

Phaedrus 279A: The Praise of Isocrates

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IS SOCRATES' praise of Isocrates at the end of the *Phaedrus* sincere? There is no unanimity, but many are inclined to take Plato at his word.¹ For Isocrates was no ordinary rhetorician or logographer; one can discern in him a clear propensity to general, if not to profound, speculation. But this very exactitude of Socrates' characterization has misled. Scholars, taking a false cue from Plato, have in general been led to emphasize the superficial similarities between his point of view and Isocrates', and to overlook or minimize irreconcilable points of difference. More important, not all evidence has been assembled which bears on the question of whether, in the context of the entire last portion of the dialogue, Socrates' words could possibly have been taken by contemporary readers as without irony (in the modern, not Socratic sense of the word). For a characterization of another, although it contains nothing but "praise," may be composed of such elements as are known will infuriate the recipient. The vain, and Isocrates indubitably was such, must be praised in a way which satisfies their own expectations, contains no jarring nuances, and corresponds to their own over-nourished image of self. In praising Isocrates one would surely have had to say the right things. To show that the final scene of the *Phaedrus* contains some wrong things which have been generally overlooked is the purpose of this brief study.

The most successful recent attempts to show that on grounds of the sheer irreconcilability of the views of Plato and Isocrates about rhetoric it is most unlikely that we should take Socrates' encomium seriously are those of Howland, de Vries, Raeder and Buchheit.² Even here, however, the case lacks final cogency, since, while it is clear that

¹ See the bibliography in V. Buchheit, *Untersuchungen zur Theorie des Genos Epideiktikon* (Munich 1960) 232.

² R. L. Howland, "The Attack on Isocrates in the *Phaedrus*," *CQ* 31 (1937) 151-9; G. J. de Vries, "Isocrates' Reaction to the *Phaedrus*," *Mnemosyne* 6 (1953) 39-45; Hans Raeder, "Platon und die Rhetoren," *Filosofiske Meddelelser: Kong. Danske Videnskabernes Selskab* 2 no.6 (1956) 10-7; V. Buchheit, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.1) 90-108 *passim*, 232-3. Paul Friedländer, *Platon* III (Berlin 1960) 221, disagrees to a greater or less extent with the views of these scholars and

Plato *ca.* 370–365 B.C. disagreed in almost all basic matters with the theory of rhetorical education that Isocrates had been advertizing for the past twenty years or so, it is also just conceivable that Socrates' words of praise, set in the time of Isocrates' youth, were intended to convey a poignant sense of lost opportunities. Isocrates, so unlike Alcibiades in other respects, would be like him in that he also misused rare gifts. On this view, the implicit attack on the Isocrates of the 370's throughout the second half of the *Phaedrus* would be unambiguous, but so too would the encomium of the closing scene. It would not be routine praise, but it would at least not have been conceived with inimical intent. Such an attitude on the part of Plato would be a complex one, made up of intellectual dissent tempered by compassion. Can such a conception stand? In my opinion, it cannot. The evidence suggests, almost to a certainty, that it was Plato's intention to wound someone he found vain and tiresome through a complex of allusions that were unmistakably hostile in their connotations and clearly designed to hurt. Indeed, Isocrates, who habitually responded to criticism with considerable petulance, was just the sort of victim one finds irresistible.

Buchheit in an appendix (232–33) to his study on the theory of the epideictic *genos* in the fifth and fourth centuries argues briefly a point which will stand as our first piece of evidence. These arguments, as well as some of my own, are as follows. At the time of the composition of the *Phaedrus* (*ca.* 375–365), Isocrates was already about seventy years old, an author of great reputation and even greater pretensions: behind him were the *Panegyricus* and the *Plataicus*, and his influence as the head of an important school was great. He possessed a clear confidence in the rightness and importance of his ideas, which he had brought before the public in a series of influential works, although the final, most profound statement of his own *philosophia* was not to appear until some fifteen years later with the publication of the *Antidosis*. And one point to which he recurred was his unambiguous view that the sort of philosophy, *i.e.* logic, epistemology and metaphysics,

sees Plato as extending to Isocrates praise, which though conditioned by Plato's belief in the superiority of dialectic over rhetoric, is still sincere and well intentioned.

