRITINGS

15. ARISTOTLE *Rhetoric* III 3, 1405b34 Frigidity in style occurs in four forms: in the use of compound words . . . also as Gorgias spoke of “begging-poet-flatterers” and “foresworn and well-sworn.”

16. ——— III 3, 1406b4 . . . and further the fourth form of frigidity is in the use of metaphor . . . for example, Gorgias “grass-pale (trembling)” and “bloodless matters.” And “you shamefully sowed these and wretchedly reaped.” For this is too poetically expressed.

17. ——— III 17, 1418a32 In epideictic it is suitable to vary the speech with episodes of praise as Isocrates does. For he is always bringing in somebody. And what Gorgias said is the same, that he was “never at a loss for words.” For if he speaks of Achilles he praises Peleus, then Aeacus, then the god, and similarly in the case of manliness, which does this or that or is of a certain sort.

18. ——— *Politics* I 5, 1260a27 Those who itemize virtues, as Gorgias does, speak much better than those who so define [virtue in a general way].

19. PLATO *Meno* 71E [Meno is speaking with reference to Gorgias 71D] In the first place, if you want to know what is excellence in a

B. Fragments 14-24

man, that is easy, because excellence in a man is this, to be competent to perform public duties, and in doing them to help friends and harm enemies and to avoid suffering anything of the sort himself. And if you want to know the excellence of a woman, it is not difficult to describe, for she ought to manage her household well, keeping the contents safe and being obedient to her husband. There are distinct excellences for a child, female and male, and for an older man, of one sort if free, another if a slave. 72A And there are numerous other excellences so that there is no difficulty in saying what excellence is. For there is an excellence for each of us in each activity and in each time of life in regard to each action, and the same is true, I think, Socrates, of fault.

20. PLUTARCH *Cimon* 10 Gorgias of Leontini says that "Cimon acquired money to use it and used it to be honored."

21. ——— *How to Tell a Flatterer* 23 p. 64C A friend will not, as Gorgias thought, "expect his friend to help him in just undertakings, but himself help the other also in many which are not just."

22. ——— *Bravery of Women* p. 242E Gorgias seems to us in better taste when he demands that "a woman's fame rather than her form ought to be known to many."

23. ——— *On the Fame of the Athenians* 5 p. 348C Tragedy bloomed and was celebrated, a marvelous sound and spectacle for the men of that time and one which by means of myth and suffering produced "a deception," as Gorgias says, "in which the deceiver is more justly esteemed than the nondeceiver and the deceived is wiser than the undeceived." The deceiver is more justly esteemed because he succeeds in what he intends, and the deceived is wiser, for a man that is not imperceptive is easily affected by the pleasure of words.

24. ——— *Table-Talk* VII 10, 2 p. 715E Gorgias said that one of his [Aeschylus'] dramas was "filled with Arcs," namely, the *Seven Against Thebes*. Cf. ARISTOPHANES *Frogs* 1021.

82. Gorgias

25. PROCLUS *Life of Homer* p. 26, 14 Wilamowitz Hellenicus [FGrHist 4 F 5b], Damastes [FGrHist 5 F 11], and Pherecydes [FGrHist 3 F 167] take his [Homer's] ancestry back to Orpheus. . . . Gorgias of Leontini takes him back to Musaeus.

26. ——— on HESIOD *Works and Days* 764 What Gorgias said is not quite the truth. He said that "existence is not manifest if it does not involve opinion, and opinion is unreliable if it does not involve existence."

27. SCHOLIA T ON HOMER *Iliad* IV 250 [p. 154, 29 Maass] . . . and Gorgias' statement: "threats are mingled with entreaties and lamentations with prayers." [From the *Funeral Oration*?]

OF DOUBTFUL AUTHENTICITY

28. GRAECO-SYRIAN TEXTS trans. into German by Ryssel [*Rheinisches Museum*, LI (1896), p. 540, n. 34] *Gorgias* [? Syrian: *Gorgonias*] said: Outstanding beauty derived from some hidden quality is detected if judicious painters cannot paint it with their customary colors. For their extensive experience and their great exertion thereby exhibit a fine testimonial of how great the beauty is in its concealment. And when the separate steps of their work have been exhausted, by their silence in turn they give the crown of victory to the original. But how can the tongue express or the ear of a hearer perceive what no hand encompasses and no eye sees?

29. GNOMOLOGIUM VATICANUM 743 no. 166 [ed. Sternbach *Wiener Studien* x 36] Gorgias the rhetor said that those neglecting philosophy and devoting themselves to general studies were like the suitors who, though wanting Penelope, slept with her maids.

30. ——— 743 no. 167 [ed. Sternbach *Wiener Studien* x 37] Gorgias said that orators were like frogs: for the latter made their cry in water and the former before the waterclock.

B. Fragments 25-31 C. Imitation 1-2

31. SOPATER *Commentary on Hermogenes, Rh.Gr.* VIII 23 Walz Gorgias, who says the sun is a red-hot stone. . . .

C. IMITATION

1. PLATO *Symposium* 194E-197E [Speech of Agathon on Love, parody of the Gorgianic style of Agathon] Cf. 198C. [Socrates is speaking] For the speech reminded me of Gorgias, so that I quite experienced what Homer says: I was afraid lest at the end of his speech Agathon might brandish the Gorgian head of clever speech at my speech and turn me into stone and make me dumb. 185C When Pausanias had paused (the sophists teach me [Apollodorus] to speak in this way like themselves), etc.

2. XENOPHON *Symposium* II 26 But if the slaves sprinkle us a little with their little cups, if I too may speak in Gorgianic phrases, etc.

Proceed to document "Gorgias Polus Style Sample" -- consider the demonstrations there in light of comments on Gorgias' style above: A.1-2, A.4, A.29-32, B.15-17, C.1 & C.2