

## Isocrates and Cicero: Ancient Orators in the Modern Classroom

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### 1 Isocrates *Panegyricus* 47-50 (tr. Papillon, UTexas Press, 2004)

[47] Moreover, philosophy (*philosophia*) was revealed by our city, a philosophy which has discovered and provided us with everything; it has taught us about public affairs, made us gentle towards one another, showed us which misfortunes come through ignorance and which through necessity, and taught us to guard against the former and to endure the latter nobly. The city has also honored the power of discourse (*logos*), which everyone desires and everyone is envious of others who have it. [48] The city knew that we alone of all animals possessed discourse (*logos*) as part of our nature and therefore used this advantage to become superior in all other ways. The city also saw that in other matters fortune is so confused that often the wise have troubles and the foolish prosper. Common people have no share in discourse that is fine and artistic, since this is the task of an intelligent mind, [49] and those who appear wise or foolish differ most in this way. Further, those who are raised from the very beginning like free men are not known so much for their courage or wealth or other such good qualities, as they become particularly distinguished for what they say, and this has become the surest sign of each person's education. Those who use discourse well not only have authority in their own cities, but are also honored among others. [50] Our city has so far surpassed other men in thought and speech that students of Athens have become the teachers of others and it has made the name "Greek" seem to be not that of a people but a way of thinking; and people are called Greeks because they share in our education (*paideusis*) rather than in our birth.

### 2 Isocrates *Antidosis* 84-88 (tr. Too, UTexas Press, 2000)

[84] It should be evident that I am more truthful and useful than those who claim to turn people toward self-restraint and justice. For they exhort people to a virtue and to a wisdom unrecognized by others and debated over by themselves, whereas I exhort them to one acknowledged by everyone. [85] They are pleased with themselves if they can attract pupils into their company by their reputations, whereas I shall never be seen inviting anyone to follow me; instead, I try to persuade the whole city to undertake activities which will lead to their own happiness and will free the rest of the Greeks from their present evils. [86] How is it reasonable that an individual who exhorts all citizens to better and more just leadership of Greece could corrupt his students? Would anyone with the ability to compose such discourses try to invent wicked speeches about wicked matters, especially when he has benefited from his discourse, as I have? [87] When my speeches were written and published, I achieved a good reputation among many and gained many students, and none of them would have remained with me if

they had found me to be other than they had expected. In fact, I have had many pupils, some of them spending three or four years with me. None of these will be found to have faulted their experiences with me, [88] but at the end, when they were about to sail back to their parents and friends, they so valued the time spent with me that we parted with regret and tears.

### **3 Isocrates *To Demonicus* 12-16 (tr. Mirhady, UTexas Press, 2000)**

[12] It is impossible to mold your understanding in this way without filling it with many fine precepts. Bodies are naturally built up through measured tasks, the soul through honorable words. Therefore, I shall try briefly to set out for you habits through which you may advance most toward virtue and win a good reputation among all people. [13] First, venerate what relates to the gods, not only by performing sacrifices but also by fulfilling your oaths. Sacrifices are a sign of material affluence, but abiding by oaths is evidence of a noble character. Honor the divine always, but especially in public worship, for in this way you will gain a good reputation both for sacrificing to the gods and for abiding by the laws. [14] Treat your parents as you would hope your children will treat you. Practice bodily exercises that contribute to health, not to strength; you will achieve this if you stop exercising while you are still able to exercise more. [15] Do not engage in uncontrolled laughter, and do not admit bold speech: the former lacks sense, the latter is madness. Believe that what is shameful to do in public is not good even to mention. Accustom yourself to being thoughtful, not sullen, for the latter will make you seem selfish, but the former pragmatic. Think that a sense of shame and justice and soundness of mind are an especially fitting regimen, for all agree that the character of the young should be controlled by these things. [16] Never expect to do something shameful and get away with it, for although you may escape the notice of others, you will be conscious of it yourself. Fear the gods; honor your parents; respect your friends; obey the laws.

### **4 Isocrates *Antidosis* 271 (tr. Too, UTexas Press, 2000)**

Since human nature cannot attain a knowledge (*episteme*) that would enable us to know what we must say or do, after this I think that the wise are those who have the ability to reach the best judgments (*doxai*) most of the time, and philosophers are those who spend time acquiring such an intelligence as quickly as possible.

### **5 Isocrates *Antidosis* 184-85 (tr. Papillon)**

[184] For when they take students, ... they instruct the students on all the concepts (*ideai*) that discourse employs. Then, after making them experienced and knowledgeable in these, they exercise them and get them used to working hard and compel them to combine together each of the individual things they have learned, so that they might have better control of them and might be able to get closer to the opportunities (*kairoi*) with their educated judgment (*doxa*). This is important (*gar*) because it is not possible to get these from exact knowledge (*episteme*),

since in all cases the *kairos* escapes exact knowledge (*episteme*), but those who pay closest attention and are able to see what will result understand them best and most often. [185] Taking care of them and training them in this manner, both teachers are able to lead their students to become better and more capable, the one in abilities of the mind, the other the abilities of the body. And neither type of teacher has exact knowledge (*episteme*) by which they might make the students into the types they wish, but they contribute only a part; great ability as a whole comes about only for those who are superior both in natural ability and in practice.

## 7 Isocrates *Against the Sophists* 14-15 (tr. Norlin)

For ability, whether in speech or in any other activity, is found in those who are well endowed by nature and have been schooled by practical experience. [15] Formal training makes such men more skillful and more resourceful in discovering the possibilities of a subject; for it teaches them to take from a readier source the topics which they otherwise hit upon in haphazard fashion. But it cannot fully fashion men who are without natural aptitude into good debaters or writers, although it is capable of leading them on to self-improvement and to a greater degree of intelligence on many subjects. (Sophists 14-15, tr., Norlin)

## 8 Cicero, *Pro Archia* 1

[1] Si quid est in me **ingenii**, iudices, quod sentio quam sit exiguum, aut si qua **exercitatio** dicendi, in qua me non infitior mediocriter esse versatum, aut si huiusce rei **ratio** aliqua ab optimarum artium studiis ac disciplina profecta, a qua ego nullum confiteor aetatis meae tempus abhorruisse, earum rerum omnium vel in primis hic A. Licinius fructum a me repetere prope suo iure debet.

[1] If I have any **talent**, judges, the slightness of which I know, or if I have any **experience** in speaking, which I confess is not rare for me, or if I have any **theoretical training** of these sorts of things, derived from my studies and my learning from the best sources, and I admit that no part of my life has lacked such study, then this man, Aulus Licinius, far above all, ought to reclaim as his due recompense such consideration from me.