This is not the place to attempt to argue the matter out. The hypothesis on which I shall proceed is that Howland *et al.* are correct. And if the evidence presented here is convincing, it will serve, in turn, to reinforce the hypothesis on which it was based. This is good Platonic method.

practiced by Antisthenes and Plato was virtually useless. As illustration, one passage may serve (*Helena* 5):³ κρείττον ἐστὶ περὶ τῶν χρησίμων ἐπιεικῶς δοξάζειν ἢ περὶ τῶν ἀχρήστων ἀκριβῶς ἐπίστασθαι.

If one keeps this in mind, and recalls that Socrates predicts that the young Isocrates will make a great mark, provided he gives free play to his natural aptitude for philosophy—the very kind of philosophy Isocrates so often rejected, since Socrates clearly means “serious” philosophy, *i.e.* *dialectic*—we must surely suppose that Isocrates, as he read this, was angered and offended.⁴ Any one would have been. It was the same as to say that one had not turned out in a way one should have in order to merit praise. For Isocrates to be patronized in this way, to be found fault with, by implication, because he had not pursued what he so often rejected, and, on top of it all, to be taunted

³ Compare, for example, the *Antidosis* of about thirty years later (258–69). There Isocrates magnanimously allows that there is some value in the study of dialectic, mathematics and the like, but only as propaedeutic studies.

⁴ This interpretation depends on the reading of B, εἴτε εἰ, which, for the reasons which follow, seems beyond much doubt to be the correct one. The alternative reading, ἔτι τε εἰ, must, I think, be deemed impossible, since it implies, in the form of a *vaticinium ex eventu*, that Isocrates, having written speeches far superior to any others, and it is surely such speeches as *Contra Sophistas* and *Panegyricus* which are meant (see below), became dissatisfied (!) with his work and was inspired to greater things. This interpretation cannot be taken seriously, unless the implausible expedient is employed of taking the first part of the sentence as a description after the event of what *did* happen, and the second as a description of what did *not* happen, or might *yet* happen (cf. R. Hackforth, *Plato's Phaedrus* [Cambridge 1952] 168). It is, however, as impossible for a modern reader of Isocrates as it was for Plato to imagine that Isocrates was often dissatisfied with what he had written, much less with a work like the *Panegyricus*, passages from which he quoted *in extenso* twenty-five years later in the *Antidosis*. Surely Plato's point (reading B) is that Isocrates never did become dissatisfied and turn to more serious matters, such as a study of dialectic, on which a more profound rhetoric might be based. The contingency denoted by the εἰ αὐτῷ μὴ ἀποχρήσαι never arose. Thomson's excellent note *ad loc.* properly points out that our oldest witness to the text, Cicero's translation at *Orator* 13.41, clearly presupposes the reading of B. There is another important question. To what class of Isocrates' composition is Plato alluding when he speaks of τοὺς λόγους οἷς νῦν ἐπιχειρεῖ? It is barely possible that Plato, adhering to the dramatic date of the dialogue, has in mind Isocrates' early forensic speeches, some of which were written before 400. It could then be said that Isocrates became dissatisfied with these and turned to his own distinctive kind of oratory. Perhaps. But it is then extremely difficult to see why Plato should have praised Isocrates' *forensic* speeches in such an exaggerated way. The natural interpretation is to see a reference, despite the anachronism, to the series of works which began with *Contra Sophistas* in *ca.* 390. It is worth noting that Isocrates himself often alludes to the superiority of his work and that in this context *διαφέρω* is a favorite word (*e.g.* *Pan.* 4). Is Plato joking here too?

with the word, *philosophia*, which was the very one he had chosen as a general term for his ideal of rhetorical education, all this cannot reasonably be construed as anything but an intentional insult. To assume otherwise would be to attribute to Plato an obtuse lack of tact which is entirely inconsistent with the clearly discernible qualities of his mind. If Socrates' remarks have mockingly condescending undertones, as they surely do, we must, I think, assume that this stemmed from no unintended lapse in courtesy.

So much for Buchheit's point. Unsupported, it is perhaps not yet absolutely cogent, since as we noted it may still be argued, against all likelihood, that although condescension may be discerned, it is a condescension not of hostility but of pity or superior wisdom. We may react uncomfortably, and perhaps Isocrates did, but this does not prove that Plato aimed at such an effect.⁵ In view of the tenacity of this sort of interpretation, we must consider two other pieces of evidence whose relevance has not yet, to my knowledge, been satisfactorily exploited. These bear on Isocrates' relationship to two contemporaries whom we know that he found vexatious, Alcidas and Antisthenes.

Alcidas, the pupil of Gorgias, was one of the competitors with whom Isocrates had to contend at the beginning of his career as a teacher of rhetoric. The work of Alcidas which is relevant here is his treatise *Περὶ τῶν σοφιστῶν*; with its attack on those who endlessly polished their speeches and were without skill in public improvisation, it was primarily directed against Isocrates.⁶ And we have a probable *terminus ante quem*, since it is all but certain that it is to Alcidas that Isocrates addresses his angry words of self-defence in the prologue to the *Panegyricus*, a work which was completed by 380.⁷ It is also likely that Alcidas' treatise was preceded by

⁵ This is Klaus Ries' view, *Isokrates und Platon im Ringen um die Philosophia* (Diss. Munich 1959) 161. Ries is not unaware of the condescending character of Plato's position, but shows nevertheless some vexation that Isocrates did not react to Plato's offer in a more kindly and cooperative spirit. Perhaps Isocrates knew better than some modern scholars what Plato was really about. See W. Burkert's remarks, *Gnomon* 33 (1961) 352-3.

⁶ The text of this work is conveniently available in L. Radermacher's *Artium Scriptores* (Vienna 1951) 135-41.

⁷ The critics are referred to anonymously, as was the custom. The point of censure, however, to which Isocrates replies is in general that of Alcidas' treatise, i.e. that those who spend too much time on perfecting their written speeches are at fault. More precisely, Isocrates counters with a criticism which exactly reflects Alcidas' position. Those who chastise him are guilty, he says, of a serious error in that they hold up as models

Isocrates' *Contra Sophistas*, and that it was an answer to this, an essay in self-justification, in which Alcidamas attempted to reply to Isocrates' criticism of the rhetoricians.⁸ The grounds for supposing the priority of Isocrates' *Contra Sophistas* are that Alcidamas, in the final section of his work, makes taunting use of a phrase which appears to have been coined by Isocrates and is found for the first time in *Contra Sophistas*. The phrase is *λόγων ποιητής*, rather pretentiously used for the more usual *λογοποιός* or *λογογράφος*, in the sense of 'writer of speeches'. At §34 (cf. §§2 and 12) Alcidamas scornfully contrasts with a *ρήτωρ δεινός*, such as himself, the laborious composer, whom he calls the *ποιητής λόγων*.

This phrase, as was suggested, was coined by Isocrates, and it would appear that Alcidamas, perhaps struck by its oddity and suspecting that Isocrates was likely to be proud of it, seized upon it and turned it with sarcasm against its inventor. It may, of course, be argued that Alcidamas' work preceded *Contra Sophistas* and that he, not Isocrates, was the inventor, or was merely drawing upon a common phrase which is unattested in the extant literature. There is, however, one consideration which reinforces our argument. If Alcidamas' work was prior, it is improbable that Isocrates, preternaturally sensitive to criticism, would have used what was by then a painful expression in the off-hand and complimentary way that he does. Of the two passages, it is Alcidamas' which is the more pointed, and if we assume, as we must, a close familiarity on the part of each man with the other's work, it is more reasonable to suppose that it is Alcidamas who is attempting to nettle Isocrates than that the latter should have been capable of using, in so undramatic a way, a phrase which had been

speeches which have been written for the courtroom; their notions of excellence are thus based on the demands of forensic oratory. This is, in fact, a major point in Alcidamas' critique of Isocrates. Isocrates, who was by this time no longer a logographer, was right to object to its irrelevance.

⁸ It is conceivable that Isocrates, in his condemnation (§§12–13) of those who think of rhetoric as a "fixed art" made up of unchangeable "elements", had Alcidamas, among others, in mind. For despite points of agreement in the positions of the two rhetoricians, it might just be that Alcidamas' theory of *αὐτοσχεδιασμοὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἐνθυμημάτων* (§18) was misunderstood or misinterpreted by Isocrates as being a mechanical deployment of such elements (here, *ἐνθυμήματα*). Or it is possible that Alcidamas, who was himself not without vanity (cf. §§2, 32, 34), saw a reference to himself in Isocrates' broadside. It is most likely of all of course that Alcidamas, as rhetorician, felt obliged to reply to Isocrates' *Programmschrift*; cf. Münscher, *RE* 9.2 (1916) 2176–7 s.v. ISOKRATES.

applied in a mordant fashion to writers such as himself. Indeed, Isocrates never does use the phrase again—I should suggest out of pique—with the single exception of a passage in the *Antidosis* of some thirty years later.⁹

There is further evidence in support of this view which suggests that the phrase *ποιητῆς λόγων*, now charged with a certain unmistakable nuance, had become a current element in the ironic banter of Athenian intellectual life of the 380's. The well-known passage in the *Euthydemus* (304c–306c), of about this date, describes someone whose intellectual position is compounded of what seemed to Plato a futile mixture of philosophy and politics, and who was a despiser of dialectic but also a despiser of the rhetoricians. This, of course, is precisely the position of Isocrates in *Contra Sophistas*. Now what makes the supposition likely that Plato is not drawing upon his general knowledge of Isocrates' position but is alluding to precisely this work, is the form of the question that Socrates puts to Crito about his anonymous interlocutor.¹⁰ Is he, Socrates asks, *τῶν ἀγωνίσασθαι δεινῶν ἐν τοῖς δικαστηρίοις, ῥήτωρ τις*, or is he a *ποιητῆς τῶν λόγων*? In view of what has been said, this ought, I think, to be taken as a clear allusion to Isocrates' work. Crito's interlocutor, moreover, is called "one of those who attack the rhetoricians, an artificer of words with whom the rhetoricians contend." All of this is as precise a reference as we might wish to the *Contra Sophistas*, both as regards that work's polemical character and the curious phrase picked up by Alcidamas.

But it is not only to Isocrates' polemical activity that Plato alludes, for he speaks also of the rhetoricians, in their turn, as contending with the likes of this anonymous figure. Does Plato here have Alcidamas' work specifically in mind? That the treatise *Περὶ τῶν σοφιστῶν* was a work which falls under Plato's general description is obvious. But there is also evidence that Plato, at the time of the *Euthydemus*, was already familiar with Alcidamas' treatise; that he knew it later is clear from the *Phaedrus*, as we shall see.

In the first place, a precise point in the *Περὶ τῶν σοφιστῶν* is paralleled in the *Euthydemus* (306a–c), and that is that such men as our anonymous interlocutor—and it is surely, above all, if not exclusively,

⁹ *Antidosis* 192. The phrase has a sense very close to that in which Alcidamas uses it, i.e., a merely "literary" orator, with no skill in public speaking. It is difficult to explain this conciliatory gesture, except to observe that it is not unique; cf. *supra* n.3.

¹⁰ See Ries, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.5) 35–46, for further evidence for the priority of *Contra Sophistas*.

Isocrates who is intended—occupy the mid-ground between philosophy and rhetoric, and in trying to combine these two pursuits, and thus surpass both the philosophers and the rhetoricians, they instead fall somewhere between: wishing to be first, they end up third. So, too, Alcidas (§2), “I have written this work because I am convinced that men who squander their lives on *writing* speeches with great care are completely deficient in both rhetoric and philosophy.” To be sure, what Alcidas means by *philosophia* will be something different from what Plato means. Now, Alcidas is, I should suggest, referring to Isocrates’ words at the end of *Contra Sophistas*. There, Isocrates, after an acerbic attack on the rhetoricians, makes the pompous claim for his *philosophia* that it will, in fact, improve his students’ morals even sooner than it will perfect their rhetorical skill. Did Alcidas, who was, after all, a student of Gorgias,¹¹ find this confusion of rhetoric with *philosophia*, i.e. general intellectual and moral culture, rather absurd? Alcidas, rejecting Isocrates’ profession to improve the morals of his students by his *philosophia*, and at the same time finding Isocrates lacking in what he considered the true skills of rhetoric, could well have said of him that he was “deficient in both philosophy and rhetoric.”

It might, of course, be argued that the *Euthydemus* preceded Alcidas’ treatise and that Alcidas saw through, as anyone of the time would have, the anonymous interlocutor, and parroted Socrates’ condemnation. Possibly. But a sentence elsewhere in this same passage suggests that Plato, not Alcidas, was the borrower.

It should first of all be made clear that even though Plato may have shared Alcidas’ annoyance with Isocrates’ pretensions, it does not follow from my suggestion that he approved of the rhetorical theory of Alcidas or of the general aims of rhetoric. It is, in fact, certain that he did not. In this small sally against Isocrates in the *Euthydemus* Alcidas’ views are something which Plato exploits, but infuses with quite a different meaning. This, as we shall see later, he also does in the *Phaedrus*. For Plato, at the same time he is laughing at Isocrates with Alcidas, will also be laughing at Alcidas. “How presumptuous of you, Alcidas, to say that Isocrates is without philosophy. Do you know what philosophy is?” If this hypothesis is correct, in the passage cited above (305B) we can see an allusion to Alcidas’

¹¹ See especially Gorgias’ deprecating remarks on the pretensions of sophists to teach virtue, *Meno* 95c.

pretentious and self-laudatory final words, *ὅστις οὖν ἐπιθυμῆι ῥήτωρ γενέσθαι δεινὸς ἀλλὰ μὴ ποιητῆς λόγων ἱκανός, κτλ.*

If we are to posit some connection between the two works—and the precise similarity in the criticism of Isocrates as well as the juxtaposition of the *δεινὸς ῥήτωρ* with the unusual *ποιητῆς λόγων* suggest that we should—is it not more plausible to see Plato as the borrower, using the words of a recent critic of Isocrates as a further irritation in an already pointed attack, but using them in such a way that the critic of Isocrates is himself implicitly criticized? Of course, the reverse situation is possible, with Alcidamas taking his cue from Plato. In this matter I am far from insisting on the priority of the one work over the other with the same emphasis as in our earlier discussion of the connection between Isocrates' *Contra Sophistas* and Alcidamas' *Περὶ τῶν σοφιστῶν*.

To return to the closing scene of the *Phaedrus*. It is a fact, first recognized by Teichmüller in 1881,¹² that Alcidamas and his treatise (although they cannot be said to have been a subject agreeable to Isocrates) are demonstrably the immediate source of the chief points which Socrates puts forth approvingly in the discussion of the faults of written *logos* which is found near the end of the *Phaedrus*, immediately before the passage where Isocrates is "praised." Friedländer,¹³ most recently, has gone in sufficient detail into the question of Plato's debt to Alcidamas, so that we need only recall the most obvious points of similarity: that the spoken word is superior to the written word, especially the written word which has been put together with infinite and laborious care (§4 and 278B–E); that the written word is like a statue or painting, mute and useless (§27 and 275D); that in view of this, writing is at best a mere pastime, a *παιδιά* (§34 and 227E). That Plato's conception of the spoken word is radically different is obvious. But, again, Alcidamas is convenient, because he takes a position with which Plato can *formally* agree, and takes this position against Isocrates, whom Plato is also concerned to attack.

The whole discussion from 275c to the mention of Isocrates (278E) brings the treatise of Alcidamas irresistibly to mind, whether we

¹² *Literarische Fehden in IV Jahrhundert I* (Breslau 1881) 96–7. It cannot of course be argued that Plato *needed* Alcidamas to formulate his ideas in the matter of the spoken *versus* the written word. Nevertheless, the use of *παιδιά* in precisely this context is all but certain proof that Plato knew this work. Why he chose to allude to it immediately before his "praise" of Isocrates is obvious.

¹³ P. Friedländer, *Plato* tr. H. Meyerhoff, I (New York 1958) 111–2.

choose to believe, and this is by far the more plausible, that Plato is directly indebted to Alcidamas, or that both men independently reflect contemporary discussion of rhetorical questions. It is in any case certain that Isocrates would not have failed to see the ghosts of a debate of some twenty years before, a debate in which his opponent had outlined a theory of rhetoric with which he disagreed *au fond*. The passage, as a whole, must therefore be viewed as a red flag which Plato intentionally waved in the face of Isocrates. Consequently, if just before Isocrates is named (278E) Socrates speaks of those poor people who have nothing more worthwhile to show than their written compositions—whether one is to call such a man a *ποιητήν ἢ λόγων συγγραφέα*—can one really maintain that the “praise” of Isocrates which follows is anything but the most outrageous condescension?

In this matter one point must be made quite clear. To translate *ποιητής* as ‘poet’ simply, as is done, for example, by Hackforth and Robin, is to render merely the surface sense and to rob the passage of a crucial nuance. ‘Poet’ is, of course, a correct translation; the three categories—poet, speech-writer, and writer of laws—are obviously based on 278B–C. We have seen, however, that *λόγων ποιητής* in the sense of writer of speeches had become, well before the time of the *Phaedrus*, a phrase of uncomfortable connotations for Isocrates. But not only *λόγων ποιητής*. Both Alcidamas and Plato, in the *Phaedrus*, use *ποιητής* by itself to denote the creator of polished written compositions, *i.e.* as a shorter, allusive equivalent to *λόγων ποιητής*. The term is so used twice earlier in the *Phaedrus* with reference to Lysias (234E and 236D); it means there, clearly, composer of written speeches. Alcidamas, too, uses *ποιητής* in exactly this sense and with clear reference to Isocrates. In the opening of his treatise (§2), in a passage reminiscent of the one under discussion in that it takes to task those who laboriously consume their time in perfecting written works (*cf.* also §§4 and 16), Alcidamas writes: *πολὺ δικαιότερον ποιητὰς ἢ σοφιστὰς προσαγορεύεσθαι νομίζων*. It therefore seems likely, in the light of this passage of Alcidamas as well as of the fact that Plato uses *ποιητής* twice earlier in the *Phaedrus* in the odd, almost certainly Isocratean, sense of ‘writer of speeches’, that Isocrates would surely not have failed to see this play on words. In this passage *ποιητής* clearly means ‘poet’. But following directly on the description of one who “spends hours on his phrases, twisting them this way and that, pasting them together and pulling them apart” (Hackforth adapted), *ποιητής* must

have brought back to Isocrates the passage in which Alcidas mockingly hints at the full phrase, *λόγων ποιητής*, which he is to attack later at the end of his treatise. And the allusion would have been irresistible, not only because of the identity of context but also because of the similarity of external form: *πολὺν δικαιότερον ἂν ποιητὰς ἢ σοφιστὰς προσαγορευέσθαι* and *ἐν δίκῃ που ποιητὴν . . . προσερεῖς*.

In view of the evidence relating to the quarrel between Alcidas and Isocrates one may confidently assume that by the time Isocrates had reached the passage where he was "praised," he was in no doubt about Plato's intentions.

There is another piece of evidence which affects the interpretation of the final scene of the *Phaedrus*. For in addition to the patronizing form into which the encomium is cast and the undoubtedly irritating allusions to Alcidas' criticisms, there is good reason to believe that another adversary of Isocrates is brought quietly onto the scene—Antisthenes. Again, the relationship between these two men was one of nastiness concealed only by the cloak of anonymous address. Who the initiator was we do not know, but it is clear that it is Antisthenes who is specifically attacked in the treatise *Contra Sophistas* about 390.

We also know that the irascible Antisthenes returned fire. A famous trial *ca.* 400 B.C. between a certain Nicias and Euthynous, involving a deposit of three talents which the plaintiff Nicias charged had not been returned in its entirety, apparently generated considerable interest, perhaps because the two logographers on opposing sides were Lysias and Isocrates. Lysias' speech, save for the opening lines, has been lost (fr.70 Thalheim). Isocrates' speech is extant, although the authenticity of the speech *Πρὸς Εὐθύουνον ἀμάρτυρος* in the Isocraean corpus is, with some justice, open to question. In any event, Antisthenes, for reasons on which we can only speculate, found something about Isocrates' speech which was vulnerable to his especially savage brand of attack, and wrote a work, now lost, entitled, *Πρὸς τὸν Ἰσοκράτους ἀμάρτυρον*.¹⁴ What he said is not known, but that he wounded Isocrates' vanity is clear from the agitated remarks which Isocrates, at the conclusion of the *Panegyricus* of 380, addresses to those who neglect matters of great moment and compose rubbish about deposits of money (§188).

Nor was this the end of the quarrel. There is evidence of another work of Antisthenes (whether it followed the *Panegyricus* rebuke is not

¹⁴ Diog.Laert. 6.15.

known) which again baited Isocrates. This was the work with the extraordinary title *Περὶ τῶν δικογράφων· Δεσίας ἢ Ἰσογράφης*.¹⁵ A play on *Λυσίας ἢ Ἰσοκράτης*, it may be rendered “Pettifogger (i.e. the man who complicates things) or The One who Always Writes The Same,” or perhaps “The One Who Writes in Balanced Clauses.”¹⁶ The juxtaposition of Lysias and Isocrates suggests that Antisthenes was still engaged, at least in part, in mocking Isocrates’ rôle and speech in the trial of Euthynous and Nicias. And it should be noted that Antisthenes was not the only philosopher contemporary with Isocrates who found the *ἀμάρτυρος* an inviting target. Plato’s nephew, Speusippus, also wrote a work attacking this speech.¹⁷ It would be extraordinarily interesting to know what it was that so amused the philosophers.

In the light of this evidence, the pairing of Isocrates and Lysias in the final scene will necessarily assume a different aspect. It has, of course, been noted that it must have been galling to Isocrates to be linked with Lysias at all, since Isocrates constantly insisted that he was far above the mere logographers.¹⁸ His adopted son, in fact, maintained with some vehemence that his father had never been engaged in such a sordid business as writing speeches for hire, and maintained that the speeches that circulated under his father’s name were forgeries. This

¹⁵ *Δεσίας ἢ Ἰσογράφης* is the plausible emendation of M. Pohlenz (*Hermes* 42 [1907] 157–9) of the corrupt passage in Diogenes Laertius 6.15: *ἰσογραφὴ ἢ δεσίας καὶ ἰσοκράτης*. The most recent editor, H. S. Long, rejects (is unaware of?) the emendation; he accepts Wytttenbach’s *Λυσίας* for *δεσίας* of the codd. Pohlenz, and in this I think he is correct, sees the name as a punning reference to the orator’s skill in verbal entrapment: “Neque sanus quisquam negabit hic de Lysia agi; quis autem verbo admonitus dubitabit, quin Antisthenes eodem ioco usus—si modo iocus appellandus est—quo contra Platonem Sathonem scripsit, Lysiam non Solutorem sed Ligatorem nominaverit? Quod tamen eum fecisse . . . ut oratorem reos circumvenientem atque vincientem cavillaretur, consentaneum est. Quae si vera est, abicienda est Wytttenbachii coniectura, . . .”

It would seem natural rather to emend to *Ἰσογράφης ἢ Δεσίας*. *Ἰσοκράτης* would then be a gloss. So Radermacher, *op.cit.* (*supra* n.6) 120, who wrongly attributes to Pohlenz, however, this variation of the emendation. For the name-play, cf. Antiochus IV Epiphanes, called by Polybius (*ap. Athen.* 2.45c) *ὁ Ἐπιμανής*; and Chrysippus of Soli, called by Carneades *Κρόφιππος* (*Diog.Laert.* 7.182).

¹⁶ Surely, the amusing parody of Isocrates’ style at *Rep.* 6.498D–E is relevant; note especially *ὠμοιωμένα(-ον)* and *παρισωμένον*. See Adam *ad loc.*, *The Republic of Plato* (Cambridge 1902, repr. 1965) and Appendix to Book VI (pp.77–8).

¹⁷ *Diog.Laert.* 4.5; see P. Lang, *De Speusippi Academici scriptis* (Diss. Bonn 1911, repr. Frankfurt 1964) 38–9.

¹⁸ Compare, for example, *Antidosis* 32–41.

contention, as we know, amused Aristotle.¹⁹ Nevertheless, the evidence concerning Antisthenes suggests that a more precise insult was intended. As was the case with Alcidas, so here too the alert reader—and Isocrates, touchy and personally concerned, was one of these—would surely have been reminded by the pairing of Lysias with Isocrates of the series of attacks which Antisthenes had launched against Isocrates, and which had their origin in the trial in which Lysias and Isocrates were the antagonists.

It is likely, then, that Isocrates, an old man and a famous one, was not pleased with Socrates' words of praise, especially as there stood, just off stage, the two silently mocking figures of Alcidas and Antisthenes.

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¹⁹ Dionys.Hal. *Isocrates* 18 (U-R I.85)=fr.122 Rose.